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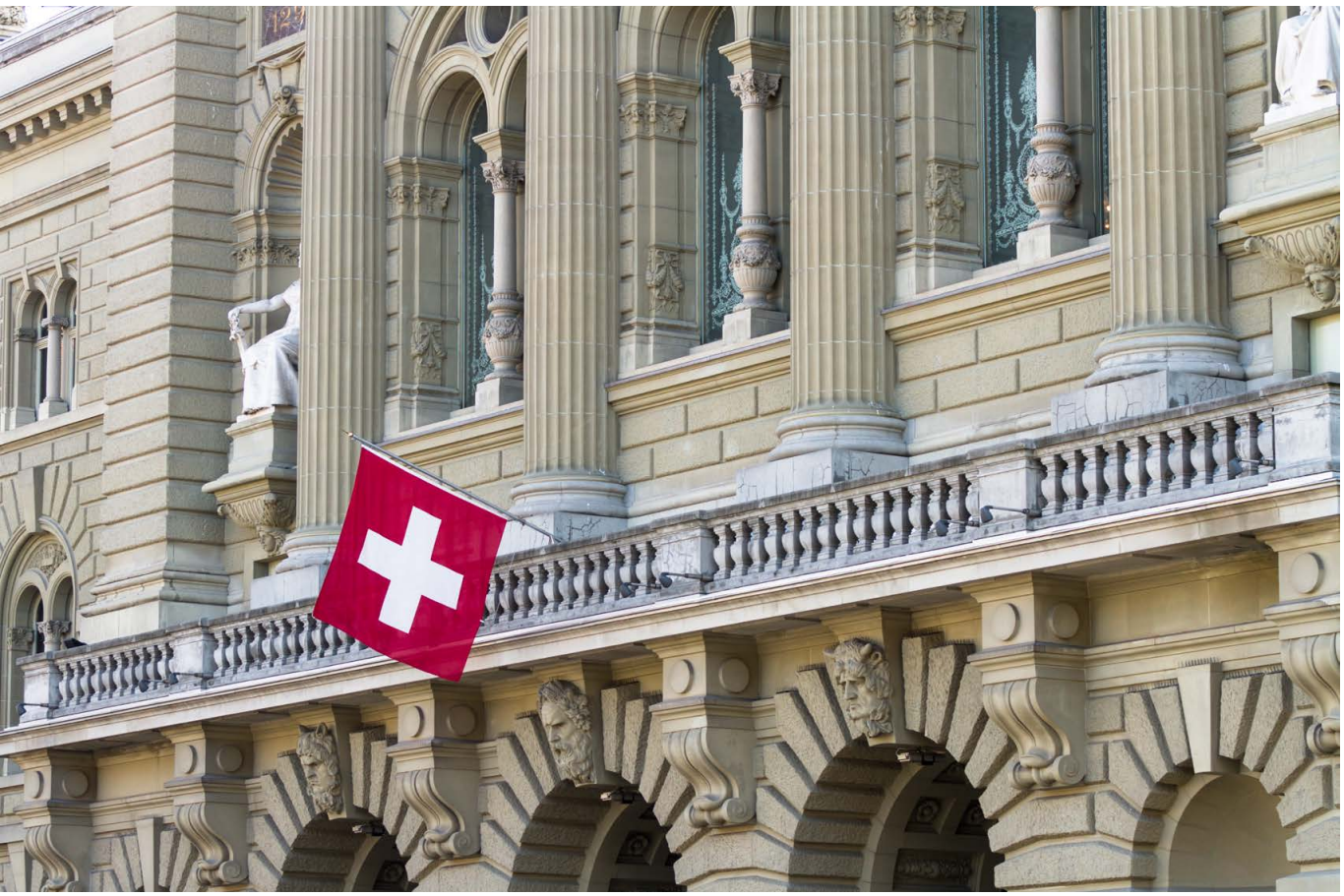
Swiss Finance Institute
Academic Partnership, Knowledge Exchange, and Faculty Guide



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1. Executive Summary

With support from its founders—the Swiss banking industry, the Swiss Confederation, and leading Swiss universities—the Swiss Finance Institute (SFI) fosters world-class research and teaching in banking and finance in Switzerland. As a result, SFI has become one of the world's top 10 research institutes in these fields. By combining this academic excellence with practical experience, SFI contributes to the strengthening of the Swiss financial center. As a foundation established pursuant to the Swiss Civil Code, SFI is subject to the supervision of the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations (Eidgenössische Stiftungsaufsicht (ESA)).

Swiss universities are publicly funded and are subject to constraints that make it hard for them to compete in the international academic market for world-class researchers in banking and finance. SFI helps them overcome this structural disadvantage with dedicated financial support and other benefits. The criteria for this support (for details, see Section 5.2 SFI Chairs) are aligned with internationally recognized standards for evaluating academic excellence similar to those applied by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the European Research Council (ERC).

SFI's governance framework upholds the highest ethical standards, safeguarding the independence of the research and teaching conducted at its partner universities and by its faculty members. Strict adherence to these principles is essential for maintaining SFI's position as a global leader in academia, and is a core priority of the Institute.

In addition to advancing research and education in banking and finance, SFI is dedicated to facilitating active knowledge exchange between its faculty and the Swiss financial industry. Through initiatives such as continuing education activities, contributions to public discussion, and the organization of conferences, SFI enables its researchers to share their expertise with experienced professionals, while practitioners in turn offer insights of value to future research.

SFI helps Swiss universities compete globally for top talent and connects leading international finance research with Switzerland's financial center. In doing so, SFI generates a vital resource: knowledge capital that helps the Swiss financial sector to position itself as a leading competence center in the global financial industry.

SFI at a glance

The Swiss Finance Institute helps Swiss universities compete globally for top talent and connects leading international finance research with Switzerland's financial center.

- **Research excellence:** one of the world's top 10 research institutes in banking and finance.
- **Academic network:** around 100 professors at SFI's partner universities are SFI faculty members, including approximately 30 SFI Junior and Senior Chairs.
- **Partner universities:**
  Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL)
  Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich)
  Università della Svizzera italiana
  University of Basel
  University of Geneva
  University of Lausanne
  University of St.Gallen
  University of Zurich
- **Talent development:** strong SFI doctoral program complemented by various Bachelor's and Master's programs in banking and finance at SFI's partner universities.
- **Knowledge exchange:** continuing education and knowledge exchange activities for several thousand experienced banking and finance professionals each year.
- **Funding model:** SFI is supported by all member institutions of the Swiss Bankers Association via a sector-wide financing model.

SFI affiliation of professors

SFI affiliation reflects a professor's relationship with SFI and SFI's academic network. It is distinct from formal university employment and from participation in SFI's industry-oriented knowledge exchange activities. Professors are appointed and employed by one of SFI's partner universities.

- **SFI faculty membership:** professors in banking and finance at partner universities may become SFI faculty members.
- **SFI Junior and Senior Chairs:** once appointed and employed by one of SFI's partner universities, SFI faculty members, or their respective partner university on their behalf, may apply for an SFI Junior or Senior Chair and receive dedicated financial support from SFI. This helps partner universities remain attractive in a highly competitive international labor market.
- **SFI Knowledge Exchange:** professors may contribute to SFI's industry-oriented continuing education formats, with such contributions being compensated separately.

2. SFI's Role and Institutional Model

SFI plays a distinctive role at the intersection of academia and the financial sector. Swiss universities are internationally respected, but their public governance structures and compensation frameworks may limit their ability to compete with leading international institutions for world-class researchers in banking and finance. As a foundation supervised by the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations (Eidgenössische Stiftungsaufsicht (ESA)), SFI helps to bridge this structural gap by providing targeted support that strengthens the international competitiveness of Swiss academic institutions while preserving their autonomy.

Importantly, the academic appointment of professors who subsequently become affiliated with SFI is the sole responsibility of the respective partner university and is governed by that university's autonomous recruitment, employment, and academic procedures. SFI's role is complementary: through specific affiliation and support arrangements, it strengthens academic excellence, university education, and doctoral training in banking and finance, while also facilitating the exchange of knowledge between research and practice.

SFI began operations in 2006 with the objective of building a top-tier faculty in banking and finance and establishing a world-class doctoral program. Over time, its activities expanded beyond research and doctoral education to include systematic knowledge exchange between academia and practice. Today, SFI contributes to Switzerland's financial center by building and mobilizing "knowledge capital": the research-based expertise, analytical capacity, and talent base that allow the Swiss financial sector to remain internationally competitive.

This knowledge capital rests on five mutually reinforcing elements:

Excellent research: internationally competitive academic research in banking and finance.

University education: high-quality Bachelor's and Master's programs in banking and finance at SFI partner universities.

Doctoral training: a strong doctoral program that develops future academic and industry top talent.

Continuing education: industry-oriented continuing education formats for experienced banking and finance professionals.

Exchange between academia and practice: active dialogue between SFI faculty members and the Swiss financial sector.

3. The SFI Academic Ecosystem

SFI's academic ecosystem is built around its Swiss partner universities, its network of affiliated faculty members, and a set of academic formats that strengthen research, teaching, doctoral education, and knowledge exchange in banking and finance across Switzerland.

The institutional relationship between SFI, its partner universities, and affiliated professors is based on a triangle of contractual arrangements. Professors are appointed and employed by the respective SFI partner universities under the terms of the applicable university employment relationship. In addition, a cooperation agreement between SFI and the partner university provides the institutional basis for a separate contractual relationship between SFI and the respective professor. This additional agreement defines the applicable forms of support available—as described in this document—while leaving the professor's primary employment relationship with the university unchanged.

SFI works with eight Swiss partner universities:

- Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL)
- Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich)
- Università della Svizzera italiana
- University of Basel
- University of Geneva
- University of Lausanne
- University of St.Gallen
- University of Zurich

These partner universities appoint and employ professors, host academic research, and provide Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral education in banking and finance. SFI complements these university-based activities by creating a national academic network that connects researchers across institutions and strengthens Switzerland's visibility as a center for banking and finance research.

Faculty expertise and visibility
SFI faculty members form the core of this academic network. Their areas of expertise, institutional affiliations, and research profiles are made visible through SFI's faculty profiles and the SFI Expertise Guide.

Cross-institutional value
The SFI academic ecosystem gives Switzerland an integrated and internationally visible research platform in banking and finance. It enables easier access to expertise across and beyond universities, strengthens collaboration within the Swiss academic banking and finance community, and helps ensure that research excellence, university education, doctoral training, and knowledge exchange are not confined to individual institutions but are embedded in a national network.

4. Benefits of SFI Faculty Membership

SFI faculty affiliation offers professors access to a national academic network, targeted financial support, enhanced international visibility, and opportunities for research dissemination and knowledge exchange. These benefits complement each professor's appointment, employment relationship, and academic responsibilities at her or his partner university.

4.1 Academic Network

SFI faculty members become part of a national academic finance network that reaches across eight Swiss partner universities.

SFI actively supports and strengthens this network through various academic formats, including research seminars, the annual SFI Research Days conference, the SFI PhD Program, academic publications and working papers, as well as research awards and distinctions. These activities foster interaction across universities, facilitate the exchange of research ideas, and strengthen the Swiss academic finance community.

Faculty members benefit from the network in several ways:

- The network facilitates **research exchange** among professors working in banking, finance, and related fields.
- It creates **opportunities for co-authorship**, doctoral supervision networks, seminar participation, and cross-university collaboration.
- Junior faculty benefit from individual mentoring, easier **integration into the Swiss academic finance community**, and structured access to senior peers.
- Senior faculty benefit from a **broad national platform, stronger institutional connectivity, and enhanced academic positioning** within Switzerland and internationally.

The network helps ensure that academic finance research in Switzerland is not confined to individual universities but is embedded in a broad national research community.

4.2 Financial Support

SFI provides targeted financial support to strengthen internationally competitive research and teaching in banking and finance at its partner universities (see Section 5 for more details).

- **SFI faculty research budget:** SFI faculty members benefit from dedicated research-related support intended to facilitate academic activity and strengthen research output within the SFI network.
- **SFI Junior and Senior Chair support:** SFI Junior and Senior Chairs receive additional financial support beyond their base compensation provided by their SFI partner university, reflecting their role in strengthening internationally competitive research and teaching at the partner universities in the SFI network.
- **Continuing education opportunities:** SFI faculty members may also contribute to SFI's industry-oriented continuing education formats, with such contributions being governed and compensated separately.

4.3 Reputation and International Standing

SFI affiliation associates professors with one of the leading institutions worldwide in banking and finance research.

- SFI provides an **internationally established platform** for academic banking and finance research conducted in Switzerland.
- Its positioning as a globally recognized research institution **strengthens the visibility** of affiliated professors and their research.
- Affiliation signals membership of a **high-quality academic environment** with internationally recognized research standards.

4.4 Visibility and Research Dissemination

SFI supports the dissemination of academic research through dedicated communication channels.

- Relevant channels include **the SFI research paper series on the SSRN and RePEc platforms**, the **SFI website, publications, events, media activities, and**—where appropriate—**social media**.
- SFI helps **make academic research more visible** to policymakers and industry professionals, and in public debate.
- Depending on the topic and context, this may include **research summaries, media commentary, opinion pieces, interviews, public discussion notes**, and **contributions at events**.

The aim is not to simplify academic work at the expense of rigor, but to make research-based insights accessible to relevant audiences beyond academia.

4.5 Access to Practice- and Policy-Relevant Expertise

SFI acts as a bridge between academic finance research and the Swiss financial sector.

- SFI enables its faculty members to **engage with banks, asset managers, regulators, central bank representatives, industry associations, and senior practitioners**.
- Such engagement is **voluntary and fully compatible with academic independence**.
- This **dialogue provides access** to relevant expertise, insight into real-world developments, and a better understanding of current challenges in the financial sector.

4.6 Career Support and Faculty Development

SFI offers its faculty members support in developing the skills and connections that complement their academic work and that help them engage effectively with different audiences and communities.

- Formats include **media training, presentation training for addressing non-academic audiences, support for public communication**, and **mentoring and networking** with senior faculty.
- For junior faculty, this can be particularly valuable in supporting integration into the SFI network, increasing **conference visibility**, and **strengthening academic career development**.
- SFI also facilitates the mentoring of junior professors by senior professors from other SFI partner universities. Mentors offer **guidance on balancing research, teaching, private life, public communication, and institutional responsibilities**.

4.7 Switzerland: Quality of Life

SFI affiliation is also embedded in the broader attractiveness of Switzerland as an ideal location in which to combine academic work with private life.

- Switzerland offers **political and economic stability, a high quality of life, strong public services, and excellent infrastructure.**
- Its education system, international connectivity, and strong financial center make it an **attractive environment for researchers** in banking and finance.
- The country's **compact geography facilitates interaction** across universities, financial centers, and public institutions.

For professors and their families, Switzerland combines strong academic opportunities with a stable, safe, and highly enjoyable living environment.

5. SFI Faculty Affiliation Categories

SFI distinguishes between three different forms of academic affiliation: SFI faculty membership, SFI Junior Chair status, and SFI Senior Chair status. All SFI-affiliated professors have SFI faculty membership. SFI Junior Chair and SFI Senior Chair appointments are determined through an academic review process by an independent advisory board. None of the affiliation categories creates any prescribed research agenda or obligations concerning teaching content or industry-sponsored activities with regard to SFI.

5.1 SFI Faculty Membership

Purpose
SFI faculty membership connects professors in banking and finance at SFI partner universities to SFI's national academic network and gives visibility to their research activities within the broader Swiss finance research community.

Eligibility
SFI faculty membership is open to professors in banking and finance at SFI partner universities.

Admission, Withdrawal, and Assessment
Admission is possible at any time. Withdrawal from SFI faculty membership is also possible at any time. No academic quality review process is required for this category.

Financial Support
SFI faculty members may receive an annual personal research budget of up to CHF 2'000. This budget may be used for eligible research-related expenses such as conference travel, databases, software licenses, or similar purposes.

Academic Freedom
SFI Faculty Members have no prescribed research agenda or obligations concerning teaching content or industry-sponsored activities. In addition, SFI has no influence over the academic conclusions of its faculty. Academic work remains governed by the standards of independent university research and teaching established by the respective partner universities at which SFI faculty are employed. All SFI faculty adhere to the *SFI Guiding Principles of Research Integrity and Conflicts of Interest*.

Transparency and Reporting
SFI faculty members are expected to disclose their SFI affiliation openly (e.g., in publications, on university and personal websites, in conference materials, and in other relevant professional communications). Where applicable, double affiliation with the partner university and SFI should be used. Beyond this, faculty members are asked to annually provide information regarding their research activities for the purposes of SFI activity reporting.

5.2 SFI Chairs

Purpose
SFI Junior and Senior Chairs are reserved for internationally competitive professors in banking and finance at SFI partner universities. SFI provides dedicated financial support to help partner universities remain attractive to outstanding researchers, thereby strengthening Switzerland's international competitiveness in academic finance research and teaching.

Eligibility
SFI Junior Chairs: tenure-track assistant professors or newly appointed associate professors in banking and finance at SFI partner universities.

SFI Senior Chairs: associate or full professors in banking and finance at SFI partner universities.

Admission, Withdrawal, and Assessment
SFI Chair status is subject to review by an independent advisory board composed of internationally renowned professors in banking and finance—the SFI Scientific Council (see Section 8.3). Assessment is based on the quality criteria outlined in the SFI Scientific Council Guidelines, which are consistent with established academic practice and with internationally recognized standards for the evaluation of academic research quality, comparable to those applied by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the European Research Council (ERC). The SFI Scientific Council, in its case-by-case examination, looks at all the dimensions of researchers' performance and supports the principles of the Declaration on Research Assessment.

SFI Senior Chairs are reserved for individuals who have already established an international reputation in banking and finance. A Senior Chair is awarded for a term of five years, renewable upon the recommendation of the SFI Scientific Council. In addition to a record of finance articles in leading journals, or exceptional impact via other journals or in the form of books, the holistic review conducted by the Scientific Council must also establish that the candidate has achieved an international reputation and has significant impact on the field.

For SFI Junior Chairs, the review focuses on the candidate's growing international standing, research potential, and emerging research impact. A Junior Chair is awarded for a term of three years, renewable once upon the recommendation of the SFI Scientific Council. Junior Chairs are expected to be developing a record of finance articles in leading journals or to be making an important impact via other journals, and to have a growing international reputation and be making an increasing impact on the field.

Where relevant, review periods may be extended by 18 months for maternity-related reasons, in line with the principles applied by leading international research funding institutions such as the ERC.

Chairs can withdraw from their Chair status at any time.

Holding an SFI Chair requires an appointment at an SFI partner university. Accordingly, Chair status automatically ceases if the appointment at the partner university ends. Decisions concerning the continuation or termination of such an appointment are the exclusive responsibility of the respective partner university.

Financial Support
SFI Junior and Senior Chairs receive an annual salary supplement of up to CHF 50'000 beyond the base compensation provided by the SFI partner university.

Academic Freedom
SFI Chairs have no prescribed research agenda or obligations concerning teaching content or industry-sponsored activities. In addition, SFI has no influence over the academic conclusions of its faculty. Academic work remains governed by the standards of independent university research and teaching established by the respective partner universities at which SFI faculty are employed. All SFI faculty adhere to the SFI Guiding Principles of Research Integrity and Conflicts of Interest.

Transparency and Reporting
SFI Chairs are expected to disclose their SFI affiliation openly (e.g., in publications, on university and personal websites, in conference materials, and in other relevant professional communications). Where applicable, double affiliation with the partner university and SFI should be used. Beyond this, SFI Chairs are asked to annually provide information regarding their research activities for the purposes of SFI activity reporting.

5.3 Comparison table: SFI Faculty affiliation categories

	SFI Faculty Member	SFI Junior Chair	SFI Senior Chair
SFI Partner University appointment	Required		
Field of research	Banking and finance		
Eligibility	Professors in banking and finance	Tenure-track assistant professors or newly appointed associate professors in banking and finance	Associate or full professors in banking and finance
Admission	Admission and withdrawal possible at any time	Appointment[1] and renewal are subject to review by the independent SFI Scientific Council	
SFI appointment criteria	None	Growing international standing, research potential, and emerging research impact	Established international standing, research impact, and sustained academic contribution
Assessment	None	The SFI Scientific Council Guidelines, based on internationally recognized standards including the principles of the Declaration on Research Assessment	
Term	None	Three years for Junior Chairs; five years for Senior Chairs. Where relevant, review periods may be extended for maternity-related reasons, in line with principles applied by leading international research funding institutions such as the ERC	
Financial support	Up to CHF 2'000 per year for eligible research-related expenses.	Salary supplement of up to CHF 50'000 per year with potential additional compensation of up to CHF 50'000 per year for industry-oriented Knowledge Exchange activities (see Section 6).	
Teaching obligations with regard to SFI	None		
Academic freedom	Fully ensured		
Transparency and reporting	Open disclosure of SFI affiliation, use of double affiliation where applicable, and annual information on research activities for the purposes of SFI activity reporting		

1) The Scientific Council may, at the request of partner universities, evaluate candidates for an SFI chair as early as the application stage. The SFI chair decision is, in this case, confirmed to the partner university before the formal appointment.

6. Knowledge Exchange Activities

SFI's Knowledge Exchange activities create structured interaction between SFI faculty members and experienced professionals from the Swiss banking and finance sector. They are designed to bring research-based insights into dialogue with practice. These exchanges can also generate insights of value to future research while preserving academic independence and ensuring that faculty members' participation is an opportunity, not an obligation.

6.1 SFI Knowledge Exchange Formats

Knowledge exchange activities complement SFI's academic mission by making research-based knowledge accessible to experienced banking and finance professionals as well as other relevant audiences.

Key formats include:

- **SFI Master Classes:** compact, research-based continuing education formats for experienced banking and finance professionals. They typically combine academic rigor with practical relevance and are developed and delivered by SFI faculty members and senior practitioners.
- **SFI Knowledge Exchange Seminars:** smaller, focused, invitation-only roundtable formats that allow for in-depth discussion between academics and selected practitioners on specific current issues.
- **Conferences and public events:** larger formats that bring together academics, senior industry representatives, policymakers, regulators, and other stakeholders to discuss topics of broad relevance to the Swiss financial center.
- **Practitioner-oriented publications:** formats such as SFI Public Discussion Notes and SFI Roundups, which translate academic insights into accessible contributions to professional and public debate.

6.2 What Knowledge Exchange Offers to Faculty

For SFI faculty members, knowledge exchange activities provide an additional channel through which academic insights can reach a high-level professional audience, while also enabling them to benefit from the experience, perspectives, and practical insights of industry professionals.

This offers:

- the opportunity to communicate research insights to senior practitioners;
- direct exposure to questions, developments, and challenges in the financial sector;
- professional visibility beyond academia;
- potential feedback loops for future research ideas;
- access to a high-level Swiss banking and finance audience;
- financial compensation for the time and effort required to develop and deliver knowledge exchange activities.

6.3 Financial and Contractual Aspects

Professors participating in SFI Knowledge Exchange activities receive compensation of up to CHF 50'000 per year. This compensation reflects the time and effort required to develop, prepare, and deliver such activities.

Topics are selected based on relevance for the financial sector and in coordination with participating professors. SFI may help identify themes of practical importance, structure the format, and ensure that the activity reaches the appropriate audience. However, SFI does not influence the specific academic content or the interpretations or messages conveyed by the participating professors.

SFI faculty membership, with or without SFI Chair status, entails no obligation to participate in knowledge exchange activities. Any such participation comes without any research obligation, teaching-content obligation, or prescribed agenda with regard to SFI.

6.4 Further Information on Knowledge Exchange Activities

The breadth of SFI Knowledge Exchange activities is reflected in the Institute's current and recent Master Classes, industry-oriented publications, and conferences, which cover both long-standing finance topics and rapidly evolving developments. Further information and examples are available on the SFI website, including information on SFI Master Classes and industry-oriented publications.

7. The SFI PhD Program and Academic Talent Pipeline

The SFI PhD Program is a central element of SFI's academic mission and of its contribution to the long-term development of banking and finance research in Switzerland. It is designed to attract highly qualified doctoral candidates and to provide them with an academic environment at the level of leading PhD programs worldwide.

The program is centrally coordinated by SFI and operates across multiple campuses at SFI partner universities. Academic admission, supervision, employment arrangements, and degree-awarding responsibilities remain anchored in the respective universities, while SFI supports the national structure of the program and strengthens interaction across campuses.

The SFI PhD Program follows a two-phase structure:

- **First phase:** intensive coursework in finance and related fields, providing PhD students with the conceptual and methodological foundations required for high-quality research.
- **Second phase:** advanced study and dissertation writing, during which candidates select a thesis topic, work with a supervisor, and participate in research activities at their academic partner institution.

SFI supports doctoral education by facilitating collective academic formats across the national network. These include shared PhD-level courses, advanced doctoral courses, the presentation and discussion of research at the SFI Research Days (SFI's annual academic conference), and interaction with doctoral students and faculty members from other Swiss universities. This cross-institutional structure strengthens the doctoral training environment and gives PhD candidates access to a broader academic community than would be available at a single institution.

In addition, SFI PhD candidates may apply for financial support of up to CHF 1'500 per year to cover eligible expenses related to conference travel and academic job-market activities. This support helps doctoral students present their research internationally, build professional networks, and prepare for the next stage of their careers.

For SFI faculty members, the PhD Program offers several benefits:

- access to strong doctoral talent;
- opportunities for teaching and supervision within a national research network;
- close interaction with doctoral students across partner universities;
- the chance to contribute to the next generation of finance academics and industry professionals.

The SFI PhD Program therefore serves not only as a doctoral education platform, but also as an academic talent pipeline for Switzerland. It strengthens the research community, supports the development of future faculty members and research-oriented professionals, and contributes to the long-term international competitiveness of Swiss banking and finance research.

8. Governance, Independence, and Academic Freedom

SFI's role as a public–private academic institution is grounded in the principle that robust governance and full academic and intellectual freedom are of utmost importance. Its governance framework is therefore designed to ensure strategic oversight, institutional transparency, and academic quality, while unequivocally safeguarding the independence of research and teaching through clearly defined structures and the highest academic and ethical standards.

8.1 Governance Principles

SFI's governance framework is designed to support internationally competitive research, teaching, doctoral education, and knowledge exchange while preserving the autonomy of partner universities and the academic independence of affiliated professors.

As outlined in this document, the key governance principles are:

- SFI activities are subject to clearly defined governance structures and the highest academic and ethical standards;
- SFI does not influence the content of faculty research or teaching;
- cooperation with partner universities is governed by formal agreements;
- partner universities retain full autonomy with regard to their recruitment, employment, academic governance, and degree-awarding responsibilities;
- SFI's activities reflect diversity and equal-opportunity principles, supporting an inclusive and internationally competitive academic environment;
- SFI support is designed to strengthen internationally competitive research and teaching, not to shape academic conclusions.

8.2 Foundation Board

The SFI Foundation Board is the Institute's main governing body. It includes representatives of SFI's founding members and academic partner universities and provides institutional oversight of the Foundation's activities.

Its role includes:

- strategic oversight of SFI's development and positioning;
- institutional governance and supervision of SFI's activities;
- fiduciary responsibility for the Foundation;
- safeguarding SFI's statutory purpose;
- ensuring that SFI remains appropriately connected to its private and public stakeholders.

8.3 Scientific Council

The SFI Scientific Council is an independent committee composed of internationally renowned professors in banking and finance. It advises the Foundation Board on scientific matters and plays a central role in safeguarding academic quality.

Its role includes:

- advising on scientific and academic matters;
- ensuring the application of internationally recognized academic quality standards in the context of Foundation Board decisions on SFI Chair appointments;
- assessing academic excellence in Chair-related matters;
- providing external academic legitimacy;
- safeguarding the quality standards applied to SFI's academic activities.

8.4 Sounding Board

SFI's Knowledge Exchange activities benefit from structured input from a sounding board of experienced representatives of the Swiss banking and finance sector.

Its role includes the provision of:

- input on topics for SFI Knowledge Exchange activities;
- observations on banking-industry trends;
- recommendations for promoting SFI Knowledge Exchange activities within banks;
- feedback on SFI Knowledge Exchange formats that have already been conducted.

8.5 Management Board

The SFI Management Board is responsible for the operational management of the Institute and for implementing the strategic direction and decisions of the Foundation Board. It coordinates SFI's activities across its different areas and ensures effective and efficient day-to-day operations.

Its role includes:

- implementing the strategy and decisions of the Foundation Board;
- overseeing SFI's day-to-day management and internal coordination;
- ensuring the effective management of SFI's financial, human, and operational resources;
- coordinating activities and interfaces across SFI's academic, knowledge exchange, and corporate functions;
- ensuring that SFI's activities are conducted in accordance with applicable governance requirements, internal policies, and Foundation Board decisions.

8.6 Intellectual Freedom

SFI's model is based on supporting academic excellence without influencing academic content.

The core principles are:

- SFI does not prescribe research topics;
- SFI does not influence research findings;
- SFI does not influence teaching content;
- professors retain full academic independence through their university appointments;
- academic work remains governed by the standards, procedures, and integrity rules of the respective partner universities.

As outlined in this document, SFI support creates no obligation to conduct industry-sponsored research. No alignment with the views of banks or with those of the Institute's sponsors or other stakeholders is required. Publication rights are not limited. There is no interference with university appointment procedures or academic governance.

8.7 Integrity and Ethical Standards

SFI support is based on academic quality, institutional transparency, and respect for scientific integrity. It is designed to strengthen internationally competitive research and teaching, not to shape academic conclusions. Consequently, the SFI governance framework establishes clearly defined standards, formal agreements with partner universities, SFI-affiliation disclosure expectations, and supports the principles of the Declaration on Research Assessment.

As outlined in this document, relevant elements include:

- SFI's governance framework and formal agreements with partner universities;
- rules on scientific integrity and academic conduct;
- transparent disclosure of SFI affiliation where applicable;
- annual activity reporting for institutional transparency;
- alignment with internationally recognized academic quality standards;
- endorsement of the principles of the Declaration on Research Assessment;
- support of the overarching objectives of swissuniversities as articulated both in its P-7 program on "equal opportunities and university development" and in the associated framework ("Orientierungsrahmen").

9. Transparency, Disclosure, and Reporting

Transparency is an essential element of SFI's institutional model. Because SFI operates at the interface of universities, academic research, and the financial sector, clear disclosure, formal reporting, and accessible information on the institute's governance framework are important for maintaining trust and safeguarding academic independence. As a foundation established pursuant to the Swiss Civil Code, SFI is subject to the supervision of the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations (Eidgenössische Stiftungsaufsicht (ESA)).

9.1 Disclosure of SFI Affiliation

Professors affiliated with SFI are expected to disclose their SFI affiliation openly and consistently where relevant. This applies in particular to:

- scientific publications,
- public reports and policy-oriented publications,
- university profile pages,
- public appearances, media contributions, and event materials where such affiliation is relevant.

Where applicable, professors should use a double affiliation referring to both their SFI partner university and to SFI. This ensures that the university appointment remains clearly visible, while also making the SFI affiliation transparent.

9.2 Annual Reporting

SFI faculty members and SFI Chairs are asked to provide information on their research activities and academic output for institutional reporting purposes (publications, conferences, doctoral supervision and teaching, contributions to SFI academic and knowledge exchange activities and communication to the public).

Such information supports SFI's Activity Reports and helps document the Institute's contribution to research, teaching, doctoral education, and knowledge exchange in banking and finance.

9.3 Treatment of Financial Support

Financial support linked to SFI affiliation is governed by transparent arrangements and by formal agreements with SFI's partner universities (see Section 5). This includes research budgets, Chair-related compensation, and compensation for knowledge exchange activities.

The treatment of such support follows the partner university's applicable rules, disclosure standards, and internal compliance requirements. The purpose of such transparency is to make the institutional framework clear while ensuring that SFI support remains compatible with university autonomy and academic independence.

9.4 Access to Governance Information

Relevant information on SFI's governance, activities, and institutional framework is made accessible through appropriate channels.

These include:

- SFI Activity Reports,
- the governance page on the SFI website,
- publicly available information on SFI's bodies and governance structures,
- information on partner-university cooperation and formal agreements in accordance with applicable law, in particular the Federal Act on Freedom of Information in the Administration,
- responses to media inquiries.

Transparent reporting and accessible governance information help demonstrate that SFI support is based on academic quality, institutional clarity, and respect for university autonomy, and that it is provided in line with the Institute's statutory purpose.

10. Switzerland, the Swiss Financial Center, and Academic Opportunity

Switzerland offers a distinctive environment for academic work in banking and finance. Its public universities are internationally respected, its research institutions are embedded in a high-quality education system, and its financial center has global relevance across banking, asset management, insurance, Fintech, regulation, and international financial institutions.

This combination creates a particularly strong setting for researchers whose work connects rigorous academic analysis with questions of practical, policy, or societal importance. Switzerland's financial sector is sufficiently concentrated to allow meaningful interaction among academics, practitioners, regulators, and public institutions, while remaining internationally connected and exposed to global developments.

For professors in banking and finance, this environment offers several advantages:

- access to strong academic institutions;
- proximity to a globally relevant financial center;
- interaction with banks, asset managers, insurance companies, Fintechs, regulators, and international institutions;
- an international professional environment;
- reliable infrastructure enabling seamless connectivity between universities and financial centers;
- a high quality of life, supported by stability, safety, public services, and a strong education system.

Switzerland's compact geography is also relevant from an academic perspective. It facilitates interaction across universities, financial centers, public institutions, and professional networks, making it easier to build bridges between research, teaching, doctoral education, and financial-sector expertise.

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Swiss Finance Institute
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