

SNSF Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC)

Newsletter 2022/1

Status of the study

The CTC study is starting its fifth year. Currently, the project team is preparing and documenting data from the surveys conducted last year. Moreover, we are preparing the upcoming surveys. In 2022, we are continuing to monitor the four existing cohorts, but will not start a new cohort.

This newsletter shows the first results of a longitudinal analysis of the CTC-18 cohort, which consists of people who applied for Early Postdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility in fall 2018. The following results are preliminary as the data preparation has not been completed yet.

First longitudinal results of the CTC-18 cohort

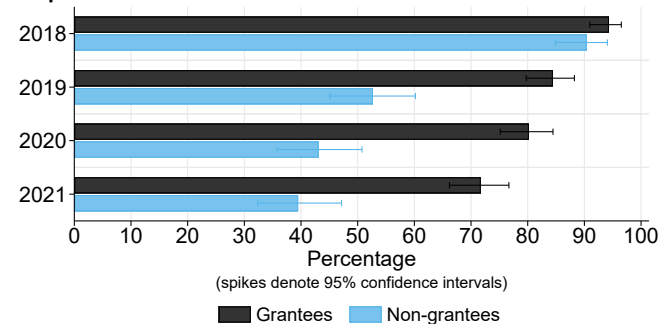
The survey participants

In fall 2018, 418 applicants for Early Postdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility took part in the baseline survey. This equals 93% of all applicants in fall 2018. Subsequently, the response rates dropped with each follow-up survey, especially for the non-grantees, that is applicants who did not receive SNSF career funding in 2018 or later. In the most recent follow-up survey in 2021, 60% of all applicants from 2018 took part.

Since 2018, 283 out of 450 applicants have received an SNSF grant, including 36 applicants who successfully applied for an SNSF grant twice (i.e. they received more than one grant between 2018 and 2021). Finally, 167 did not receive SNSF career funding in 2018 or in the subsequent years. In 2021, 180 of the 203 successful applicants

who participated in the survey had already finished their grant, while 33 had a running grant (either the first or the second one).

Response rates of the CTC-18 cohort

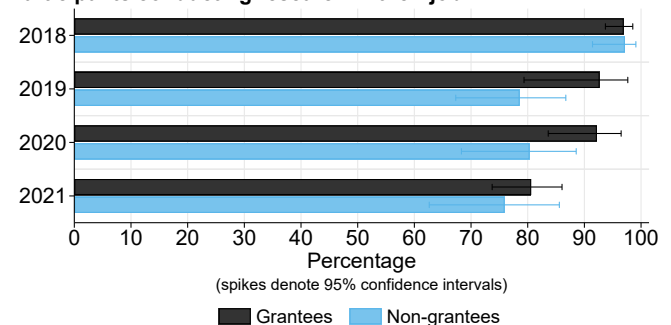


The majority still conducts research three years after their application

Every year, the survey participants are asked whether they are (still) conducting research in their job. Right after their application in 2018, almost all participants reported that they conduct research (97%). Over the subsequent years, this percentage has dropped, and yet, three years later, still almost 80% of the survey participants reported that they conduct research in their job. The percentage of non-grantees conducting research had shrunk to roughly 80% in 2019 and has remained rather stable thereafter. Unsurprisingly, this number is higher for grantees in their first years, and falls as the funding ceases. There is no significant difference between grantees and non-grantees in 2021. Overall, the percentage of participants conducting

research declined significantly in 2021 compared to 2018 (97% in 2018 vs. 79% in 2021, $p < 0.001$).

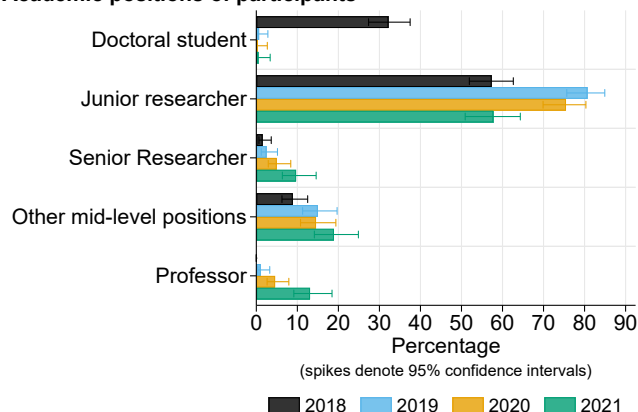
Participants conducting research in their job



Former applicants take up senior positions and professorships

The analysis of the survey participants' academic positions shows that more than a third of them were still doctoral students when they applied. In the two years after their application, the majority completed their doctorate and were employed as junior researchers or postdocs. The percentage of participants working as senior researchers or other mid-level academic staff (lecturers, scientific collaborators, or similar) has increased with every year. In 2021, three years after the application for an Early Postdoc.Mobility or a Postdoc.Mobility grant, 13% of the survey participants already had a position as a professor.

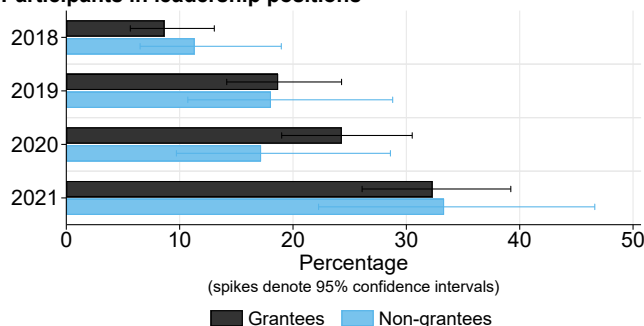
Academic positions of participants



Increase of leadership positions over the years

Every year, the survey participants are asked whether they have a supervisory function in their current job. Analyses over the years show an increase in leadership positions. This is true for both grantees and non-grantees. Three years after their application for a mobility grant, 32% of the grantees and 33% of the non-grantees reported that they have a supervisory function in their job. Moreover, analyses by gender show that there is no significant difference between the percentages of men and women with leadership positions.

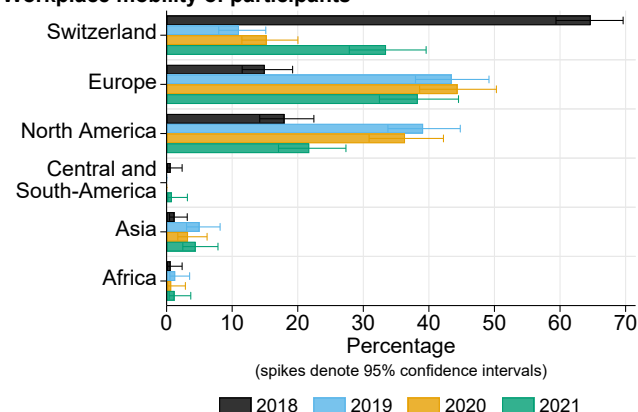
Participants in leadership positions



Workplace shifts to Europe and North America

In 2018, when the survey participants applied for (Early) Postdoc.Mobility, most of them worked in Switzerland, followed by North America and Europe (excluding Switzerland). In the two subsequent years, roughly 40% worked in other European countries and North America, while the number of participants who worked in Switzerland dropped to 11% and 15% respectively. In 2021 – presumably with the end of most of the mobility grants – more participants worked in Switzerland again. At the same time, 126 (49%) of the survey participants in 2021 reported that they had to cancel research visits planned for the time between fall 2020 and fall 2021 – in almost all cases (112; 89%) because of travel restrictions or bans.

Workplace mobility of participants

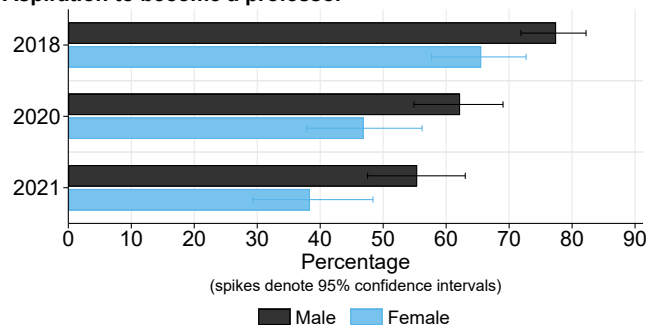


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Aspirations to a professorship decrease with time

When they first applied in 2018, as well as two and three years later, the survey participants were asked about their long-term career aspirations. Shortly after the application, the majority of the participants reported that they aspire to a full tenured professorship most (compared to other leading management, research, or teaching positions). However, this aspiration decreases with time, for both women and men. Three years after the application, 55% of the male and 38% of the female participants still aspire to a professorship (versus 77% and 66% in 2018).

Aspiration to become a professor



Up next

We are looking forward to the follow-up surveys to be fielded in spring 2022. These include the first follow-up with the CTC-21 cohort, the second follow-up with the CTC-20 cohort, and the third follow-up with the CTC-19 cohort. In summer, we will upload the latest data on

SwissUbase, where it will be accessible for interested researchers. Finally, we would like to thank all our survey participants for participating in the surveys and thereby allowing for valuable insights into the career paths of early-career researchers.

About

The Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC) project of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is a longitudinal panel study with four cohorts (CTC-18 – CTC-21). It aims at tracking the career paths of young researchers applying for SNSF career funding schemes at the post-doctoral level (Early Postdoc.Mobility, Postdoc.Mobility,

Ambizione, Eccellenza, and PRIMA). The main goals of the CTC are to monitor the careers of these researchers and to evaluate the impact of the different career funding schemes of the SNSF. The Career Tracker Cohorts study is affiliated to the Interfaculty Centre for Educational Research (ICER) at the University of Bern.

For more information see: <http://careertrackercohorts.ch/>

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