**Tool to Record the Negative Effects of the COVID-19 Crisis on Early Career Researchers – Requests for Financial Support from the Executive Board of the University of Bern**

**Current Situation**

The measures to curb the COVID-19 pandemic are having a severe impact on the work of our researchers. Early career researchers are particularly affected by the negative consequences of the current crisis, due to their fixed-term employment and the qualification goals involved.

The tool at hand is a means to record the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis on research work of early career researchers which are causing delays in achieving set qualification goals and leading to **requests for financial support from the Executive Board of the University of Bern** to extend qualification positions. Requests for extension of employment for positions with **secured funding** are to be applied for via the regular channels.

**Scope**

* Doctoral students incl. assistants III (Doktorierende inkl. Assistentinnen III und Assistenten III)
* Assistants I (Assistentinnen I und Assistenten I)
* Postdocs (early postdocs, advanced postdocs, senior research assistants)
* Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action fellows
* Senior assistants (Oberassistentinnen und -assistenten)
* Assistant professors without tenure track (Assistenzprofessorinnen und Assistenzprofessoren ohne Tenure Track)
* Assistant physicians in human medicine/dentistry[[1]](#footnote-1)\* (Assistenzärztinnen und -ärzte   
  Human-/Zahnmedizin)
* Assistant physicians in veterinary medicine (Assistenzärztinnen und -ärzte Tiermedizin)
* Senior physicians II\* (Oberärztinnen II und Oberärzte II)
* Deputy senior physicians\* (Stv. Oberärztinnen und Stv. Oberärzte)

**Conditions**

1. An affected person is defined as an employee in a qualification position faced with considerable and demonstrable hindrances in his/her academic work since March 2020, due to the limitations and/or additional duties resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, e.g., in research, in teaching, in meeting mandatory educational requirements or due to additional parental duties so that he/she is unable to complete his/her projects as planned (and for whom no financial solution could be found).
2. Applications for employment extensions through financial support of the Executive Board of the University of Bern may be submitted earliest one year prior to the end of the current employment contract.
3. Reporting on funding gaps caused by the COVID-19 crisis may only be made for salaries, not for equipment or material resources.

**Solution-finding principles**

The solutions are geared to the individual situation, focusing on the negative consequences within the academic qualification procedure. The solutions should be reasonable and fair. Hardship cases are to be avoided and mitigated.

**The principle of subsidiarity applies.** In principle, solutions should be first sought de-centrally – at **superior/supervisor/research group leader**, **institute/department**, **faculty/center** levels – so as to provide the necessary support to early career researchers.

Any supplementary measures of the Executive Board of the University of Bern shall only apply subsidiarily and in hardship cases. In other words, a request for funding may be made to the Executive Board only if sufficient grounds and justification can be provided as to why no alternative solution could be found, and if it can be proven why other funding options are not, or only partially, possible. The Executive Board shall set up a pre-advisory committee to review these cases of hardship.

**Requests for extension of maximum term of employment**

**a) Requests with secured funding:** Requests for COVID-19 related employment extensions with secured funding (through supervisors/superiors, institutes, departments, faculties and/or centers) are to be applied for via the regular channels (e.g., for doctoral students and postdocs via e-forms). Detailed justification must be given for the employment extension request (description of limitations to research, additional duties in teaching and/or additional personal duties, e.g., increased parental duties).

**b) Requests for additional funding from the Executive Board of the University of Bern:** The following application form is to be used for COVID-19 related requests for extension of the maximum employment term that require the financial support of the Executive Board of the University of Bern. Requests may only be submitted by the Deans’ Offices. There is no legal entitlement to granting of Executive Board funds for employment term extensions.

**Request to the Executive Board of the University of Bern**

**Extension of planned employment term due to COVID-19:**

**Application for additional funding**

**Please note that all of the questions in sections 1 - 3 must be answered. Incomplete applications will be rejected.**

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| **1. Recording of Negative Effects Caused by COVID-19** | | |
| **To be completed by the affected person** | | |
| **1a) Personal details** | | |
| Surname and first name |  | |
| Personal number |  | |
| Qualification level / Type of employment | Wählen Sie ein Element aus.  Select an item from the list. | |
| Institute / Department |  | |
| Superior / Supervisor |  | |
| **1b) Employment** | | |
| Regular employment term | from DD.MM.YYYY to DD.MM.YYYY | |
| Employment through cantonal funding | yes  no | |
| Employment through external funding | yes  no  If yes, specify the source of funding: | |
| Level of employment | % | |
| **1c) Effects of the COVID-19 situation** | | |
| **Research** | | |
| Were there any restrictions on research due to COVID-19 that led to a delay of the qualification phase (e.g., due to closure of labs, archives, libraries; stalled field research and the like)? | | |
| yes  no | | |
| If your answer is yes, which parts of the research project could not be implemented as planned? | | |
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| What measures were taken to adopt a different way forward in order to prevent a delay (e.g., changes to the research plan, moving other tasks forward)? | | |
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| If no measures were taken, or could not be taken, please give a brief explanation why: | | |
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| **Teaching** | | |
| Were their additional teaching duties due to COVID-19 that led to a delay of the qualification phase (e.g., switching to digital teaching)? | | |
| yes  no | | |
| If your answer is yes, please give a brief description of the additional teaching duties: | | |
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| **Educational requirements** | | |
| Were you unable to meet mandatory educational requirements (doctorate) or requirements for further specialization by way of continuing education due to the COVID-19 crisis? | | |
| yes  no | | |
| If your answer is yes, which compulsory educational requirements were you unable to meet as a doctoral student due to the COVID-19 crisis? | | |
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| If your answer is yes, which compulsory requirements for specialization by way of continuing education were you unable to meet due to the COVID-19 crisis (e.g., in human medicine or veterinary medicine)? | | |
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| **Additional private/personal duties** | | |
| Did you have any additional duties due to COVID-19, e.g., resulting from family circumstances including parental duties and/or as a result of illness? | | |
| yes  no | | |
| If your answer is yes, please describe the effects of those extra duties: | | |
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| How much time will you need to compensate the delay of the qualification phase? | | |
| **months** | | |
| What measures are planned? | | |
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| Date and signature of the affected person | | Date and signature of the superior / supervisor |

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| **2. Solution finding** |
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| **2a) To be completed by the superior / the supervisor** |
| What measures to compensate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the qualification phase of the affected person have you explored, and which measures have been taken (e.g., exemption from teaching duties)? |
|  |
| For supervisors of doctoral students and postdocs: Were the measures taken stipulated in the doctoral or postdoctoral agreement? |
| yes  no  **Please enclose a copy of the agreement regardless of your answer.** |
| What efforts have you made to secure an extension of employment through other financial resources (e.g., through unused budget for material and equipment, overhead, funds from other projects, personal points)? |
|  |
| Were funding options (partly) found? (Specify length in months) |
| yes  no |
| If your answer is yes: **months** |
| If no or only part funding is possible, please give a brief explanation why: |
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| Date and signature of the superior / supervisor |

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| **2b) To be completed by the Institute / Department** |
| What efforts has the Institute / Department made to secure an extension of employment and, if necessary, to meet the costs through other financial resources (e.g., through unused budget for material and equipment, overhead, funds from other projects, Institute’s budget)? |
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| Were funding options (partly) found? (Specify length in months) |
| yes  no |
| If your answer is yes: **months** |
| If no or only part funding is possible, please give a brief explanation why:  *(If at the time of this application a positive year-end balance of personal points results in the PPP, an explanation must be given as to what other use is intended for these points)* |
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| Date and signature of the Head of the Institute / Head of the Department |

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| **2c) To be completed by the Faculty** | |
| What efforts has the Faculty made to secure an extension of employment and, as the case may be, to meet the costs through alternative financial resources (e.g., through unused budget for material and equipment, overhead, funds from other projects, Faculty budget)? | |
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| Were funding options (partly) found? (Specify length in months) | |
| yes  no | |
| If your answer is yes: **months** | |
| If no or only part funding is possible, please give a brief explanation why:  *(If at the time of this application a positive year-end balance of personal points results in the PPP, an explanation must be given as to what other use is intended for these points)* | |
|  | |
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| Total of employment term extension financially secured by the superior / the supervisor / the Institute / Department and/or Faculty / Center | from DD.MM.YYYY to DD.MM.YYYY |
|  | |
| Date and signature of the Dean | |

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| **3. Application for Employment Extension Funding for the Attention of the Executive Board of the University of Bern** | |
| Length of the requested employment extension | from DD.MM.YYYY to DD.MM.YYYY |
| Level of employment | % |
|  | |
| Date and signature of the Dean | |
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| Submission of this application for funding duly completed and signed in PDF format by the Board of the Faculty to: [**info.pers@unibe.ch**](mailto:info.pers@unibe.ch) | |

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| **4. Review of the application and recommendation**  **(To be completed by the Human Resources Office)** | | | | |
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| **4a) Is the application complete and plausible?**  yes  no  *(If the answer is no, the application shall be returned to the Faculty and must be resubmitted.)* | | | | |
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| **4b) Delay und envisaged extension** | | | | |
| Delay | Share superior/supervisor | Share Institute | Share Faculty | Application to the Executive Board |
| month(s) | month(s) | S   month(s) | month(s) | month(s) |
|  | | | | |
| **4c) Assessment criteria** | | | | |
| 1. Is there a delay, and is the reason for the delay plausible?   yes  no | | | | |
| 1. Did the supervisors react adequately to the situation?   yes  no | | | | |
| 1. Have the Institute and the Faculty really exhausted all financial options for an extension of employment?   yes  a conditional yes  no | | | | |
| Remarks: | | | | |
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| **4d) Recommendation for the attention of the Executive Board of the University of Bern** | | | | |
| The preparatory committee’s recommendation to the Executive Board for this application is to | | | | |
| reject it  partially approve it  approve it | | | | |
| and provisionally provide funding in the amount of 0.00 personal point(s) (under the proviso of a balanced personal points budget of the Institute / the Faculty at the end of the year). | | | | |
| Remarks: | | | | |
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| **5. Decision of the Executive Board of the University of Bern**  **(To be completed by the Human Resources Office)** |
| Application for funding of employment extension approved? |
| yes  partly  no |
| Approved funds |
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1. \* insofar as they are not subject to hospital legislation [↑](#footnote-ref-1)