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# Guidelines on the Drafting of Interim and Final Reports for Leading Houses Conducting Research on Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET)

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Basis for VPET research

Within the context of federal government research, the Swiss Federal Administration supports or initiates scientific research whose findings may be used to perform its tasks. Research provides, for example, the scientific basis for policy development and design in the various policy areas. It can also be used to enforce legal requirements, respond to and implement parliamentary procedural requests, or for legislative work. Federal government research finds its legal basis in the Research and Innovation Promotion Act (RIPA) as well as in special legal provisions.<sup>1</sup>

In the policy area 'vocational and professional education and training (VPET)', research is managed and coordinated by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).<sup>2</sup> The aims of funding are set out in Article 4 of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA) and Article 2 of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Ordinance (VPETO) and are described in the document entitled, 'Vocational and professional education and training (VPET) policy area: Research strategy paper 2017-2020'<sup>3</sup>:

- Development of sustainable structures that pursue research on VPET at internationally recognised standards of scientific excellence.
- (Further) development of the Swiss VPET system through the use of VPET research findings.
- Use of knowledge gained from VPET research for evidence-based management of Swiss VPET policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal government research: [www.ressortforschung.admin.ch/rsf/de/home.html](http://www.ressortforschung.admin.ch/rsf/de/home.html)

<sup>2</sup> SERI research on VPET: <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/education/berufsbildungssteuerung-und--politik/vet-pet-research.html>

<sup>3</sup> Vocational and professional education and training (VPET) policy area: Research strategy paper 2017-2020: <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/education/berufsbildungssteuerung-und--politik/vet-pet-research.html>

## **1.2 Research funding mechanisms**

SERI uses two approaches to achieve these objectives. On the one hand, it provides funding to competence centres – referred to as ‘Leading Houses’ – linked to university professorships. These Leading Houses conduct research in a clearly defined area deemed relevant to VPET. Leading Houses also work with other university professors or higher education institutions. Leading House research funding is long-term and is intended to bring about sustainable research structures that conduct research on VPET in Switzerland. Leading Houses are tendered as required.

Moreover, research on current issues relating to VPET is subsidised by way of grants for less extensive ‘individual research projects’. Individual research projects serve as a complement to the work done by Leading Houses. Thus, they deal with VPET research topics that are not already addressed by the Leading Houses. Individual research projects may be tendered by SERI or applied for by interested researchers on a bottom-up basis.

## **1.3 Quality control**

The demands placed on the research projects funded under this programme are high. When assessing and maintaining quality, SERI is advised by the Scientific Advisory Committee for VPET Research. This body is comprised of renowned experts from various fields and scientific disciplines. New research proposals and - if a project is funded - regular reports are submitted to the Scientific Advisory Committee for review. In addition, research proposals and, if necessary, ongoing projects are submitted for international review.

## **1.4 Purpose of guidelines**

For the purpose of quality assurance, SERI regularly requires progress reports on funded projects. As a rule, these interim and final reports also serve as a prerequisite for the disbursement of further funding and are therefore examined in detail.

In order for the reporting process to run smoothly, it is important that reports satisfy a number of formal and scientific criteria. This document is intended for those responsible for a Leading House conducting research on VPET, to help them to prepare interim and final reports. This document thus provides information about the expected content of Leading House reports as well as on the report examination process.

# **2. Submission of reports**

Interim and final reports for Leading Houses provide information on the state of progress, the results achieved during the reporting period, any difficulties encountered and how to resolve them. The following information and guidelines are intended to assist researchers in writing and submitting reports.

## **2.1. Address for submissions**

Interim and final reports must be submitted to SERI in both electronic ([bbfo@sbfi.admin.ch](mailto:bbfo@sbfi.admin.ch)) and hard-copy form:

State Secretariat for Education,  
Research and Innovation SERI  
VPET Research  
Einsteinstrasse 2  
CH-3003 Bern

## 2.2. Reporting form

The 'Reporting Form for Leading Houses' is available for download on the SERI webpage for VPET research<sup>4</sup>. This reporting form should be used when submitting Leading House reports.

## 2.3. Scope and level of detail of reporting

Interim reports for Leading House research projects (excluding all appendices and enclosures) should comprise a maximum of 30 pages in front size 11 or 12 pts. The final report should be a maximum of 50 pages.

The reports should be drawn up in such detail that they are understandable without knowledge of the research application and appendices. References to appendices should be avoided and key points from the research application should be briefly reiterated in the report (questions, hypotheses, theoretical and methodological aspects, etc.).

The wording and terminology used should be chosen so that the reports can be easily understood by experts from other scientific disciplines.

## 2.4. Content

A Leading House report should contain three main sections, each of approximately the same length, although there may be exceptions to this depending on the status of the Leading House's activities.

The report should give a broad picture of the Leading House as a whole. The first section should present the organisational structure in graphic form, if available, giving an overview of the locations, the persons involved and their responsibilities, as well as presenting the sub-projects in the overall context and their relationship to each other. The Leading House's aims, theoretical and methodological aspects, recent developments during the reporting period and planned activities should be provided in greater detail.

The middle section should contain a brief presentation of the individual sub-projects, without going into any great detail. There should be a few sentences on the aims and issues to be addressed in each, plus information on the contribution that they will make to the Leading House as a whole and/or on their place in the project overall. Other than this, any further information relating to the sub-projects such as new developments and publications should only be provided in the reporting period.

The final section should focus on the other Leading House activities, i.e. support for young researchers, network formation, broad use of the research results and the establishment of the Leading House as a long-term institution.

Finally, further remarks may be provided (maximum one page).

The following information should be provided on the Reporting Form for Leading Houses:

### 1. Leading House overview

#### 1.1. Overview and organisation

*Provide in graphic form if possible:*

At which locations is the Leading House active?

Which persons are involved? Who is responsible for what?

How do the individual sub-projects fit into the overall project? How are they linked?

#### 1.2. Leading House structure

What is the overall concept of the Leading House?

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<sup>4</sup> 'Reporting Form for Leading Houses': <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/education/berufsbildungssteuerung-und--politik/vet-pet-research.html>

How has the Leading House developed during the reporting period? Which issues were addressed? Which aims were pursued?

Upon which theories and methods did the Leading House base its work?

What new findings were there in the reporting period? Which questions was the Leading House able to answer?

What are the next steps planned?

## **2. Sub-projects**

What are the aims of each sub-project?

What contribution does each sub-project make to the Leading House as a whole? How?

Have there been any new developments and/or notable publications since the last report? If so, which?

## **3. Other Leading House activities**

### **3.1. Support for young researchers**

What activities were undertaken in the reporting period to foster the careers of young researchers?

Were any new young researchers employed?

Are there any new 'Leading House alumni' since the last report? Have they remained active in the field of VPET research? Who, and where?

### **3.2. Network formation**

What national and international contacts have been formed since the last report? To what end?

### **3.3. Use of research findings**

What efforts have been made to implement the research findings since the last report? With what success?

### **3.4. Institutionalization**

What efforts have been made to establish the Leading House as an institution since the last report? With what success?

## **4. Further comments**

Any other comments?

## **5. Additional documents**

A written list of all activities in connection with the research project (publications, visits to conferences and symposiums) should be enclosed with the interim or final report. This list does not replace the report on the use of research findings, which must be submitted to SERI once the research project is complete and will subsequently be posted on SERI's VPET webpage.

Any other additional documents?

## **2.5. Enclosures**

Each report must be accompanied by an updated abstract of the Leading House's work. The length of this extract should be between 200 - 400 words. In addition to information on individual projects (objectives, research questions and results obtained), the abstract should also include information on how these projects will be brought together under the Leading House umbrella. SERI will have the abstract

translated into the national languages German, French and Italian, as well as into English. The abstracts will be posted on SERI's VPET webpage as well as on the ARAMIS information system website<sup>5</sup>.

In addition, a financial report and/or a report on the use of research findings must be submitted at contractually agreed times.

## 2.6. Submission deadline and extension of deadline

Generally speaking, the contractually agreed submission deadlines shall apply.

Because scientific evaluation of reports takes place at the meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee for VPET Research, it is usually possible to request an extension of the deadline up to at least five weeks before the next scheduled meeting. Longer deadline extensions must be contractually agreed. Researchers wishing to apply for an extension of the deadline are requested to contact SERI in good time. The dates for the meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee are posted on the SERI<sup>6</sup> website.

## 3. Reviewing of reports

After SERI receives the report, it will be examined both by SERI and members of the Scientific Advisory Committee for VPET Research. A report may be accepted without further comment or returned for revision:

### Report accepted

If the submitted report is well received, the work in the project can be continued according to plan.

If grants are contractually contingent upon acceptance of the report, an invoice may now be sent to SERI.

### Report returned for revision

If the report is returned for revision, this means that certain improvements are necessary. The letter announcing the decision made by SERI and the Scientific Advisory Committee lists the various improvements to be made.

Researchers are expected to provide SERI with a revised draft of the report (unless otherwise agreed) no later than five weeks before the next scheduled meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee for VPET Research. Text passages revised in the report must be highlighted in colour. In addition, researchers must submit a letter presenting their stance on the various objections raised and the requested improvements.

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<sup>5</sup> ARAMIS Information System on Research and Development: <https://www.aramis.admin.ch/>

<sup>6</sup> SERI Research on VPET, 'Meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee, 20xx': <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/education/berufsbildungssteuerung-und--politik/vet-pet-research.html>

## 4. Contact

The Education Management and Research Unit will gladly handle any other questions that you may have:

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