

**Early career researchers on fixed-term contracts in qualification positions whose research has been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions have the option of having their employment extended.**

Below, we would like to draw your attention to or remind you of the general procedure.

Due to the **restrictions imposed following the Covid-19 pandemic**, there may be delays in qualification work by early career researchers that necessitate an extension of employment. The university stipulates that in these cases, solutions should first be sought in a decentralised manner. This means that in an initial step, you should talk to your superior, supervisor, or research group leader directly. Should the two of you not be able to find a solution within your institute, your superior, supervisor, or research group leader should pass on your case to the next level in the hierarchy: your division, department, faculty, or centre. Superiors and supervisors have been instructed to do so by their individual Head of Department or their Dean's office.

**The Executive Board (Unileitung) will take subsidiary action in cases of hardship by providing supplementary measures only if absolutely necessary.** In other words, this means that the faculty management can only submit a funding application to the Executive Board if it can be sufficiently proven that no solutions could be found on any of the other institutional levels. In addition, the following points apply for:

**1) Applications with secured funding:**

- Your superior(s) or supervisor(s) initiate(s) the usual procedure should your contract require an extension.

**2) Cases where there are issues financing an extension of employment**

- The subsidiary principle applies even if there are issues financing an extension of employment. In these cases, the Executive Board provides the necessary **instrument (Erfassungsinstrument)** for the application process. This form can currently only be obtained by superiors or supervisors via their respective institute. When completed and signed, it must be submitted as a pdf file to the faculty management (Fakultätsleitung).

Should you have any further questions regarding deadline or contract extensions necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic, please contact your supervisor(s), or, if necessary, your Head of Department or Dean's office.

### Written record of restrictions and delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic

It is vital that all difficulties encountered due to the pandemic are recorded in writing even if you currently cannot or are not planning to apply for an extension of employment. Annual staff performance appraisals (MAG) are mandatory under cantonal personnel law. You can schedule an MAG or an interim MAG with your superior or supervisor at any point. Amongst others, these staff performance appraisals should be used to document any difficulties encountered due to the pandemic. We would also recommend using the MAG to review your doctoral or postdoctoral agreement.

In addition, make sure that you and your supervisor sign a doctoral or postdoctoral agreement 6 months after the beginning of your (post)doctorate at the very latest.

Should you not have had a staff performance appraisal within the last 12 months, contact your superior or supervisor even if you are currently not experiencing any funding issues. The agreement also serves as an important basis for a professional relationship between you and your superior or supervisor. Please make sure to schedule one on an annual basis in the future.

The MVUB (Association of Junior Researchers at the University of Bern) can be contacted in case you experience any difficulties regarding your employment that cannot be solved between you and your superior(s) or supervisor(s) or within the institute, department, faculty or Dean's office. You can arrange a confidential meeting by e-mailing [info@mvub.unibe.ch](mailto:info@mvub.unibe.ch).

Members of the MVUB also have access to legal advice free of charge. [Become a member here](#).

Kind regards,

For the Executive Board MVUB



*Daniela Feller*  
*Thomas Kirchner*  
Co-Präsidium MVUB

### Further important resources:

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Coronavirus: Current situation:

[https://www.unibe.ch/coronavirus/index\\_eng.html](https://www.unibe.ch/coronavirus/index_eng.html)

Coronavirus: Information about self-organisation and assistance:

[https://www.unibe.ch/coronavirus/information\\_about\\_self\\_organisation\\_and\\_assistance/index\\_eng.html](https://www.unibe.ch/coronavirus/information_about_self_organisation_and_assistance/index_eng.html)

Coronavirus: Information for researchers:

[https://www.unibe.ch/coronavirus/information\\_for\\_researchers/index\\_eng.html](https://www.unibe.ch/coronavirus/information_for_researchers/index_eng.html)

Current news for researchers from the Vice Rectorate for Research (internal, VPN required):

[www.MitteilungenForschung.unibe.ch](http://www.MitteilungenForschung.unibe.ch)

### Templates for (post)doctoral agreements:

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Doctoral agreement:

[https://www.unibe.ch/studies/programs/doctorate/doctoral\\_degree/doctoral\\_agreement/index\\_eng.html](https://www.unibe.ch/studies/programs/doctorate/doctoral_degree/doctoral_agreement/index_eng.html)

Postdocotoral agreement:

[https://intern.unibe.ch/dienstleistungen/personal/anstellungsbedingungen/anstellung/anstellungsverhaeltnis/qualifikationsfunktionen/index\\_ger.html](https://intern.unibe.ch/dienstleistungen/personal/anstellungsbedingungen/anstellung/anstellungsverhaeltnis/qualifikationsfunktionen/index_ger.html)

### Further counselling services:

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**Central administration for the promotion of early career researchers:** Matthias Hirt / Simone Rufener. Advice on planning an academic career and funding opportunities, especially at the postdoc level.

**Office for Gender Equality (AfG):** Advice on issues relating to gender equality, to work-life balance and to discrimination based on gender, physical/mental disability, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. <http://www.gleichstellung.unibe.ch/>

**Vice Rectorate (VR) Development:** Marco Hollenstein. Advice on issues encountered during the PhD (e.g. structured doctoral programme, doctoral supervision, financing of the doctorate).

### Counselling Centre Universities of Bern:

Psychological support on issues relating to crises, conflicts, personal development, career planning and professional cooperation. The consultations are confidential and free of charge.

<https://beratungsstelle.bernerhochschulen.ch/en/kontakt>