Awarding Guidelines of the Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences for the *Deutschlandstipendium* (Germany Scholarship)

Dated 15 July 2026

Acting on the basis of Section 16 (1) of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (*HG NRW*) from 16 September 2014 (GV. NRW. 2014 p. 547), which originally entered into force on 1 October 2014, was last amended by Article 2 of the Act from 19 December 2024 (GV. NRW. P. 1222) and entered into force on 1 January 2025, and in conjunction with the National Scholarship Programme Act (*Stipendienprogrammgesetz*, *StipG*) from 21 July 2010 (BGBI. 2010 p. 957), last amended by Article 74 of the Act from 29 March 2017 (BGBI. I p. 626), as well as with the Implementation Regulations for the Scholarship Programme Act (*StipV*) from 20 December 2010 (BGBI. I p. 2197), last amended by Article 2 of the Ordinance from 29 November 2011 (BGB. I p. 2450), the Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences enacted the following Awarding Guidelines on 28 July 2026:

Section 1
Purpose of the *Deutschlandstipendium*

The *Deutschlandstipendium* (Germany Scholarship, hereinafter: “Scholarship”) serves to encourage and support both existing students of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences who have already demonstrated excellent academic performance as well as incoming students who can be expected to demonstrate excellent academic performance due to their track record prior to application.

Section 2
Eligibility

(1) Currently enrolled students at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences who have not exceeded the standard period of study for their degree programme and incoming students to Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences who will enrol in the next semester after application are eligible to receive the Scholarship. Scholarship recipients must be enrolled at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences during their scholarship period.

(2) The Scholarship has no negative impact on students receiving German federal education assistance (*BAföG*), as it is a merit-based academic allowance that neither stipulates a specific use nor exceeds the monthly limit of 300 EUR for financial assistance of this kind (see Section 21 (3) sentence 1 number 2 *BAföG*). It is thus excluded from income calculations for *BAföG* eligibility.

(3) Applicants currently receiving a talent or merit-based material scholarship exceeding 30 EUR per month are ineligible to receive a Scholarship.

Section 3
Rights and obligations

(1) Scholarships are awarded based on available funding and in accordance with these Awarding Guidelines.

(2) Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences reserves the right to revoke Scholarships due to a change in eligibility status.

(3) By accepting a Scholarship, recipients are obliged to:

1. immediately inform Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences of any changes affecting their eligibility status within the meaning of Section 2;

2. participate in assessments of their academic performance and the scholarship programme itself;

3. provide, voluntarily and without request, all information and documentation required to verify their eligibility status. This includes:

    a) A report detailing the recipient's academic progress as well as any relevant (extra-)curricular activities.

    b) Current transcripts.

    c) Proof of any relevant academic achievements, acquired knowledge or skills, or relevant and noteworthy circumstances.

(4) Furthermore, by accepting a Scholarship, students declare:

1. their willingness to participate in Scholarship-related events; and

2. their agreement with these Awarding Guidelines.

Section 4
Type and amount of funding

(1) Scholarship availability depends on the amount of funding secured by Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

(2) As a rule, the Scholarship is disbursed in monthly instalments of 300 EUR.

(3) For recipients in their first four semesters of study, Scholarships are granted for a period of one year. The approval period begins in the winter semester and ends with the conclusion of the subsequent summer semester. For recipients in their fifth semester of study or later, Scholarships are granted up to the maximum period set forth in subsection (4).

(4) The maximum period for receiving a Scholarship is generally limited to the recipient's standard period of study per their degree programme. However, extensions beyond this limit are possible if a recipient's studies have been delayed for important reasons. In general, the following reasons would justify an extension:

1. Pregnancy or caring for children within the meaning of Section 25 (5) *BAföG*.

2. A disability or debilitating illness.

3. Caring for immediate family members who are officially recognised as care-dependent by the German Medical Service of the Health Insurers (MDK) (note: a medical certificate from a doctor is also acceptable in some cases).

4. Stays abroad which are relevant to the recipient's studies. This applies only to semesters abroad at a university outside of Germany or other stay abroad undertaken as part of an official exchange programme.

5. Postgraduates who must complete an additional 30 ECTS credits as part of a Learning Agreement.

Proof of the justifying circumstances must be provided without delay.

(5) In the case of pregnancy, the Scholarship will continue through the maternity protection period defined by Section 3 of the German Maternity Protection Act (*MuSchG*).

(6) The Scholarship does not constitute an employment relationship, nor is it subject to mandatory social insurance contributions, as it is not considered a wage within the meaning of Section 14 of the German Civil Code, Volume IV (*SGB IV*). The Scholarship is also tax-free by virtue of Section 3 no. 44 of the German Income Tax Law (*EStG*).

Section 5
Submitting an application

(1) Scholarships are awarded solely on the basis of an application. Applications must be submitted on time, in the proper form and with all required documents during an official application window that was announced on the homepage of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. Furthermore, applications must be submitted via the official online portal. If an application cannot be submitted online for specific and justifiable reasons, it can be submitted instead directly to the Office of the President of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

(2) Application deadlines will be announced on the homepage. Students will also be notified of application periods via their HSRW email accounts and the social media channels of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

Section 6
Application process

(1) To be eligible to apply for a Scholarship, applicants must

1. have met all admission requirements to study at HSRW; and

2. be currently enrolled or about to enrol at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in the semester immediately following the application.

(2) Students who have switched degree programmes at HSRW are not eligible to apply.

(3) Applications must include the following documents:

1. Completed and signed application form (with consent agreement at the end of the form).

2. Current résumé/CV.

3. Letter of motivation.

4. A copy of the applicant's university entrance qualification, e.g. German *Abitur* certificate or other school-leaving document confirming the applicant's eligibility to enrol at a German university (requirement for undergraduate applicants in the first semester or later).

5. Bachelor's degree certificate with a final grade for the applicant's undergraduate degree programme (requirement for first-semester postgraduate applicants).

6. If available, current transcripts from HISinONE showing the applicant's academic performance to-date (requirement for all students in their second semester of study or later).

7. If available, internship certificates and/or work references.

8. Documentation for other relevant qualifications, (extra-)curricular activities and/or special personal, social or family-related circumstances.

(4) Applications which do not fulfil the requirements of the current call for applications – particularly in the case of missing documentation, improper/inappropriate forms of submission, or late submissions – will be excluded from the selection process. Submitted applications will be kept at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences for a period of six months after rejection notices have been issued before being destroyed. All documents must be submitted as copies, not originals. Documents that are not in German or English must be submitted with a certified translation. Documents that do not comply with these requirements may be excluded from consideration during the selection process.

Section 7
Selection process

(1) Scholarship recipients will be chosen by a selection committee formed by the Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. This committee will include the following members:

1. (with voting power)
   a) the President;
   b) the Vice-President of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Training;
   c) the Vice-Dean of Studies or a Link Professor from each faculty;
   d) one member of the Student Parliament (StuPa); and
   e) one member of the General Student Committee (AStA).
2. Acting as advisors without voting power, the committee will also include:
   a) one representative of the Welcome Centre;
   b) one representative of the Career Service; and
   c) the Equal Opportunities Representative of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

The committee members no. 1 a) to c) will be represented by their own designated representatives. The committee members no. 1 d) and e) will be represented by persons from their specific governing body appointed by the Executive Board.

(2) The term in office for student members of the selection committee is one year. The term in office for all other members is two years. Reappointment is permissible.

(3) The selection committee is chaired by the President. The deputy chairperson is the Vice-President of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Training; Section 7 (1) sentence 3 does not apply to the chairperson / deputy chairperson. The selection committee has a quorum when at least half of its members with voting power (Section 7 (1) no. 1) are present. Decisions are passed by simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.

(4) The selection committee may appoint representatives of the private donors as additional advisers.

(5) The selection committee may decide which percentage of available scholarships should go to first-semester undergraduates and to postgraduates.

(6) Scholarships are awarded based on a ranking system using primary and secondary criteria.

a) The following primary criteria apply:

aa) In order to be considered for a Scholarship, applicants must have a regular and uninterrupted study history to be eligible for a Scholarship. As a general rule, both undergraduate and postgraduate applicants must have earned an average of at least 20 credits (ECTS) in their previously completed semesters. Students enrolled in degree programmes with modules worth 6 credits (ECTS) must have earned an average of at least 18 credits (ECTS) in previously completed semesters. In master's degree programmes, only half of credits (ECTS) which were earned as part of a Learning Agreement within the meaning of Section 4a (4) of the General Examination Regulations will be recognised. Credits transferred from other institutions in accordance with Section 63a HG NRW will not be recognised towards the aforementioned minimum credit requirements.

bb) The applicant's academic history thus far will be used to generate an initial ranking score:

- First-semester undergraduate students: the initial ranking score is equal to the final grade for the applicant's university entrance qualification for the initial scholarship period of two semesters; for first-semester postgraduate students: the initial ranking score is equal to the final grade for the applicant's undergraduate degree for the initial scholarship period of two semesters;
- For students in the second semester or later: the initial ranking score is equal to the average grade for all examinations completed at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences; subsection 6 a) aa) sentence 4 remains unaffected. Examinations from the semester in which a Scholarship application was submitted per Section 5 are not included.

  The average grade for examinations completed at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences will be taken from the applicant's HISinOne account.

b) The following secondary criteria apply:

aa) Noteworthy achievements, awards or distinctions including, for example, achievements in conjunction with a university entrance qualification or during previous gainful employment (of at least 1 year) or a successfully completed vocational training programme (of at least 18 months); internships (of at least 6 months); academic publications; earning more credits (ECTS) than the recommended minimum per the applicant's curriculum.

bb) Extracurricular activities, including, for example, volunteer work for public or private organisations; a voluntary social or ecological year (FSJ/FÖJ); civil service; volunteering in religious communities; volunteering in (higher education) politics/student government (for a period of at least 1 semester); other cultural or social engagement/volunteering.

cc) Special personal or family-related circumstances, including chronic illness, caring for/raising one's own children, or caring for immediate family with recognised care dependency.

Additional details are set forth in the annex titled "Secondary criteria for the application and selection procedure for the *Deutschlandstipendium* (Germany Scholarship) at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences".

(7) The secondary criteria can be used to improve an applicant's initial ranking score derived from the applicable primary criterion:

- For criteria falling under subsection (6) b) aa): usually up to a maximum of 0.2 additional points.

- For criteria falling under subsection (6) b) bb): usually up to a maximum of 0.2 additional points.

- For criteria falling under subsection (6) b) cc): usually up to a maximum of 0.2 additional points.

The more recent the circumstances, the more heavily they are weighted. Secondary criteria may improve an applicant's initial ranking score by no more than 0.6 points.

(8) Using the applicable primary criterion (subsection 6 a) bb)) and any applicable secondary criteria, a final ranking score will be calculated for each candidate: any secondary criteria points will be subtracted from the primary criterion score, as the German grading system is used. For applicants with a score derived from the HISinOne portal of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, the final ranking score will also be compared to the grade distribution for their degree programme. This results in a ranking of all eligible applicants. For first-semester applicants, i.e. those who can only submit a university entrance qualification or a bachelor's degree, separate rankings will be generated based on the final grade of the university entrance qualification or the bachelor's degree, respectively. Scholarships will be awarded sequentially based on the final ranking of applicants produced by the selection process. In the event of tie between one or more applicants, a detailed individual assessment will occur.

(9) For recipients whose first semester of study occurs during the scholarship period, a "selection process grade" (*Verfahrensnote*) will also be generated and used for Scholarship-related calculations for the rest of scholarship period, but until no later than the end of the recipient's standard duration of study (*Regelstudienzeit*). In particular, the selection process grade is used to determine whether the holder has maintained or improved their academic performance within the meaning of Section 9 (1) sentence 1 no. 3, and Section 9 (1) sentence 2. The selection process grade will be determined using the process described in subsection (8) sentences 1-3 and is equal to the lowest ranking score to be awarded a Scholarship.

Section 8
Awarding of Scholarships

(1) The Executive Board is responsible for deciding who will receive a Scholarship.

(2) Decisions will be announced via approval letters. These letters will outline the scholarship period, duration and total funding amount. Scholarship recipients must formally accept their Scholarship offer in writing before the deadline.

Section 9
Scholarship extensions

(1) Insofar as a scholarship holder has not exceeded the standard duration of study (*Regelstudienzeit*) for their degree programme, Scholarships will be extended automatically if the holder:

1. has properly submitted all documents verifying their continued eligibility and academic performance in accordance with Section 3 (3) no. 3;

2. has continued their studies uninterrupted in compliance with Section 7 (6) a) aa); and

3. has maintained or improved their academic performance during the scholarship period.

As a rule, academic performance is not considered to have been maintained if a holder's current grade point average (taken from HISinOne) has worsened by more than 0.5 grade points compared to the selection process ranking/grade (refer to Section 7 (8) sentences 1-3 or Section 7 (9)). In the event of repeated drops in academic performance, the holder's grade must not have worsened by more than 0.8 grade points in total.

(2) If a scholarship holder has not maintained their academic performance within the meaning of subsection 1 sentences 2-3, extension requests will be treated as regular scholarship applications.

Section 10
Scholarship withdrawal and revocation

(1) Scholarships awarded on the basis of false or incomplete information will be revoked and the holder held liable for all payments which have been disbursed.

(2) Scholarships will be revoked if the holder does not comply with the reporting obligations in Section 3 (3), Section 3 (4) and Section 8, or if the holder is receiving an additional scholarship in violation of Section 2, or if Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences determines that the eligibility and merit requirements set forth in Section 6 are no longer met. Scholarships can be revoked retroactively, particularly in the case of double-funding violations.

(3) Scholarship holders remain liable for repayment regardless of whether the disbursed funds have been spent in part or in full.

Section 11
Termination

(1) The Scholarship will terminate prematurely at the end of any month in which the holder:

1. completes their final graduation requirement;
2. withdraws from Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences;
3. switches degree programmes; or
4. is de-registered from Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

(2) Should a scholarship holder enrol at a different German university during the scholarship period, the Scholarship will continue to be disbursed in accordance with the existing scholarship agreement until the end of the semester. A "semester" is defined as the academic term observed at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences (6 months).

(3) Scholarships that were terminated prematurely will be awarded to the next candidate in line according to the selection committee's ranking list and disbursed until the end of the previous holder's original scholarship period. Recipients of a prematurely terminated Scholarship are not entitled to a full scholarship period within the meaning of Section 4 (3).

Section 12
Miscellaneous

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences reserves the right to:

1. adjust or amend these Awarding Guidelines of the Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences for the *Deutschlandstipendium* (Germany Scholarship); and

2. report any violations or fraudulent activity in connection with an application for a Scholarship to relevant authorities and recover any unduly disbursed funds using all available legal recourse.

The Scholarship Programme Act (*StipG*) and its accompanying implementation regulations (*StipV*) apply as well.

Section 13
Entry into force

(1) These Awarding Guidelines will enter into force by official decision of the Executive Board.

(2) Upon entering into force, the previous Awarding Guidelines of the Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences for the *Deutschlandstipendium* (Germany Scholarship), dated 21 March 2024, will expire.

Annex

Secondary criteria for the application and selection process for the *Deutschlandstipendium* (Germany Scholarship) at HSRW

The selection committee uses secondary criteria in order to produce a final ranking of scholarship applicants. These criteria are divided into three categories:

Category 1) Special achievements, awards and distinctions

Category 2) Extracurricular activities

Category 3) Special personal or family-related circumstances

An applicant's initial ranking score, which is derived from the applicable primary criterion, can be improved by up to 0.2 points for each category. The selection committee will decide which criteria are worth 0.2 points, 0.1 points or zero points. Applicants can thus improve their scores by a maximum of 0.6 points. Circumstances submitted for consideration should have occurred within the last 3 years.

The three aforementioned categories include the following criteria:

Category 1) Special achievements, awards and distinctions

Criteria:
Awards and distinctions bestowed by institutions at the international, national or trans-regional level, for example: • Awards and distinctions earned in connection with a university entrance qualification, e.g. "Sheffelpreis", "Karl-von-Frisch-Preis", "Appolinaire-Preis", awards bestowed by the German Physical Society (DPG) etc. • Nation-wide competitions, e.g. in Germany "Jugend musiziert", "Jugend forscht" etc. • Awards and distinctions bestowed by HSRW itself will be recognised by the selection committee on a case-by-case basis.
Having earned more than the minimum number of credits (ECTS) recommended by the applicant's curriculum at the time of application. (This usually means earning **more than 31 ECTS credits** per semester while in the standard period of study.)
Academic publications
Previous gainful employment (min. 1 year) or previously completed **career-oriented vocational training** (min. 18 months with min. 19 hrs./week) or **internships** (combined min. length of 6 months). Internships required by an applicants' degree programme are excluded from consideration. Part-time student jobs are also excluded.

Category 2) Extracurricular activities or volunteering

Criteria:
Volunteering work (in associations, clubs or societies) or **social engagement** (at least 6 months total), for example: • Documented extracurricular work for public and private institutions or organisations. • Providing after-school help in a mentoring role officially recognised by a school (for example). • Mentoring or coaching in a club or other association.
Social engagement Examples include: *Bundesfreiwilligendienst*; voluntary social (FSJ) or ecological years (FÖJ); civil service; volunteer work countries; military service; European Solidarity Corps; German Technical Relief Association (THW), Red Cross or other emergency services; involvement in religious communities, political activism etc.
Extracurricular engagement at HSRW Political, cultural or social engagement on campus, including AStA, StuPa, FSR, cultural activities, committee work, exchange organisations, mentoring programmes, acting as a student spokesperson etc. for a minimum of 1 semester.

Category 3) Special personal or family-related circumstances

(These are judged on a case-by-case basis through the lens of: "To what extent have these special circumstances negatively affected the applicant's studies?")

Criteria:
Disability or chronic illness
Caring for (one's own) children
Caring for immediate relatives in accordance with Section 7 (3) of the Home Care Leave Act (*Pflegezeitgesetz*)
Other family-related considerations (e.g. first-generation student)
Working for the family business (min. 6 months with min. 5 hrs./week or 20 hrs./month)
Current gainful employment (at the time of application) as part of an officially recognised dual / part-time study programme. (min. 5 hrs./week or 20 hrs./month. Part-time student jobs are excluded.)
Immigration background

Corresponding documentation is required for any secondary criteria to be considered.