

Frequently Asked Questions

A. Scholarship requirements

1. Is there an age limit for DAAD scholarships?

There is no fixed age limit. However, some scholarship programmes specify that only a certain amount of time should have elapsed since the last degree was taken. For details, please refer to the respective Call for Applications.

2. I have not completed my university degree at the time of application. Am I still eligible to apply for a scholarship?

Yes, in programmes for graduates you may apply at the earliest in the last year of your studies and you must satisfy all the academic requirements specified in the Call for Applications by the time the funded studies begin. You should submit your degree certificate before funding begins.

3. I'm already in Germany. Am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, if you who have been resident in Germany for no longer than 15 months at the time of application, you are eligible to apply. The reference date is the application deadline.

4. I am not currently living in my country of origin. Am I still eligible to apply for a scholarship?

Please note that your country of permanent residence or the country in which you have lived in the year before your application is usually of relevance for the application procedure. We strongly recommend that you obtain information and advice and find out which scholarship programmes are open to you, and whether you have to apply from your country of residence or country of origin.

You can find out where your nearest contact person is in the scholarship database (www.funding-guide.de) under the "Contact and advice" tab.

5. Can I apply for a scholarship whatever subject I am studying?

The DAAD offers scholarship programmes throughout the world that are open to all subjects. There are also subject-specific programmes. In the scholarship database (www.funding-guide.de) you can select the scholarships that are offered for your group of subjects.

6. What language skills do I need to apply for a scholarship?

The required language skills generally depend on study plans and subject: In the arts, social sciences and in law, at least a good knowledge of German is usually expected. For the natural sciences and engineering, and if English can be spoken at the host institute or if the study programme is taught in English, proof of good English language skills may also be accepted. Depending on country of origin and scholarship programme, however, certain language skills may be required. The "Application requirements" in the Call for Applications specifies what requirements these may be.

B. Preparing your application

1. **The Call for Applications specifies that a "Description of my study plans" or a "Letter of motivation" has to be submitted. What exactly does this mean?**

You will find notes on how to write a motivation letter in section G: "[How do I write a letter of motivation?](#)"

2. **The Call for Applications calls for a comprehensive and precise "Description of my research project". What does this mean?**

You will find notes on how to describe your research project in section G: "[How do I describe my research project?](#)"

3. **I would like to improve my German before I arrive in the country. Are there online language courses which I can take in my home country?**

Yes, you can learn German online. Find out on the DAAD website [Deutsch-lernen.net](#) about the different options that are available for learning German.

Special online German language courses are offered by the [Goethe-Institut](#), for example, or [Deutsch-Uni Online](#) (for scholarship holders whose scholarships last longer than 6 months, the DAAD covers the costs of a DUO module.)

C. Planning your project

1. **Do I have to have contacts in Germany when I apply?**

Yes, if you are carrying out individual research in Germany or – in artistic subjects – wish to continue your education individually, you need an invitation from a German supervisor (see item 2).

If you are participating in a structured study or doctoral degree programme, you only need to provide information about your chosen programme (see "Application procedure" in the Call for Applications). If you already have a contact at your host university, it is also advisable to enclose appropriate proof (e.g. e-mail correspondence).

2. **I need a supervisor for my individual project in Germany. Who can be my academic host?**

Hosts can be university teachers or academic teaching staff who work at a state or state-recognised institution of higher education or a non-university research institute in Germany. If possible, the host should have a professorial qualification.

3. **I have found a supervisor for my individual project. What documents do I need from him for the application?**

Your academic supervisor must confirm that he/she is willing to help you carry out your research project or doctoral degree in a "Letter confirming academic supervision", which you must submit with your application. Ideally, the letter of confirmation (informal) from your supervisor

- indicates that the description of your research project and schedule has been discussed,
- confirms that a workplace is available for you, and
- specifies the language that is spoken at the host institute.

D. Application

1. How do I apply?

Application procedures may vary depending on scholarship programme. To find out where and how to apply, please read the "Application procedure" section of the Call for Applications.

Please contact us if you have any questions. You can find out where your nearest contact person is in the scholarship database (www.funding-guide.de) under the "Contact and advice" tab.

2. In the Call for Applications it says I have to apply through the **DAAD portal**.

- *What does this mean?*

You have to apply online. To do this, you have to register in the DAAD portal. Select first the Call for Applications for your chosen scholarship programme and then the tab "Application portal" in the scholarship database (www.funding-guide.de). Please note that this tab is only visible in the period in which it is possible to apply for this scholarship programme or when the DAAD portal is open for applications.

- *I have a problem with my online application. What can I do?*

If technical problems occur, send an e-mail to portal@daad.de.

- *Which documents do I have to upload to be able to submit an application to the DAAD portal?*

Your application is only complete if you submit all the application documents listed in the Call for Applications. With the exception of your references and work samples (e.g. DVD), all of these documents must be uploaded to the DAAD portal. In some cases, individual documents (e.g. university certificate) may be submitted at a later date if this is explicitly permitted in the programme's Call for Applications.

- *Do I receive confirmation that my application has been received?*

Yes, as soon as you have submitted your application online, you will automatically receive confirmation that your application has been successfully submitted and an e-mail informing you that a message has been sent to you via the portal's messaging system. The message confirms that your application has been received.

- *I have sent my application to the DAAD portal. Is my application now binding?*

No. For your online application to be binding, you have to print out the "Application summary" generated in the portal and send this summary together with the documents which did not have to be uploaded (such as references or work samples) to the application address. Please take note of the application deadline indicated in the Call for Applications. This applies both to the online application and to the dispatch of the "Application summary" by post (the postmark date is valid).

3. Several copies of the application have to be submitted. In what order should documents be submitted?

Each copy must contain an application summary of your online application and, if applicable, references. Please submit your documents in the order in which the documents are listed in the Call for Applications.

Example: 2 copies



In some subjects, work samples (e.g. on a DVD) are required. Only one copy of work samples needs to be submitted to the application address.

4. Should the individual copies be stapled or bound together?

No, please do not staple or bind documents together, or submit documents in a file. This makes it more difficult for us prepare applications for the selection committee.

5. The Call for Applications states that I have to submit a reference from a university teacher. Who can write a reference for my application?

References in scientific subjects should be written by university professors who can provide information about the following:

- How are your academic achievements?
- What are your academic and personal qualities?
- Is your project well planned, feasible and relevant?
- What significance does the scholarship have for your academic and professional career?

6. Do I have to apply in German?

Unless otherwise stated in the Call for Applications, you can submit your application either in German or English. Please note that application documents that are not in German or English must be translated either into German or English. The translations do not have to be certified for the application procedure and you may do the translations yourself. In most scholarship programmes, translations have to be submitted again in certified form if a scholarship is awarded.

7. What language certificates do I need when I apply for a scholarship?

You can find out what language certificates you need when you apply for a scholarship in the "Application procedure" section of the Call for Applications.

8. My native language is English or German. Do I still have to provide proof of my knowledge of English or German?

No, in this case a language certificate is not required.

9. Do my certificates and transcripts (lists of grades) have to be certified for my application?

No, not initially. If your certificates and transcripts are not in German or English, you can translate the documents for your application yourself. The DAAD does not usually ask you to submit certified documents (if a positive decision is made) until after the selection has been made.

E. Selection

1. Who makes a decision about my application?

A pre-selection or assessment of submitted applications is usually made in your home country by a pre-selection committee. The pre-selection committee may be made up of local university teachers (with special consideration given to former DAAD scholarship holders and former holders of scholarships from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation), German university teachers and lecturers appointed by the DAAD, lecturers from the Goethe Institute, representatives of responsible ministries or partner organisations of the DAAD or the DAAD's regional office.

An independent committee made up of German university teachers is responsible for making the final decision. If necessary, experts in the respective subject are asked to submit written statements.

DAAD employees have no right to vote in the scholarship election procedure.

2. According to which criteria does the selection committee make its decision?

Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic qualifications and personal suitability. In detail, selection criteria include the following:

- previous coursework and examinations and specialist knowledge
- if applicable, confirmation of applicant's academic supervision from a German university teacher, contacts between home and host institute
- if applicable, knowledge of German
- if applicable, letter of recommendation from a university teacher
- general personal skills and qualities which may be of relevance to a stay abroad
- if applicable, the project's relevance for the home country in terms of development policy
- applicability of experiences gained in Germany in the home country (chances of professional reintegration)

F. Scholarship

1. How high is the monthly scholarship payment?

The scholarship payment depends on the applicant's academic qualifications. It is usually € 650 for students, € 750 for postgrads and around € 1,000 for doctoral candidates and postdocs. Payments for university teachers are usually € 2,000 for assistant teachers, assistant professors and lecturers, € 2,150 for professors (as of May 2014). You can find an overview of other possible benefits in each Call for Applications.

2. Who pays for outward and return travel expenses?

Unless travel expenses are covered by another source of funding, the DAAD pays a contribution towards the scholarship holder's travel expenses.

3. Can I bring my family with me?

If the funding period is less than six months, there are no provisions to unite families and therefore no family allowances can be paid. For scholarships with a funding period of over six months, please read the Call for Applications to find out if this programme provides for family members.

4. Do I have to take out health insurance in Germany?

Scholarship holders and accompanying family members must be covered by health insurance throughout their stay in Germany from their first day in the country. Health insurance coverage in Germany is regulated differently depending on country of origin. You will be informed about the conditions of health insurance and the services provided by the DAAD when you receive the Scholarship Award Letter.

5. Am I allowed to take on a part-time job as a scholarship holder in Germany?

Scholarship holders wishing to work part-time during their scholarship, in other words pursue gainful employment, always require the approval of the DAAD. The host must also approve the part-time job. The DAAD is responsible for making sure that the part-time job does not endanger fulfilment of the scholarship purpose, as described in the introduction of the Call for Applications. Casual earnings which exceed the so-called "Income limit for part-time workers" (currently € 450 a month) are credited against the monthly scholarship payments.

G. Notes and advice on application documents

How do I write my letter of motivation? – Guidelines

A letter of motivation is required when you apply for a study scholarship or a grant for a language or specialist course. This letter gives you the chance to describe your personality and the reasons why you are applying for a DAAD scholarship.

The following information and questions will help you to write an informative letter of motivation.

Content

- Facts about your education, skills and knowledge
 - Studies: study programme, number of semesters, if applicable, degree
 - Professional experience, if applicable
 - Academic knowledge, skills and language skills
 - Prizes and awards (if applicable)
- Academic motivation
 - Why do you wish to take the study programme or attend the language or specialist course for which you are applying?
 - What appeals to you about the university you have chosen?
 - What are your expectations of studying in Germany or attending the course (personal, professional, for your career)?
- Reasons for applying for a scholarship
 - Why are you applying for a DAAD scholarship?
 - What do you expect of this scholarship?
 - How will the scholarship help you achieve your academic, professional and personal goals?
- Personal interests
Here you can outline special extracurricular achievements and commitments or personal qualities that say something about your character.

Formal information

The letter of motivation should be between one and three DIN A4 pages long.

How should I introduce my research project? – Or: How do I write a research exposé?

In a research exposé, you define the goals of your research work, reflect upon the theoretical and methodical procedure and you describe the individual steps.

The objective

- What is the content of your research project?
- Which steps are planned?
- How do you plan your work schedule?

The structure

The description (approx. 3 – 10 pages) should provide information about the following:

1. The research field in general and the current state of research literature:
 - What is the current level of research?
 - Which theories/work of other scientists do you refer to?
 - Discussion of the theoretical framework or model
 - What is your research question?

2. Key research questions (hypotheses), research objectives and the scientific relevance of your project:
 - What do you intend finding out?
 - What goals are you pursuing with your project?
3. Research strategies/methods:
 - How do you intend answering the research questions?
 - How do you want to collect data (document analyses, quantitative or qualitative survey, experiment, etc.)?
 - Which scientific literature will you use?
 - How will you evaluate results?
 - What is your schedule?
 - What preparation have you already done or intend doing before funding begins?
4. Ethical issues/anticipated difficulties collecting data
5. Provisional schedule (in tabular form)
 - How much time do you need for the individual research phases (before, during and, if applicable, after the scholarship period)?
6. Research bibliography
 - List of books and essays upon which your work is based.

Not all of these points may apply to your project. When composing your letter of motivation, please also refer to the "Rules of good scientific practice" contained in the DAAD leaflet of the same name.