



CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026

Career Development Award

Submission Deadline for Letter of Intent: 8 April 2026

Dementia Research Switzerland - Synapsis Foundation announces a **Career Development Award** competition. This funding mechanism **supports advanced postdoctoral researchers at Swiss universities and non-commercial research institutions** who seek to establish themselves as independent researchers in the field of dementia. The goal of this award is to **accelerate their transition to a faculty position in Switzerland or EMBO member countries**.

The Synapsis Foundation Career Development Award consists of 2 phases:

- Phase 1 is carried out as a postdoctoral fellow in a host laboratory.
- Phase 2 supports the researcher in an independent faculty position.

For more details on the application process and eligibility criteria for both phases see page 2.

Dementia Research Switzerland - Synapsis Foundation and Race Against Dementia are announcing the



Race Against Dementia – Synapsis Foundation Fellowship

The highest scoring applicants for a Synapsis Career Development Award will be nominated for this fellowship and will be invited to an interview attended by representatives from Race Against Dementia and Dementia Research Switzerland – Synapsis Foundation. One nominee will be awarded this prestigious fellowship. In addition to research funding as described in the Synapsis Foundation Career Development Award call papers, the awardee will be enrolled on Race Against Dementia's training programme inspired by the precision, speed and teamwork of Formula 1. The training encourages researchers to approach dementia research with the same focus on efficiency, innovation and collaboration that drives success on the racetrack. The Fellowship is co-funded by both organisations.

[Race Against Dementia](#) was established by world champion racing driver, Sir Jackie Stewart, OBE after his wife, Helen, was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia. The charity raises funds to support researchers across the globe to find cures for dementia.

FUNDING

Funding is a **maximum of CHF 100'000 per year** for up to five years (phase 1 and 2 together), pending on a successful reapplication after phase 1. Institutions may not charge indirect or overhead costs on this award.

TOPICS

The Synopsis Foundation supports research projects on neurodegenerative diseases in either basic, translational or clinical research:

- Research in genetics, molecular and cell biology to gain new insights into pathomechanisms
- Innovative clinical approaches towards an early diagnosis (including biomarkers) and therapeutic interventions
- Prevention studies

DETAILS ON THE FUNDING SCHEME

The maximum funding period for phase 1 and phase 2 combined is five years, pending upon successful reapplication after the first phase.

Phase 1 – Three Years Postdoctoral Research Phase

Advanced postdoctoral scientists conducting research in a host laboratory at a public research facility in Switzerland are supported for up to three years with a maximum of CHF 100'000 per year. Researchers who have worked 3 - 5 years as postdoctoral researchers at the time of application are eligible to apply. The awardees must submit annual progress reports and a final report.

Phase 2 – Two Years Junior Faculty Phase

To apply for phase 2 of the fellowship, applicants must submit a progress report, research plan and a career plan at least 3 months before the completion of phase 1. Applicants qualifying for phase 2 of the award will be invited for an interview with members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Foundation. The funding for phase 2 is up to CHF 100'000 per year for a maximum of 2 years.

Eligibility criteria for phase 2 of the Career Fellowship:

- Approval of the progress report and research plan by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Synopsis Foundation.
- Move to a new institution or department.
- Employment as an **independent** faculty member (assistant professor or higher level) or group leader.
- Funding for faculty/group leader position must be provided by institutional funds or other grants (e.g. ERC starter grant or SNSF-professorship).
- The independent position can be at any institution in EMBO member countries.
- In case a candidate requires additional time to secure an independent faculty position after completion of the phase 1, the start date of the independent phase can be postponed by up to one year.

APPLICATION FOR PHASE 1

The application follows a **two-step process for phase 1 of the Career Development Award**.

First, researchers are invited to submit a short letter of intent. The most convincing project ideas will be selected, and the main applicant will be invited to submit a full proposal. All documents must be submitted by the main applicant using the provided template and must be completed in English. Project proposals that have been previously rejected by the Foundation may be resubmitted once, accompanied by an explanation of the changes made to the original application.



1st Step: Letter of Intent

In a first stage, researchers are invited to submit a **letter of intent** that includes a **short project outline**. The template for the letter of intent for the Career Development Award is provided on the Synapsis Foundation website.

The letter of intent includes:

- Information on the main applicant
- Project title
- Start date and duration of the project
- Requested funding
- Information regarding resubmission and further funding partners
- Curriculum vitae, including top 3 publications
- Outline of the proposed research project (1 page only)

The letter of intent must be submitted online in pdf-format via the submission tool.
The submission deadline for the letter of intent is 8 April 2026 at 11:59 p.m.

The Scientific Advisory Board of Synapsis Foundation will review the letters of intent and select the most promising project ideas based on scientific quality, originality and relevance to the call.

2nd Step: Full Proposal

If the project outline was positively evaluated, the main applicant will be invited to submit a **detailed full proposal**. The **template** for the full proposal will be **sent** to the main applicant **via e-mail**, together with the invitation.

The full proposal includes:

- Scientific abstract
- Introduction to the topic
- Specific goals of the project and detailed research plan for phase 1
- Detailed budget for phase 1
- Disclosure of all other funding sources
- Short description of career plans of the applicant for the next five years, incl. a short outline for phase 2
- Letter of support and commitment from the supervisor/principal investigator, confirming that the PostDoc will be working independently on the proposed project

All relevant information must be compiled in a single pdf-file of maximum 10 MB and must be submitted online. The link to the submission tool will be provided via e-mail.
The submission deadline for the full proposal is 5 July 2026 at 11:59 p.m.

EVALUATION

Full proposals will be evaluated by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Synapsis Foundation, supported by external reviewers. The main **evaluation criteria** are **scientific quality, originality, feasibility, innovation, experience and past performance of the main applicant**, as well as **relevance to the call**. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Final decision for funding lies with the Board of Trustees of the Synapsis Foundation.

Funding decisions will be announced before 20 December 2026.

CONTACT

If you have questions regarding any aspects of the Call for Proposals 2026, please consult our **FAQs** or contact Heide Marie Hess, Liaison Officer Research:
hess@demenz-forschung.ch, +41 44 276 40 63

