

Doctorate scholarships

Many different foundations grant scholarships to doctoral candidates. The application procedures vary widely from one foundation or educational programme to another. For some general information on applying for a grant, click [here](#).

Most scholarships are given out by one of the [13 organisations for the promotion of young talent](#) in Germany. The federal state of Thuringia finances state [graduate scholarships](#) for doctoral candidates at Friedrich Schiller University Jena. The GA organises the granting of these scholarships. Apart from these scholarships, which are independent of a scientific discipline, there are also a number of [scholarships for specific disciplines](#). We recommend the 'mystipendium' database to German students for a search on available grants and the 'euraxess' database to international doctoral candidates. Click [here](#) for more databases to search through.

General information on applying for a grant

The requirements for grant applications vary widely depending on the awarding organisation. However, the application process and required paperwork, such as the research proposal, are quite similar. Applications from international doctoral candidates vary in terms of the required profiles.

Key steps to a grant

Developing your individual financing strategy takes several steps. First of all, you should conduct in-depth research on potential funding organisations. After clarifying what your chances of obtaining a grant from them are, make your personal selection. This is where the actual application process begins. Usually, applicants go through a selection procedure with several steps. First, you will need to put together your application documents. Pre-selection of candidates based on these documents is often followed by selection through an oral interview.

1. Researching the sponsoring organisations

There are a number of [grant databases](#) that you can use for targeted search on organisations that may fund your individual doctorate project. You can filter the organisations according to their application requirements.

2. Clarifying your chances of obtaining a grant

Take a careful look at your pre-selection of potential funding organisations and read through the application requirements of foundations that are of interest to you in detail. The Graduate Academy can provide you with information on scholarships according to the Thuringian Higher Education Act ([Landesgraduiertenstipendien](#)). Moreover, the FSU's liaison professors can advise you on the profiles of the 13 [Organisations for the Promotion of Young Talent](#) in Germany. Rather than spreading your applications arbitrarily across all the well-known foundations, it is advisable to prioritise applications and send them to foundations the profile of which matches yours.

3. Make your personal selection

Get an expert feedback on the foundations you have selected (e.g. on your "Top 5"). Your supervising professor or, if applicable, the coordinators of the structured doctorate programmes at Friedrich Schiller University will support you.

4. The application documents

Every foundation has its own requirements. As a rule, requirements include a motivation letter, CV, university degree certificate as well as a [research proposal](#) and [two letters of recommendation](#) from associate professors. Decision makers in the selection process wish to find out whether you meet the personal criteria for successfully completing a doctoral degree - in other words, whether you will have the persistence to finalise a dissertation. The dissertation project described in the research proposal will also be scrutinised. The research proposal will be read by established scientists in your field of research who can judge both its relevance for research and its feasibility. Consequently it makes sense to discuss the contents of your synopsis with your supervisor.

5. Preparing for an oral interview (if applicable)

The document-based pre-selection process is often followed by oral interviews. Depending on the foundation, this part of the application process can range from a single personal interview to an assessment centre with group discussions and an individual presentation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Here you can find answers to the most frequently asked questions about the process of applying for a scholarship.

What is a statement of purpose/letter of motivation?

A statement of purpose or letter of motivation is an important part of every application. When you are applying for a scholarship for your PhD, the decision committee tries to find out who has the dedication necessary in order to successfully complete a multi-year time to degree. In addition, the committee also checks if the applicant is the right person to receive a scholarship. In other words, does your personal profile fit the appropriate profile of the foundation?

In your statement of purpose or letter of motivation, include information about

- Why you are seeking to do a doctorate,
- What your personal strengths are,
- And why this is the appropriate scholarship for you.

What is an exposé?

An exposé is a summary of your plans for your PhD. It is generally between five and 12 pages long. In your exposé, you should define the major questions that will be addressed in your dissertation as well as the goals of your dissertation. You should address the current state of research, summarise any results you may have, and explain your planned methodology. Some foundations and funding institutions would also like to see your timeline for research (Work plan and timetable).

The exposé is an important part of a scholarship application. It will be read by established scholars who will evaluate the relevance of your project as well as its feasibility. You should try to be as elaborate and precise as possible when writing your exposé. Discuss the content of your exposé with your supervisor, and pay attention to the rules of good scientific practice.

How definite is your work plan and timetable?

Your work plan and timetable present your envisaged steps of your dissertation in the form of a table, from its state today all the way to its conclusion. Your plan should clearly show that your PhD can be completed within the limited time period of two to three years. Individual stages of your work can be based on the rough outline of your dissertation. It is a natural part of research to change or re-work your dissertation topic. The most important part is that the committee considers your work plan and timetable to be realistic and coherent.

How do I get a letter of recommendation from an instructor/professor?

Most scholarship programmes require a letter of recommendation from one or two university instructors. The first letter of recommendation should be from your future supervisor. The second letter of recommendation should be from a university instructor of your choice.

Many professors are prepared to write a letter of recommendation for their PhD students. Some would like your support in the matter. The best thing to do is ask if you can help your recommender with his or her work, be it sending your recommender a copy of your CV and diplomas or providing input in the form of starting points.

It is usually not possible to see the finished letter of recommendation, because many foundations request that the letter of recommendation is sent directly to them.

How do I find a supervisor?

At the beginning of your doctorate, you will need to find a supervisor. There is no central application process for a PhD at German universities.

There are many ways to find a supervisor for your PhD (also see Ways to your PhD):

- A university instructor from your faculty offers a doctoral position (such as a job as an academic employee/teaching and research assistant in either a university-funded or a third-party funded job, or as a PhD student within a structured PhD programme): You apply for PhD positions just as you would for other jobs. When applying for a doctoral position within the framework of a structured PhD programme, please pay attention to the appropriate procedure for the programme.
- You plan to finance your PhD yourself (such as via a scholarship) and need a supervisor for your dissertation: contact the appropriate instructors and heads of junior research groups. Don't be shy; ask about making a personal appointment.

What is a "Bildungsinländer" (academic national)? What is a "Bildungsausländer" (foreign student)?

When applying for a scholarship, there are usually different application requirements for academic nationals and foreign students.

You are considered to be an academic national if you received your university entrance qualification in Germany or at a German school in a different country, no matter what your nationality is. If you received this qualification at a non-German educational institution, you are considered a foreign student.

When can I begin to apply for a PhD scholarship?

The rules for this vary depending on the organisation offering the scholarship. Typically, you will need a copy of your university diploma in order to apply for a doctoral scholarship. Formal acceptance by the university is usually not necessary. However, you will need to have a supervisor who will write you a letter of recommendation and also help you with your exposé.

How long does the application process last?

The length of the application process is dependent on many different factors. One important factor is the date of application: Some scholarship providers have set application deadlines. Other organisations will accept applications at any time. After that, there is the process of review and the selection of candidates. The selection process typically lasts between three and six months.

Landesgraduierstipendien

The FSU annually awards scholarships, so called Landesgraduierstipendien, funded by the State of Thuringia. The funding period of these scholarships is three years, you can apply for an extension for one year. Further extensions are possible: for child care, care for close relatives, in case of chronic diseases and disability. As of 2020, the scholarship is 1400,- EUR per month and (if applicable) extra payments for child care.

The Landesgraduierstipendien are announced once a year in summer. The scholarship is paid from the beginning of the following year. The number of scholarships granted varies from year to year - in recent years, it was about 10-12 each year. From 2019 on, less scholarships may be given due to the extension of the funding period and the increase of the scholarship money.

Click [here](#) to view the announcement of 2020. The application deadline is 30 September 2020. Earliest start of funding is 1 January 2021. More general information, information on the legal framework and grant procedure is contained in the Thuringian Act on State Scholarships, the [Thuringian Landesgraduierstipendienförderungsverordnung](#) and in the [Thuringian Higher Education Act](#) (both in German).

How to apply

Applications are submitted online. Application deadline is 30 September 2020. Please add these documents to your online application (upload as pdf at the application website):

1. CV (with photo)
2. Exposé of your PhD project, containing the aims, their derivation and reasons, current research, methods, the schedule of your project and relevant literature (5-10 pages without the bibliography), Arial 11pt, line pitch 1.5
3. abstract of the written exam paper (if applicable) on 2 - 3 pages
4. scan of your university degree (with transcripts)

Further parts of your application:

- a confidential reference by your supervisor ([German/English](#)), containing information about the PhD project and the personal and scientific qualification of the applicant. Please ask your supervisor to submit the form directly to .
- a confidential, formless reference by a second professor. Please ask the professor to submit the form directly to .

Links & Downloads

- [Application portal](#)
- Form for supervisors ([German/English](#))
- [Landesgraduiertenförderungsverordnung](#) (in German)

Assessment procedure

The assessment of candidates has two steps. Firstly, applications will be evaluated by the respective faculties. Depending on the faculty, an awards commission is appointed, independent assessments are requested or hearings are conducted. Then, the scholarships are awarded by a commission of the university senate. Members of this commission are the non-student members of the senate's research committee and the representative for equal opportunities. The awarding commission is headed by the Vice-President for young researchers and diversity management.

Frequently asked questions

How many scholarships will be awarded?

The number of scholarships granted varies from year to year - in recent years, it was about 10-12 each year. Each faculty can grant 1-2 scholarships.

What are my chances?

The number of applications varies from faculty to faculty. Based on experience, more applications are submitted for the social sciences and humanities than for the natural sciences. However, a small number of applications does not guarantee that you will receive a scholarship - the quality of the individual application is decisive.

What are the evaluation criteria?

The three essential criteria for scholarships are: excellent grades, a short study duration, and a high-quality exposé.

I have studied longer than the normal period. Is this a problem?

Carrying out your studies in a timely manner is a prerequisite for obtaining a Landesgraduierten-Stipendium. However, if you did study longer, you should clearly state the reasons for that (e.g. in your application, curriculum vitae, or an additional explanation).

I have applied before. Can I reapply?

It is possible to reapply. However, the new application - especially the exposé - should indicate the further development of your dissertation project.

Who decides on the allocation?

The allocation process involves a two-step assessment of the candidates. Firstly, applications will be evaluated by the respective faculties. Depending on the faculty, an awards commission is appointed, independent assessments are requested or hearings are conducted. For further information please contact your dean's office.

Then, the scholarships are awarded by a commission of the university senate. Members of this commission are the non-student members of the senate's committee for young researchers, the representative for equal opportunities and the diversity officer. The awarding commission is headed by the Vice-President for young researchers and diversity management.

Who can be a supervisor?

Appointed or habilitated faculty members of the University of Jena (e.g. professors, assistant professors, and associate professors) as well as the heads of junior research groups (e.g. Emmy Noether groups) may be supervisors. Simply having a doctoral degree is not enough to supervise a doctoral candidate.

What is a reference letter? Who can write one?

Reference letters should focus on your character and academic qualifications - your planned dissertation project is secondary. The person writing the letter should therefore know you personally and be able to assess your previous academic achievements. The letter can be submitted by someone from the University of Jena or another university.

I do not have a degree certificate yet. Can I apply anyway?

Yes, If you cannot provide your degree certificate until application deadline, you may submit a transcript of records and a confirmation by the reviewer about acceptance and rating (final mark) of your master thesis. Please note: The degree certificate must be submitted until the final meeting of the awarding commission, otherwise your application cannot be considered.

What should be included in the exposé?

The exposé should: describe the issue (including derivation and justification), the current state of research, the methodological implementation, and the planned timing. It should also cite any relevant literature.

What form should the exposé have?

The exposé should be 5-10 pages long (excluding bibliography). Please use 11-point Arial with 1.5-spaced lines.

I was not required to submit a thesis during my previous studies. What should I submit instead?

If your studies did not include a thesis, you can submit a summary of a seminar paper.

When will I find out if I get a scholarship?

You will receive a written notification in early december. Please do not enquire earlier than this.

When will the funding start?

The first scholarship payment will be made in January.

Is there any support for families?

Yes. Scholarship holders will receive since 2017 a monthly family allowance of € 300 for one dependent child and €150 for each additional dependent child.

Information for current scholarship-holders

Support of research stays abroad

To realise research projects in foreign countries, the DAAD supports scholarship holders with an additional fund. The funding includes an increase to your existing scholarship, a onetime travel grant, research and conference costs as

well as insurance costs. You can also apply for other costs e.g. tuition fees. The funding can be granted for research stays abroad lasting at least 30 days up to 12 months. Applications must be submitted at least 8 weeks before the start of the stay abroad.

Further information (in German)

Annual progress report

Scholarship holders have to submit an annual progress report. This report shall give an overview of the contents and progress of work over time so far. It also has to include a project map and schedule for the entire doctoral project. Moreover, the supervisor has to submit a statement concerning this matter directly to Graduate Academy.

Content of the progress report and sample (as a docx)

Final report

At the end of the scholarship period, the holder must present a final report. If the scholarship runs out before the dissertation has been handed in, the supervisor must provide an opinion on the final report.

Content of the final report and sample

Organisations for the promotion of young talent

There are 13 Organisations for the Promotion of Young Talent (Begabtenförderungswerke) in Germany, which grant scholarships for doctoral candidates. They are financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The different organisations are close to different German political parties, churches or social partners. They differ from each other in the way they select their grant holders, and in the ideals they promote and ways of promoting them. The amount of financial support is the same among all 13 organisations, but it varies according to the individual applicant's situation.

For an overview on the similarities and differences of the 13 major German Organisations for the Promotion of Young Talent see <http://www.stipendiumplus.de>. The internet portal informs about requirements and performances of the individual institutions, about procedures of the application as well as about specific offers for particular target groups.

Every Organisation for the Promotion of Young Talent has liaison professors at the different German universities. Here is a list with the liaison professors of the funding bodies at Friedrich Schiller University Jena.

Currently, there exist the following 13 organisations in Germany:

Independent organisation

- Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes
Applications are possible at any time on a proposal by a professor.

Politically associated organisations

- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
(certificate of German language proficiency required) Applications are possible at any time.
- Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung
Application deadline 30 Apr and 31 Oct
- Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung
(German Citizens and *Bildungsinländer** only) Application deadline 15 Jan and 15 July
- Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung
(certificate of German language proficiency required) Application deadline 1 March and 1 Sept
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
(certificate of German language proficiency required) Application deadline 15 Jan and 15 July
- Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung
(certificate of German language proficiency required) Application deadline 15 Apr and 15 Oct

* You are considered to be an academic national ("Bildungsinländer") if you received your university entrance qualification in Germany or at a German school in a different country, no matter what your nationality is. If you received this qualification at a non-German educational institution, you are considered a foreign student ("Bildungsausländer").

Organisations supported by social partners

- Hans-Böckler-Stiftung
Applicant deadline 1 February, 1 June, 1 October
- Stiftung der deutschen Wirtschaft
Application deadline 8 January, 16 April, 27 August

Denomination-based organisations

- Avicenna-Studienwerk - Promotion of Muslim doctoral candidates with German citizenship
Application deadline: 1 Apr and 1 Oct (other deadlines are to be announced) (EU-citizens with German language skills (Level C1/DHS-3) and *Bildungsinländer** only)
- Cusanuswerk - Bischöfliche Studienförderung
Application deadline 3 January, 18 July (EU-citizens and *Bildungsinländer** only)
- Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich-Studienwerk - Promotion of Jewish doctoral candidates
Applications are possible at any time (EU-citizens and *Bildungsinländer** only)
- Evangelisches Studienwerk e.V. Villigst
Application deadline 1 June and 1 Dec

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Selected subject-specific scholarships

This is a random selection of subject-specific scholarship opportunities for doctoral candidates. Information are available partly in German only. Please also search the available scholarship [databases](#).

Selected subject-specific scholarships

- Bayer-Stiftungen
Funding doctoral research projects in natural sciences
- Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds
Foundation for Basic Research in Medicine
Scholarships for young scientists (max. age: 27 years) in basic biomedical Research; also offer [Travel Grants](#).
- Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur
Doctoral Scholarships (Submission of an application possible after annual tendering.)
- Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung
Scholarships for doctoral students and Post-Docs in natural sciences and engineering
(Submission of an application possible after annual tendering.)
- Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (German Federal Foundation for the Environment)
Funding scholars from all disciplines that are carrying out further research work into the field of environmental protection
(also offers [Fellowships](#) for university graduates from Central and Eastern Europe to finance research stays in Germany)
- Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung
Funding of clinical medical research of young doctors (Post-Docs)

- Evonik Stiftung
Werner-Schwarze Scholarship for doctoral candidates with research projects on amino acids.
- FAZIT-Stiftung
- Fonds des Verbandes der Chemischen Industrie
Scholarships for doctoral research projects in chemistry
- Gerda Henkel Stiftung
Funding German and foreign doctoral students in historical humanities
- Richard-Winter-Stiftung
Funding doctoral research projects in natural sciences
- Schering Stiftung
Doctoral scholarships for basic research in biology, medicine or chemistry
- Stiftung Bildung und Wissenschaft
Scholarships for research in modern German literature and contemporary history after 1945
- Stiftung "Geld und Wahrung"
- Telekom-Stiftung
Scholarships for doctoral candidates in mathematics, physics, computer science or engineering.
Recommendation by the head of university required.
- ZEIT-Stiftung
Settling Into Motion - scholarship for doctoral research projects in social sciences/ migration studies

Databases

On this page, you will find databases that you can search specifically for individual scholarships. Some databases are particularly suited for search on financing options for doctoral projects in Germany. To make use of these offers, you will need to be proficient in German. Other databases focus on internationality. These databases are often multi-lingual, which makes them suitable for international doctoral candidates with no or little knowledge of German. You can research financing options for doing a doctorate in Germany as well as financing options for a stay abroad in the course of your doctorate.

Scholarship-databases for doing a doctorate in Germany (in german)

- mystipendium
A database with more than 1245 funding entries. It includes a wide range of funding opportunities for undergraduate and graduate studies (including PhD).
- Stipendienlotse of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research
The scholarship database of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research informs doctoral candidates as well as postdocs about different funding possibilities.
- Servicestelle fur ELelektronische ForschungsforderInformationen (ELFI)
The portal contains a database which collects and specifically processes the information on the research funding. The ELFI database currently contains more than 8.000 programs and about 3.700 national and international sponsors/ promoters.

Scholarship-databases for incomings and outgoings (multilingual)

- EURAXESS Researchers in Motion
Funding database for scientists in Germany (incoming, outgoing, returning)
- Stipendien-Datenbank des Deutschen Akademischen Austausch Dienstes (DAAD)
The DAAD is a shared facility of the universities in Germany. Its mission is to promote good relationships between German and international universities through the exchange of students and scholars, as well as through international programs and projects.
- Scholarshipportal.eu
A central European website providing information on scholarships for studying in Europe.

- European Funding Guide

A website that allows you to search for funding possibilities for a research stay as well as for scholarships for your complete doctorate.