



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How much time will I spend on SCF operations/EDB projects/partner organization projects?

In the beginning, you are mostly busy with Foundation operations. After about three months, your EDB project begins and you will be spending more time on that. The internship with a local company usually takes place in spring (March/April). However, your schedule highly depends on your personal SCF projects and what projects you are working on with our partner organizations.

2. What projects will I be working on?

There are certain tasks regarding the operation of the Foundation that occur every year. In the framework of the Foundation you can define your own personal project(s), e.g. organizing a special donor event, design a new layout for our publications, develop a new (fundraising/ networking/ recruiting) strategy, etc. The projects with partner organizations very much depend on their needs and availability. In certain cases, however, you might set up a new project and work on it with them.

3. What events will I be attending?

There are various events throughout the year which can be visited, among others:

- Business Forum Events (e.g. luncheon with speakers such as the CEO of the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce) at swissnex in San Francisco
- Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce Christmas Luncheon in San Francisco
- Swiss Benevolent Society's Annual Meeting in San Francisco
- Various EDB events in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County

Depending on your priorities, you might decide to join other events in order to broaden your personal and the Foundation's network.

4. What kind of career does the fellowship prepare me for?

Our former fellows pursue careers in various industries and positions. The fellowship is designed as a broad leadership program to develop future Swiss leaders with a variety of professional skills. You learn to work independently and take on responsibility, and you will find out about your strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, spending almost a year abroad will positively influence your personality and help you grow personally.

5. Where are the former fellows now in their careers?

To find out what our alumni are doing now, have a look at the alumni profiles: [SCF alumni profiles](#)

6. What is the recruiting process like?

After handing in your application, there will first be a Skype interview with the current fellow. Four shortlisted candidates will then be invited to a personal interview in Switzerland, based upon which the next fellow will be chosen.

7. I'm an MBA student / Master student. Can I apply nonetheless?

Yes, your application is welcome. However, if you are a Master's or an MBA student/graduate, you should be aware that this is not a program that will lead you to a direct career path.



SWISS-CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION

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8. What are you looking for in a candidate?

On the one hand, it is very important that the fellow is able to work independently, professionally, possesses good organizational skills and is reliable in order to fulfill all tasks related to the general management of the Foundation. On the other, we are looking for a fellow who quickly connects well with people and has excellent communication skills. Therefore it is not just about your knowledge and grades, but very much about your personality and experiences.

9. If I spent one year in the United States already, I assume my chances are good to be accepted?

It is great that you spent one year in the United States and that you already experienced the American way of life. You probably speak English very well which definitely simplifies getting started here. You gained experience abroad and managed to adapt to a new cultural setting. However, the fact that you spent time abroad is more important to us than where you did so. Therefore, having spent a year in the United States does not significantly increase your chances compared to someone who spent a year in another region of the world.

10. I do not speak English well. Do I stand a chance?

Yes, you do have a chance. If you successfully passed English Level 2 at the University of St. Gallen you should be fine. The fellowship is an opportunity for you to improve your English and once you are immersed in a purely American environment you will do so quickly.

11. Will the SCF help me to get a job in the United States after the fellowship?

No, the SCF will not actively help you to find a job after the fellowship. However, we are convinced that the fellowship experience will help you considerably if you want to work in the United States in the future. Not only will you have experienced the American business culture, but you also have had the opportunity to build a broad network among Swiss and American business leaders. This can significantly help you when looking for a job in the United States.

12. How much is the stipend?

USD 1'500.- per month and a car is provided to the fellow (fellow pays for insurance and gas). In addition, the fellow can regularly attend lunch meetings or conferences free of charge.

13. What car will I be driving?

Currently, it is a Volvo 850, year 1997. It is not the most prestigious car, but it is well maintained and will enable you to drive safely around the Bay Area.

14. How much money do I have to spend for the car?

The insurance is approximately USD 100.- per month. How much you spend on gas depends on where you live and how much you are driving. In the United States, gas is cheaper than in Switzerland (1 gallon = 3.8l is approximately USD 3-4 USD).

15. Do I need to have a driver's license?

It is difficult to get around without a car in this region. There was a fellow who did not have a car while he was in Santa Rosa. He used his bicycle a lot. However, he had a driver's license and rented a car whenever he needed one (e.g. for attending meetings in San Francisco). Therefore, it is important to have a driver's license.



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16. How is the fellowship different from a usual internship?

The fellowship is all about the fellow. Since you manage the entire Foundation, you have a lot of responsibility and you take many decisions regarding the Foundation's operations. However, the board members and alumni advise you and certain steps have to be approved by the board. In order to give you a chance to gain insights into the local economy, you are involved in EDB projects and intern in an affiliated company. You will significantly grow personally by being exposed to an American work environment.

17. What Visa will I have to apply for?

As the next fellow, you will apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa. The visa includes health insurance and is, hence, a relatively inexpensive way of living in the United States.

18. Can I apply even if I am not Swiss?

We had various non-Swiss fellows who did an excellent job, so we are happy to accept candidates who are non-Swiss. What is important to us is that the fellow can prove that he/she connects quickly to the Swiss community in the San Francisco Bay Area as this is where we have our network. Since we exclusively recruit from the University of St. Gallen, we assume that all applicants do have some connection to Switzerland, which helps the fellow to connect to the Swiss community.

19. Do I have to have a place to stay before I arrive in Santa Rosa?

No, you do not. It is difficult to find a place when you are not in the United States. The Foundation pays for a hotel room for approximately two weeks after your arrival, this gives you time to find your apartment.

20. What happens if I do not find a room within two weeks?

There will definitely be a place for you to stay. It is not difficult to find a room in Santa Rosa and your co-workers at the EDB and the board members are happy to assist you.

21. My graduation is in September. Is the starting date of the fellowship flexible?

Ideally the Swiss fellow starts in September. However, if there is an important reason that does not allow you to start on September 1, we can find a solution.

22. Do I have to hand in my Bachelor's thesis before I start my fellowship?

If your Bachelor's thesis is the only requirement missing for you to receive your Bachelor, you can start the SCF fellowship. However, we do not recommend finishing your thesis after you started the internship as it will prevent you from truly enjoying your new environment and settling in Santa Rosa.