

Policy on awarding third-party fellowships and university-funded fellowships at Freie Universität Berlin

*The present document is a translation of the official German version.
In case of doubt, the German version will prevail.*

I. Type of support

Freie Universität Berlin awards scholarships/fellowships funded by third party funding (TP scholarships/fellowships) as well as from core funds of Freie Universität Berlin (FU scholarships/fellowships) to promote academic competence and research activities as well as to advance academic education. They are divided into the following categories:

1. “Undergraduate Scholarships” funding university study that are restricted to undergraduate students only.
2. “Doctoral Fellowships” funding the advancement of academic competence / doctoral research (the pursuit of higher academic qualifications).
3. “Research Fellowships” for postdoctoral fellows that aim to promote core research activity as well as international research collaborations.

II. Duration of scholarships/fellowship

1. Undergraduate Scholarships may not exceed two semesters.
2. Doctoral Fellowships must be awarded for a minimum of one semester and may extend up to two years. Prolongations of Doctoral Fellowships are possible.
3. Research Fellowships must not exceed an award period of twelve months.
4. The duration of TP scholarships/fellowships depends on the terms of the relevant third party funding providers. If the third party funding provider does not specify the duration of the fellowship, the above regulations apply.

III. Value of scholarships/fellowship award

1. The value of scholarships/fellowships awarded from core funds of Freie Universität Berlin is determined as follows:
 - 1.1 Undergraduate Scholarships must not exceed the maximum value stipulated under BAföG (Germany’s Federal Education Assistance Act) or a comparable DAAD-fellowship.
 - 1.2 Doctoral Fellowships must not exceed the value of doctoral fellowships awarded by the DFG (German Research Foundation) for doctoral research.
 - 1.3 Research Fellowships may not exceed an award of 2,500 € per month (refer also to section VII.3 of this policy)
2. The value of the TP scholarships/fellowships is determined according to the relevant terms specified by the third party funding providers. If not specified by the third party funding provider, the maximum amount for Undergraduate Scholarships and for Doctoral Fellowships is determined according to section III.1. Research Fellowships awarded from third party funding may not exceed a maximum of 7,500 € per month.

3. Additional expenses incurred, such as for travel or childcare, may be covered through an award of a lump-sum allowance.
4. If the scholarships/fellowship is awarded from third-party funding, funds can only be made available up to the sum stated in the approval letter to Freie Universität Berlin.

IV. Tax treatment

Where scholarship/fellowship awards do not exceed the amount stated under III.1 and no additional sources of income exist, recipients of the scholarship/fellowship awards are not subject to income tax in pursuance of § 3 Nr. 44 Income Tax Law (EStG.). In case the scholarship/fellowship award exceeds the amount stated under section III.1, it is assumed that the recipient of the scholarship/fellowship award is subject to income tax. The final decision whether or not the recipient of a scholarship/fellowship award is subject to income tax is at the sole discretion of the responsible tax authority. Freie Universität Berlin shall forward a control notice to the responsible tax authority.

V. Status of scholarships/fellowship recipients

1. Where they are not members of a group in pursuance of § 45 para 1 Berlin Higher Education Law (BerlHG), scholarship/fellowship recipients are not considered members of Freie Universität Berlin.
2. The status of doctoral fellows is regulated under § 45 para 1 no. 3 BerlHG in conjunction with the relevant regulations of Freie Universität Berlin.
According to § 3 no. 44 EStG, scholarship/fellowship awards may not be bound to an obligation to undertake a specific academic activity or to enter any employment relationship in return for scholarship funds.
Scholarship/Fellowship recipients may not be integrated into the course of the normal operations as employees.
A scholarship/fellowship recipient cannot be required to teach without a formal teaching contract. The scholarship/fellowship does not constitute an employment relationship.
Scholarship/Fellowship recipients are not obliged to contribute to social insurance.
3. Secondary or part-time employment must not impede the ability of scholarship/fellowship recipients to devoting themselves primarily to the purpose for which the scholarship/fellowship was awarded. The private income of the scholarship/fellowship recipient derived from such secondary or part-time employment shall be set-off against the basic amount of the scholarship/fellowship according to the rules and regulations of the respective funding institutions or according to the policy guideline in force. In the event of part-time or secondary employment, the scholarship/fellowship recipients are required to notify:
 - a. the project management (in case they are awarded a TP scholarship/fellowship), or
 - b. the advisory committee and/or the supervisor of the doctoral study (in case they are awarded a FU scholarship/fellowship).
4. Scholarship/Fellowship recipients are required to report toward the scholarship/fellowship funding authority. They are also bound by all other obligations deriving from the respective rules and regulations.
5. A scholarship/fellowship award cannot be given to a person if Freie Universität Berlin employs (or has employed) the same person for a similar purpose, unless the respective regulations permit an exception to the rule.

VI. Procedures governing the award of scholarships/fellowships

1. A scholarship/fellowship is granted by the project management and/or a selection commission.
2. A selection process must precede the scholarship/fellowship award.
3. The scholarship/fellowship notification is issued by the head of the responsible administrative division.
4. The information and application documents needed to grant the scholarship/fellowship must be forwarded by the project management to the responsible administrative division.
5. The scholarship/fellowship notification can be supplemented by a written supervision agreement, if so stipulated in the scholarship/fellowship notifications sent by the respective third-party funding providers or in the policy guideline.

VII. Additional regulations

1. Undergraduate Scholarships:
Undergraduate Scholarships funded through core funds of Freie Universität Berlin are restricted to the international exchange program of Division IV of the Central University Administration or may be made from university endowments.
2. Doctoral Fellowships:
 - 2.1 Doctoral Fellowships funded through core funds of Freie Universität Berlin may be awarded only within the framework of programs organized by the Dahlem Research School (DRS) or from university endowments.
 - 2.2 Doctoral Fellowships may not be awarded if the first university degree dates back to over ten years ago.
3. Research Fellowships:
The precondition to an award of a Research Fellowship is a doctorate.
No Research Fellowships may be awarded from core funds of Freie Universität Berlin. In exceptional, justified cases, the final decision lies with the competent authority responsible for the university budget.
4. Use of third party funds:
 - 4.1 TP scholarships/fellowships may be awarded only after the stipulated legally binding financial approvals have been received by Freie Universität Berlin from third party funding providers.
 - 4.2 No scholarship/fellowship awards are permitted from third-party funds of the so-called contract research.
 - 4.3 No scholarship/fellowship awards can be made from so-called personal allowances.