Funding options

New books, meals in the cafeteria, rent: studying involves a lot of expenses. Scholarships can help you complete your degree with a little less stress. That's why it's worth knowing about the various funding providers, funding types and application modalities.

International students can apply to various organisations for a scholarship. The largest group of scholarship providers are the 13 Begabtenförderungswerke supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. They represent important societal groups and have for example a political, religious or economic background. There are also many other scholarship providers in Germany: Smaller foundations often focus on particular subjects or cities. Higher education institutions also award scholarships. Many of them offer the Deutschlandstipendium; approximately eight percent of recipients of this grant are foreign students.

Overview of scholarship providers

- **Party-affiliated foundations:** The parties represented in the German Bundestag often have foundations that support highly motivated, civically engaged and well-performing students. These foundations include e.g. the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Applicants are not expected to be members of the respective party, but they should support its purposes and aims.

- **Denominational organisations:** Students wishing to receive funding from denominational organisations must generally be a member of the respective religious denomination. There are for example Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim study foundations. They fund talented and civically engaged students who are dedicated to their beliefs.
Corporate foundations: Many corporations have foundations with own scholarship programmes relating to the company's topics and aims. These scholarships are frequently awarded to students and researchers who focus on matters that are of interest to the company.

European Union (Erasmus+): The Erasmus+ exchange scholarship [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/individuals_en] is open to students from EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and Macedonia. It supports study visits of between three and twelve months through bilateral treaties between European higher education institutions. Erasmus students do not have to pay tuition fees. Work placements are also funded. For information, please contact the International Office at your higher education institution.

Federal states: Germany's federal states award scholarships mainly based on financial circumstances. There are a whole range of scholarship programmes for various target groups. However, funding options differ widely between the individual federal states. It is especially important that applicants can demonstrate good grades.

Socially oriented organisations: There are also funding organisations that award scholarships not according to achievement, but based on a student's social, family-related and personal circumstances. The Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard Foundation [http://www.cnv-stiftung.de/en/goals/] for example supports young female doctoral candidates who have children and are planning to embark on an academic career.

Research institutions: Academic research institutions such as the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation [https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/home.html] or the German Research Foundation [http://www.dfg.de/en/index.jsp] award scholarships according to academic achievement. Funding is generally available to outstanding young researchers aiming for an academic career.

Student organisations: There are also – usually volunteer – associations run by students for students. The Bundesvertretung der Medizinstudierenden in Deutschland (BVMD) [https://www.bvmd.de/] for example organises international exchanges for medical students. The Gemeinschaft für studentischen Austausch in Mittel- und Osteuropa (GFPS) [http://www.gfps.org/stipendien/] funds students from Eastern Europe.

Financial and moral support

Financial support consists of a regular monthly payment over a specified period of time. In addition to contributing to students’ cost of living, scholarship holders may often receive subsidies for books, health insurance or childcare. Moral support is also important to many scholarship providers. This form of support includes for example academic conferences, language courses or holiday academies. Beneficiaries also become part of a large network of current and former scholarship holders. This exchange is not only interesting on a personal level, it can also aid career prospects.

Requirements and probability of success

- Good grades in school and university are important, but you can also gain a scholarship without having perfect grades. Many organisations additionally want their applicants to be civically engaged.
- Funding is often provided for certain target groups and scholarships may be awarded according to social, family-based or personal criteria.
- On average, more than a third of scholarship applicants receive the funding for which they have applied.
• You are often more likely to succeed by applying to smaller, less well-known foundations than to the larger funding organisations.
• Around 80 percent of all students in Germany have never applied for a scholarship.

**TIP:** The DAAD offers a comprehensive range of [scholarship programmes](/deutschland/stipendium/hinweise/en/27334-frequently-asked-questions/) for German and international students, graduates and academics. Funding for complete courses of study or for first-year students is only provided in exceptional cases.

**Selection and application procedures**

Every scholarship provider is free to implement its own selection and application procedures. The traditional route begins with a **written application**. Application documents should include a **cover letter** with your **CV, certificates**, and **assessments** from teachers or professors. If your application is successful, in the second phase you will be invited to an **interview** or an **evaluation round with other applicants**. Large “Begabtenförderungswerke” have a more complex selection procedure than smaller foundations; it can include workshops, presentations and discussion groups.

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

- Does the scholarship provider’s offering meet your personal and academic needs?
- Do you meet the formal requirements for the scholarship programme, from academic status to study discipline?
- Do you meet the basic requirements: educational and academic achievements, civic engagement?
- Will you be able to compile the necessary application documents by the application deadline?
- Are you prepared for the key points of an application interview, and do you know what you want to achieve with your scholarship?

**TIP:** First enquire in your home country whether you can apply for scholarships or other funding options.