



Universität Hamburg

DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

# GUIDELINES

ON THE

## DIRECTIVE FOR THE AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS AT UNIVERSITÄT HAMBURG (EXCLUDING UKE)

UNIVERSITÄT HAMBURG, UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT 4: RESEARCH MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING

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## INTRODUCTION

To promote research, academic, and artistic education and professional development, Universität Hamburg awards qualification scholarships to students, doctoral researchers, and doctoral graduates. Universität Hamburg also awards research scholarships, particularly to doctoral graduates, for research purposes.

This guideline outlines the conditions for the awarding of scholarships according to the Directive for the Awarding of Scholarships at Universität Hamburg (excluding UKE) in the version adopted by the Executive University Board on 7 September 2020 and includes the requirements for the selection of recipients, the application procedure, the amount of funding rewarded, and the status and obligations of the scholarship holders.

The guideline also contains supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships, based on the supplement of the directive on short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations adopted by the Executive University Board on 5 December 2022.

The guidelines were adapted as of January 1st, 2026 in view of changed DFG regulations, on which the amount of doctoral scholarships is based.

### **① Supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations:**

Any special requirements for short-term scholarships are described separately in the guidelines. Otherwise, the general requirements in the guidelines also apply to short-term scholarships.

## I. SCOPE

1. This guideline is to be applied in the awarding of all scholarships in all disciplines at Universität Hamburg (excluding UKE) within the scope of the directive insofar as the funds are awarded through Universität Hamburg. It

does not apply to scholarships awarded by third parties according to their own guidelines or regulations.

2. Funding provider guidelines and/or legal requirements take precedence over the guidelines. Any regulatory loopholes will be closed by Universität Hamburg guidelines.

**① Supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations:**

The scope of short-term scholarships is limited to the awarding of scholarships that do not meet the minimum durations specified in the guideline. They may be awarded to lessen disadvantages in terms of individual qualification or research projects by means of scholarships with a shorter duration.

Short-term scholarships are scholarships for doctoral researchers, doctoral graduates, and researchers who find themselves in unforeseen or unavoidable emergency situations through no fault of their own or who are demonstrably<sup>1</sup> disadvantaged in terms of their educational and participation opportunities.

For those who have not completed their studies, qualification scholarships of up to 12 months can be awarded on the basis of the existing Universität Hamburg guidelines.

No short-term scholarship can be awarded in cases where funding for a normal duration is possible according to Directive for the Awarding of Scholarships at Universität Hamburg (excluding UKE).

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<sup>1</sup> Doctoral researchers, doctoral graduates, and researchers are demonstrably disadvantaged if reference is made to these individuals in the objectives and measures of the Equal Opportunity Directive for Universität Hamburg Academic Members, Universität Hamburg's equal opportunity plan as amended, and Universität Hamburg's diversity concept as amended with regard to equal opportunity and the reduction of disadvantages. You can find further information on the proof of fulfillment of the criteria for short-term scholarships via self-disclosure in Section XI.2 ("Application").

## II. PURPOSE OF SCHOLARSHIP

1. Scholarships are awarded for research, academic, and artistic education and training. The scholarship should enable the holder to adequately focus on their research or earning a qualification.

### **① Supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations:**

Short-term scholarships can be awarded to individuals who are demonstrably disadvantaged in terms of educational and participation opportunities. Furthermore, short-term scholarships may be awarded to individuals who are prevented from conducting research or pursuing academic or artistic education and training due to an unforeseen or unavoidable emergency situation through no fault of their own. These include geopolitical and sociopolitical issues and discrimination in terms of awareness of educational opportunities and barriers to equal participation in society.

Short-term scholarships should serve to compensate for difficulties that have arisen, and prevent discrimination or disadvantage for the affected individual.

## III. PREREQUISITES FOR AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS

1. In principle, scholarships can be financed both through external funding (e.g., via project accounts) and through state funding (e.g., via cost centers), but only when permitted by the external-funding provider's guidelines or federal state legal provisions. As a prerequisite, sufficient funds must be available for the total planned funding period. It is not possible to award scholarships for projects in which specific results are owed or are required in the context of economic activity (e.g., contract research, research services), since scholarship holders are not subject to any obligation to provide services.
2. In principle, scholarships cannot be linked to a specific academic or artistic service. The results and resulting rights of use belong to the scholarship holder.

3. Scholarship holders may not be treated as employees—that is, scholarship holders:
  - have no obligation to follow instructions
  - are not integrated into the organization
  - have no vacation entitlement
  - have no mandatory attendance
  - have no social security obligations.

## IV. PERIOD OF FUNDING

1. The duration of a scholarship is determined by the content and objective of the educational or professional development program or of the research project. Depending on the underlying level of qualification, the duration is generally based on the requirements of the German federal training assistance act (Bundesgesetz über individuelle Förderung der Ausbildung, BAföG), the guidelines of the German Research Foundation (DFG), and the guidelines of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.
2. In general, the funding periods are usually a maximum of 12 months (BAföG) for students, a minimum of one and a maximum of four or two years (DFG) for doctoral students and doctoral graduates, respectively, and three months to two years for doctoral researchers, depending on the time of the doctorate and the purpose of the scholarship (Alexander von Humboldt). Details about the funding period can be found in the **Appendix** to this document.

### **📌 Supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations:**

Unlike the minimum and maximum durations specified in the appendix to the guidelines, the duration of short-term scholarships is a maximum of six months (funding period). The minimum duration depends on the purpose of the funding but is one month.

## V. EXTENSIONS, INTERRUPTIONS, AND SUSPENSIONS

1. It is possible to extend an ongoing scholarship before the funding period expires. In certain justified individual cases, an application to extend the funding period can be submitted in good time (usually, at least two months before the end of the funding period) upon prior consultation between the scholarship provider and the Central Scholarship Office.
2. The funding may be suspended or interrupted for good cause when the undertaking being funded is temporarily suspended. Funding should generally not be suspended for more than six months so as not to endanger the funding purpose. An application to suspend funding must be submitted in writing to Universität Hamburg in good time (at least one month prior) and plausibly justified through the presentation of relevant evidence. The rights and obligations of the parties arising from this Funding Agreement are suspended for the duration of the interruption, in particular Universität Hamburg's obligation to pay the funding amount.
  - a) In the case of interruption, the duration of the scholarship/fellowship remains unaffected. An application for extension of the funding period may be submitted separately (see subsection 1).
  - b) In the case of the suspension of funding pursuant to this subsection, the funding period will be extended for the requested period with cost-neutral, continued payment of the scholarship/fellowship.
3. Illnesses lasting less than six weeks have no effect on receipt of the scholarship payments. If the purpose of the scholarship is jeopardized due to illness, the scholarship may be interrupted/suspended. The purpose of the scholarship is generally considered to be jeopardized if an illness lasts longer than six weeks.

### **① Supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations:**

In substantiated exceptional cases, the funding may be extended once on application for a period of up to six months, if the emergency situation or the disadvantage in terms of educational and participation opportunities

continues to exist and the goal of the project supported by the scholarship can still be achieved.

## VI. FUNDING AMOUNT AND COMPOSITION

1. The amount of funding for a scholarship may not exceed the amount necessary to fulfill the research task or to cover living expenses and individual educational needs. Living expenses are determined based on a general understanding of same and include the expenses essential for housing, food, clothing, education, health, reasonable leisure activities and other similar necessary expenses. Individual need is oriented to the scholarship holder's academic qualification. Details about the funding amount can be found in the **Appendix** to this document.
2. As a rule, the funding amount consists of:

### a) **Base amount**

The base amount is determined by the academic qualification of the scholarship/fellowship recipient (see appendix to guidelines).

Doctoral scholarships (see Appendix to the Guidelines, Table 1, Category 2) may be supplemented by grants from third parties (e.g., private foundations, industry, universities), provided that the total of the scholarship and the supplement does not exceed the basic amount of the fellowship for postdoctoral researchers (see Appendix to the Guidelines, Table 1, Category 4). Supplements may not be bound to any obligations, conditions, or restrictions.

When awarding a fellowship to postdoctoral and experienced researchers, the awarding body may independently determine the base amount of the grant within the range listed in Sections II subsections 5 and 6 of the appendix.

### b) **Material cost allowance**

The material cost allowance is a lump sum that is included in the monthly basic payment without requiring a separate application. No subsistence allowance is granted for qualification scholarships for students and scholarships for postdocs and experienced researchers (see Appendix to the Guidelines, Section II, table 1, categories 1, 5 and 6).

**c) Supplementary child benefit**

A child allowance will be granted only where there is no statutory entitlement to child benefit.

Eligibility will be assessed on application. A child benefit can be paid only for doctoral researchers, postdoctoral, and recent doctoral graduate (see appendix to Table 1 categories 2, 3, and 4).

The University of Hamburg can grant a child benefit only where no statutory entitlement to the child benefit exists under German law for the duration of the scholarship. Relevant evidence must be submitted (see Section XI.4 of this guide)

The following entitlements apply where a child benefit is granted:

A monthly amount of EUR 400 is paid for the first child; this amount increases by EUR 100 for each additional child. When a child is born, the full amount is granted for the month of birth. Changes that result in a recalculation of the child supplement take effect in the month of introduction. Children of the scholarship/fellowship recipient's partner may be taken into account, if it can be credibly proven to the University that they were already living in the scholarship/fellowship recipient's household before the scholarship/fellowship was awarded (e.g., proof from the residents' registration office). Scholarships and fellowships for postdoctoral and experienced researchers (Section II table 1 categories 1, 5, and 6 in the Appendix) do not include supplementary child benefit.

**d) Parental pay**

Benefits paid under the federal parental allowance and parental leave act (Gesetz zum Elterngeld und zur Elternzeit, BEEG) to scholarship/fellowship recipients count toward the basic scholarship/fellowship payment.

Relevant evidence must be submitted (see Section XI.4 of this guide).

As a general rule, failure to disclose benefits that should be taken into account constitutes a breach of the funding conditions (see Section 7 University of Hamburg Guidelines).

## VII. TAXATION, SOCIAL SECURITY OBLIGATIONS, INSURANCE

1. Provided they do not exceed the maximum funding amounts designated in the guideline and listed in the Appendix, scholarships are, as a rule, tax-exempt in accordance with Section 3 number 44 of the German Income Tax Act (Einkommensteuergesetz, EStG), provided they do not exceed the maximum funding amounts as specified in the guideline and the scholarship holder has no other income. The tax office responsible for assessing the scholarship provider for corporate income tax, or which would be responsible if the scholarship provider were liable for corporate tax, is responsible for checking whether the conditions for tax exemption of a scholarship under Section 3 number 44 of the German Income Tax Act (EStG) are met. At the request of the scholarship holder or the scholarship holder's relevant tax office, this scholarship provider's tax office must issue a certificate of tax exemption in accordance with the requirements of Section 3 number 44 sentence 3 letters a and b EStG.
2. Scholarship funding does not constitute remuneration pursuant to Section 14 of the German Social Security Code IV (SGB IV) and is therefore not subject to social security contributions. No contributions are paid into pension or unemployment insurance and thus no vested rights are acquired. No further benefits (e.g. contributions to health insurance, allowance in cases of illness, child benefit, etc.) will be paid over and above the approved funding.
3. No insurance coverage is associated with the status of scholarship holder; therefore, scholarship holders receive
  - no health insurance,
  - no nursing care insurance,
  - no accident insurance,
  - no pensions contributions
  - and no unemployment insurance.
4. As adequate health insurance coverage is required by law, scholarship holders are obligated to take out their own insurance (statutory or private). If the scholarship holder is a student (according to Section 8 subsection 1 HmbHG) and under 30 years of age, they may be eligible for a student

health insurance policy. Foreign scholarship holders have the option of taking out health insurance through the DAAD. They are moreover advised to take out accident and (professional) liability insurance, and to pay unemployment insurance and/or pension contributions. Existing accident and (professional) liability insurance policies should be reviewed to determine whether they cover any hazardous activity on the part of the scholarship holder.

## VIII. INFORMATION ON THE INTERNAL REVENUE OFFICE, OTHER INCOME, AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

1. Universität Hamburg is obligated to report all scholarship payments to the scholarship recipient's relevant tax office. Payments from independent contractor agreements, teaching contracts, and fee agreements— independent of scholarships given by Universität Hamburg—are also subject to taxation reporting obligations.
2. In the funding agreement with the scholarship holder, Universität Hamburg expressly points out the scholarship holder's tax-related record-keeping recording and declaration obligations. Universität Hamburg cannot and may not provide a consulting service for this purpose.
3. The directive stipulates that a combination of the scholarship with other additional income is permissible, provided that the monthly income (salary or income from freelance and non-freelance work) does not exceed the earnings limit for so-called *Minijob* employees. The corresponding amounts are determined by Section 8 subsection 1 numbers 1 or Section 8a German Social Security Code IV (Sozialgesetzbuch IV, SGB IV), which concerns marginal employment and marginal self-employment.
4. The scholarship holder must inform the scholarship provider if they have or take on additional gainful work.
5. In order to avoid dual funding, existing or planned subsidies or income from circumstances that compromise the purpose of the scholarship must be reported to the scholarship provider. The evidence should also make it possible to understand and verify whether and which other immediate

assistance / funding is being applied for or received simultaneously by the scholarship holder, where necessary to determine this combination of additional incomes is permissible under the scholarship provisions and below the maximum limit for marginal employment according to Section 8 subsection 1 numbers 1 German Social Security Code IV. These supporting documents must be submitted the internal revenue office should it inquire regarding payments made by Universität Hamburg to the scholarship holder with a view to exempting the funding from taxation.

6. The Central Scholarship Office will request the information required for possible verification of tax exemption in a separate document (information on the tax assessment in accordance with Section 3 number 44 of the German income tax act [Einkommensteuergesetz, EStG]).

## **IX. ORGANIZATIONAL EMBEDDING**

1. A scholarship does not establish an employment relationship.
2. Scholarship holders do not belong to any group at Universität Hamburg and are not members of the University unless they are enrolled as students or doctoral researchers at Universität Hamburg (Section 8 subsection 1 Hamburg higher education act [Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG]). Under certain conditions, scholarship holders may be granted visiting scholar status at Universität Hamburg.
3. Provided that scholarship holders are members of Universität Hamburg (e.g., as visiting scholars, continuing-education students, part-time University employees), they are permitted to use all University facilities in keeping with the regulations for use.
4. As a rule, a scholarship allows the scholarship holder to use Universität Hamburg facilities, material and, if applicable, staff as regulated by the managing director of the institution awarding the scholarship. The scholarship holder is obligated to use the facilities and material conscientiously and without excess. The legal and administrative regulations in force at the respective institution must be observed by the scholarship holder.
5. Scholarship holders may not be deployed in the supervision of students or in teaching, as these activities are usually conducted according to

instructions and carry a reciprocal obligation. Teaching assignments are only compatible with the scholarship in the context of a part-time job.

6. Scholarship holders are encouraged to participate in the academic life of their research area and/or academic and research institution.

## **X. CONDITIONS AND INFORMATION OBLIGATIONS**

1. The scholarship holder may be requested to submit a report after the completion of the scholarship. References to the scholarship are permitted in publications as well as the production of reprints and books, scholarship reports, and publications whose creation is wholly or partly due to the scholarship, as are references in a suitable form to the research area / academic and research institution and the support provided by the scholarship, if applicable.
2. The scholarship providers must also do everything necessary to create an environment for the scholarship holder that is conducive to achieving the purpose of the scholarship within a reasonable period of time.
3. The relationship between the scholarship holder and the academic sponsor or scholarship provider is a partnership based on trust. As such, scholarship holders are to refrain from any activities that might jeopardize the fulfillment of the scholarship purpose. Furthermore, it is the duty of the scholarship holder to inform Universität Hamburg of any circumstances that could jeopardize the purpose of the scholarship (e.g. acceptance of additional contracts or secondary income, etc.). Universität Hamburg may impose certain notification and information obligations on the scholarship holder.

## XI. AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS

### XI.1 PROCEDURE

1. Scholarships are awarded by means of a selection process according to the criteria established for this purpose at the beginning of the process—for example,
  - high achievement in school, vocational training / profession, or university studies
  - special achievements, awards, honors, or prizes relevant to the field of study
  - community, social, or policy involvement in matters related to university (non-exhaustive list of possible award criteria)

**① Supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations:**

The prerequisites for awarding a short-term scholarship are compelling reasons for deviating from the scholarship duration specified in the guidelines. In particular, the award of short-term scholarships must not lead to indirect discrimination against individuals who receive scholarships under the terms specified in IV.1. The Central Scholarship Office will advise on this matter.

The scholarship provider must notify the Central Scholarship Office of the expert and objective reasoning behind the selection decision. This also serves as proof of the prerequisite for the award of short-term scholarships. For this purpose, a letter from the scholarship holder and a letter of support from a sponsor or the scholarship provider; in the case of overarching formats, a short program description or explanation of the criteria for equal opportunity is usually sufficient<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The criteria for equal opportunity come from the objectives and measures of the Equal Opportunity Directive for Universität Hamburg Academic Members, Universität Hamburg's equal opportunity plan as amended, and Universität Hamburg's diversity concept as amended.

## XI.2 APPLYING

1. The scholarship provider develops and stipulates the formal structure of the application in the course of the call for applications for the scholarship.
2. A prerequisite for awarding a scholarship includes both the applicant's qualification and the purpose of the funding (educational and professional development measures and support of research, academic career development, and international research cooperation). The minimum requirement is determined by the applicant's level of education (higher education entrance eligibility, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate, *Habilitation* (postdoctoral qualification)).
3. It is up to the academic institution, the department, or the individual professorships to determine further application criteria. Proof of eligibility and of fulfillment of the criteria can be provided with the following, for example:
  - curriculum vitae
  - diplomas/certificates/transcripts
  - letter of motivation
  - statement from a supervisor/reviewer, project topic and timetable.
  - ① **Supplementary information on awarding short-term scholarships for equal opportunity and urgent assistance in emergency situations:** Notwithstanding the specified forms of proof, fulfillment of the criteria for short-term scholarships for emergency situations or diversity dimensions<sup>3</sup> can be confirmed by self-disclosure to the scholarship provider, particularly through:
    - information about the qualification and comparable (professional) experience
    - individual letter (max. one DIN A4 page) explaining the reasons for the application as well as the emergency situation and/or the disadvantage in terms of educational and participation opportunities.

If evidence cannot be provided due to the emergency situation or the diversity dimensions leading to disadvantage in terms of educational

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<sup>3</sup> Diversity dimensions can include gender, age, religion, nationality and ethnicity, long-term health impairment or disability, sexual orientation, the family situation with regard to childcare and caring for

and participation opportunities, the applicant must provide a comprehensible explanation. The proof required for the award of short-term scholarships will be provided to the scholarship provider during the selection process in the form specified by the scholarship provider in the respective call for applications.

### **XI.3 SELECTION PROCEDURE**

1. Scholarship holders are chosen by the scholarship provider, which are represented by individual professors, departments, academic and research institutions, or a central selection committee. The selection of recipients must be documented in a comprehensible and transparent manner by the scholarship provider. There is no central documentation. The Central Scholarship Office can provide information on award criteria and support during the selection process.
2. The scholarship providers (professorships, departments, academic and research institutions) are responsible for reviewing the qualifications of the scholarship applicants and documenting this in a suitable form.
3. Any documentation or notes concerning the call for applications, selection, or supplementary award conditions must be made available to the Central Scholarship Office, if required, in order to be able to fulfill external and internal reporting obligations and to answer inquiries, for example, from the internal revenue office.

### **XI.4 PREPARATION AND ISSUANCE OF SCHOLARSHIP AGREEMENTS**

1. Scholarships are awarded through a private-law agreement (funding agreement or scholarship agreement) between the scholarship holder and Universität Hamburg. International scholarship holders may receive a funding agreement in English.

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relatives, social background and professional perspective. (cf. "Diversity Concept of the University of Hamburg", Preamble)

2. The formal decision on whether the scholarship is awarded in accordance with the guidelines and the related review for the preparation of the scholarship agreements is the responsibility of the Central Scholarship Office.
3. The information required for issuing the scholarship agreements must be submitted in full by the scholarship awarding body to the Central Scholarship Office. In principle, the information below is required.

Scholarship holder details:

- name,
- address,
- date of birth,
- IBAN (International Bank Account Number) and BIC (Business Identifier Code) for the private bank account in the SEPA (Single Euro Payments Area) region,
- the German tax office responsible (generally determined by place of residence),
- German tax ID number,
- current curriculum vitae
- nature and objective of the funding
- topic of bachelor's, master's, or, doctoral thesis, or Habilitation or research topic,
- if applying for the child allowance: a birth certificate, the child's registration certificate for each child, and the rejection notice for the child benefit application (all as scans)
- If receiving benefits under the federal parental allowance and parental leave act (Gesetz zum Elterngeld und zur Elternzeit, BEEG) within the funding period: submission of the parental allowance notification for the scholarship/fellowship candidate as proof of the payment period, and the amount (all as scans)
- information regarding additional gainful work and other income sources during the funding period

Information from the scholarship provider (office responsible):

- project head or supervisor
- funding period (duration in months, start and end of funding)

- funding amount (basic monthly stipend and, if relevant, material costs and requested supplementary child benefit [attach scanned birth certificates])
  - funding source(s) (cost center, WBS element) and funding periods if
  - supplementary guidelines of the funding provider (on the basis of guidelines to be observed, letter confirming scholarship approval, funding notice, etc.)
4. The agreement is executed and signed by the Central Scholarship Office.

## **XI.5 ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL PROCESSING**

1. The Central Scholarship Office is responsible for issuing scholarship agreements.
2. The scholarship provider coordinates the financial processing of the scholarships.
3. As a rule, the scholarships are paid into the scholarship holder's German bank account, which must be specified in the funding agreement.
4. Payment of scholarships by cashier's check is only possible in exceptional cases (e.g. if it is not possible for the scholarship holder to open a German bank account) and requires an informal written justification, which is to be forwarded to the Central Scholarship Office.
5. Scholarships are, as a rule, paid in monthly installments, beginning on the first of the month. One-time payments or payments of several combined months at the beginning of the scholarship are only possible in exceptional cases and require an informal written justification, which is to be forwarded to the Central Scholarship Office.

### **Appendix:**

Overview of scholarships at Universität Hamburg – funding amounts, allowances, and funding periods