

Awarding Guidelines of the Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences for the *Deutschlandstipendium*

Dated 23 November 2022

Section 1

Purpose of the *Deutschlandstipendium*

The *Deutschlandstipendium* (“Germany Scholarship”, hereinafter: “Scholarship”) serves to encourage and support current students at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences who have demonstrated excellent academic performance or incoming students who are expected to demonstrate excellent academic performance due to their track record prior to application.

Section 2

Eligibility

(1) All currently enrolled students at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences who have not exceeded the standard period of study for their degree programme as well as all incoming students who will be enrolling at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in the semester after their application are eligible for a Scholarship. Scholarship recipients must be enrolled at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences during their scholarship period.

(2) The scholarship has no effect on eligibility for German federal education assistance (*BAföG*), as it is merit-based academic aid which neither stipulates a specific use nor exceeds the monthly limit of 300 EUR set for financial aid of this kind for recipients of *BAföG*. For more information, refer to the Section 21 (3) sentence 1 no. 2 of the German Federal Assistance Act (*BAföG*), as well as Section 23 of its amending act (*BAföGÄndG*). Thus, the *Deutschlandstipendium* can be excluded from income-related calculations for *BAföG* eligibility.

(3) Scholarships cannot be awarded to students who are currently receiving another merit-based scholarship of more than 30 EUR per month.

Section 3

Rights and obligations

(1) Scholarships are awarded in accordance with these Awarding Guidelines and the amount of available funding.

(2) Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences reserves the right to revoke Scholarships for recipients who no longer meet eligibility requirements.

- (3) By accepting a Scholarship, recipients agree 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 fully in evaluations of their academic performance and of the scholarship programme itself.
 3. Provide, voluntarily and without request, all information and documentation required to verify their continued eligibility status. This includes:
 - a) A report detailing the recipient's academic progress as well as any curricular or extracurricular activities.
 - b) Current transcripts.
 - c) Proof of any academic achievements, acquired knowledge or skills, or relevant and noteworthy circumstances.
- (4) Furthermore, by accepting a Scholarship, recipients formally declare:
1. Their willingness to participate in scholarship-related events.
 2. Their agreement with these Awarding Guidelines.

Section 4

Type and amount of funding

- (1) The availability of Scholarships depends on the amount of funding secured by Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.
- (2) As a rule, Scholarships are disbursed as monthly instalments of 300 EUR.
- (3) For recipients in their first four semesters of study, Scholarships will be granted for a period of one year. The funding period begins in winter semester and ends with the conclusion of the subsequent summer semester. For recipients in the fifth semester or later, Scholarships are granted up to the maximum period set forth in subsection (4).
- (4) The maximum scholarship period is generally limited to the standard period of study for the recipient's degree programme. However, if recipient's studies are delayed for justified reasons, they may request an extension beyond the usual maximum length. In general, the following situations would justify a scholarship 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) (a medical certificate from a doctor is also acceptable in some cases).
 4. Subject-relevant stays abroad. This applies only to periods of study at a foreign university or a period abroad as part of an official exchange programme.

Corresponding proof of the aforementioned circumstances must be provided without delay.

(5) If a recipient becomes pregnant during their scholarship period, the Scholarship will continue to be disbursed through the legally mandated protection period set forth in Section 3 (1) and (2) 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 compensation 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 via an official application process. Applications can only be submitted during the official application window announced on the homepage of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences and must be submitted on time, in the proper form and with all required documents in order to be valid. Applications must be submitted via the official online portal. If an application cannot be submitted online for specific and justifiable reasons, it may instead be submitted directly to the Office of the President of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences as a hard copy or by email.

(2) Application deadlines are announced on the homepage. In addition, students will 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) Applicants are only eligible to apply for a Scholarship if they:

1. Have met all admission requirements to study at HSRW.
2. Are currently enrolled at or will be enrolling at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in the semester immediately after applying.

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

(3) All applications must include the following:

1. Completed and signed application form (including the 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, i.e. German "Abitur" certificate or other document confirming their eligibility to study at a German university (requirement for undergraduates applicants from the first semester onwards).
5. Bachelor's degree certificate with a final grade for the degree programme (requirement for postgraduate applicants in their first semester).

6. Current HIS transcripts showing academic performance to-date (requirement for all students in their second semester of study or later).
7. Internship certificates and/or work references (if available).
8. Documentation of other qualifications, (extra)curricular activities and/or unique personal, social or family-related circumstances.

(4) Incorrect or incomplete applications – whether due to missing documents, improper form or late submission – will be automatically rejected. 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. Thus only copies, not original documents, should be submitted with applications. Documents not in German or English must be submitted as notarised German translations. Documents that do not comply with these requirements may be excluded from consideration during the selection process.

Section 7

Selection process

(1) Scholarships are awarded by a selection committee organised by the Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. This committee includes:

1. (Members 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).
 - e) One member of the General Student Committee (AStA).
2. (Advisors without voting power)
 - a) One representative of the Welcome Centre.
 - b) One representative of the Career Service.
 - c) The Equal Opportunities Representative.

The members indicated above by no. 1 a) to c) are represented by their currently designated representatives/proxies. The members indicated by no. 1 d) and e) will be represented by another person from their respective committee chosen 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 made by simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.

- (4) The selection committee is entitled to appoint representatives of the private donors as additional advisors.
- (5) The selection committee can decide which percentage of available scholarships should go to first-semester undergraduates or to postgraduates.
- (6) Scholarship recipients are selected according to a set of primary and secondary criteria.

1. The primary criterion is calculated from the following grade:

- a) For first-semester undergraduates: the final grade from the applicant's university entrance qualification.
- b) For first-semester postgraduates: the final grade for the applicant's undergraduate degree.
- c) For students in their second semester of study or later: the applicant's current grade point average in HIS, including the most recent winter semester.

As a general rule, both undergraduate and postgraduate applicants must have earned at least 20 ECTS credits for each completed semester.

2. Secondary criteria include:

- a) Noteworthy achievements, awards or distinctions achieved (for example) alongside a university entrance qualification or during previous gainful employment (of at least 1 year), a successfully completed vocational training programme (of at least 18 months), or an internship (of at least 6 months); academic publications; or by acquiring more ECTS credits than the recommended minimum in the applicant's curriculum.
- b) Extracurricular activities, including, for example, volunteer work for public or private institutions or organisations, a voluntary social or ecological year [FSJ/FÖJ], civil or community service, involvement in religious communities, involvement in (university) politics/student government (over at least 1 semester), cultural or social volunteering.
- c) Special personal or familial circumstances or hardships, including chronic illness, caring for/raising one's own children, or caring for immediate family.

For detailed information, see the annex: Secondary criteria for the application and selection process for a *Deutschlandstipendium* at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

(7) An applicant's initial grade (derived from the relevant primary criterion) can be improved via the secondary criteria:

- For circumstances falling under subsection (6) no. 2 a): improvement of up to 0.2 points.
- For circumstances falling under subsection (6) no. 2 b): improvement of up to 0.2 points.
- For circumstances falling under subsection (6) no. 2 c): improvement of up to 0.2 points.

The more recent the circumstances, the more heavily they are weighted. Thus, secondary criteria can improve an applicant's initial grade by up to 0.6 points.

(8) The primary and secondary criteria are used to calculate the applicant's final selection grade: any points awarded via secondary criteria are *subtracted* from the initial grade derived from the primary criterion in

accordance with the academic grading scale used in Germany. For applicants whose initial grade was taken from the HSRW HIS portal, their selection grade will also be put in relation to the distribution of grades in their degree programme. Thus, a ranking of all applicants will be calculated. For first-semester applicants, i.e. those applying on the basis of a university entrance qualification or an undergraduate degree, separate rankings will be generated based on the final grade for their university entrance qualification or the undergraduate degree, respectively. Scholarships will be awarded according to the final ranking of applicants. In the event of a tie, a detailed individual assessment will be conducted.

Section 8 Awarding of Scholarships

- (1) The Executive Board is responsible for deciding who will receive a Scholarship.
- (2) Decisions will be announced via scholarship approval letters. These letters will outline the scholarship period, duration and total funding amount. Scholarship winners must formally accept their scholarships in writing before the deadline.

Section 9 Scholarship extensions

- (1) Recipients who were first awarded a Scholarship in their first or second semester of study can apply for an extension by submitting a new application via the normal procedure. These extension applications must be submitted in the recipient's second or third semester before the deadline per Section 5 (2). Applications must include the documents specified in Section 6 (3) no. 1-3 and 6-8.
- (2) Recipients in their fourth semester of study or later are eligible for an extension up to the limit set forth in Section 4 (4) if:
 1. The extension application is submitted properly and on time.
 2. The applicant has submitted documents verifying their academic performance in accordance with Section 3 (3) no. 3.
 3. The applicant has maintained or improved their academic performance over the scholarship year.

Recipients are not considered to have maintained their academic performance if their current GPA (per HIS) has worsened by more than 0.5 grade points over the scholarship year. In the event of repeated drops in performance, extensions are only possible if the recipient's current GPA is within 0.8 grade points of their grade at the time of the first application.

- (3) If an extension is granted in accordance with subsection (2), the required annual performance evaluation is considered met.

Section 10 Scholarship withdrawal and revocation

- (1) Scholarships awarded on the basis of false or incomplete information will be revoked and the recipient obliged to repay the disbursed amount in full.
- (2) Scholarships will be revoked for recipients who do not comply with the reporting obligations in Sections 3 (3) and (4) as well as Section 8, or for recipients who are already receiving an additional scholarship in violation of Section 2, or if Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences determines that the merit-based eligibility requirements within the meaning of Section 6 are no longer present. Retroactive revocations are possible, particularly in the case of double-funding violations.

(3) Repayment obligations remain regardless of whether the recipient has spent the disbursed funds in part or in full.

Section 11 Termination

(1) Scholarships will be automatically terminated at the end of any month in which a recipient:

1. Completes their final graduation requirement.
2. Withdraws from Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.
3. Enrols in a different degree programme at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.
4. Is de-registered from Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

(2) If a recipient enrols at a different university during their scholarship period, the Scholarship will be disbursed until the end of the current semester in accordance with the existing agreement. A “semester” in this context refers to the academic period 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 be disbursed up to the end of the 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.
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 rules and provisions of the Scholarship Programme Act (*StipG*) and its accompanying directive (*StipV*) apply as well.

Section 13 Entry into force

(1) These Awarding Guidelines shall enter into force by 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*, dated 26 October 2021, shall expire.

Annex

Secondary criteria for the application and selection process for a *Deutschlandstipendium* at HSRW

The selection committee uses secondary criteria in order to rank and select scholarship winners. These criteria are divided into three categories:

Category 1) Notable achievements, awards and distinctions

Category 2) Extracurricular activities

Category 3) Notable personal or family-related circumstances

Applicants' initial grades can be improved by up to 0.2 points for each category. The selection committee will define which criteria are worth 0.2 or 0.1 points, or no points at all. Applicants can 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 are subdivided as follows:

Category 1) Notable achievements, awards and distinctions

Criteria:
Awards and distinctions bestowed by institutions at the international, national or trans-regional level, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awards and distinctions in connection with a German 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 from HSRW are recognised by the selection committee on a case-by-case basis.
Having acquired more ECTS credits than the recommended minimum in the applicant's curriculum by the date of application. (This usually means more than 31 ECTS credits per semester during the standard period of study.)
Academic publications
Previous gainful employment (min. 1 year) or completed vocational training programme (min. 18 months) with a career-oriented component (min. 19 working hours/week) or internships (combined min. length of 6 months). Internships stipulated by an applicants' degree programme are excluded. Part-time student jobs are also excluded.

Category 2) Extracurricular activities

Criteria:
<p>Volunteering work (in associations, clubs or societies) or social engagement (combined min. length 6 months), for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extracurricular work for public and private institutions or organisations. • Providing after-school help in a mentoring role officially recognised by the school. • Mentoring or coaching in a club or other association.
<p>Social engagement</p> <p><i>Bundesfreiwilligendienst</i>; voluntary social (FSJ) or ecological year (FÖJ); civil service; volunteer work abroad; military service; European Solidarity Corps; German Technical Relief Association (THW), Red Cross or other emergency services; involvement in religious communities, political activism etc.</p>
<p>Extracurricular engagement at HSRW</p> <p>(With min. length of 1 semester) political, cultural or social engagement on campus, including AStA, StuPa, FSR, cultural activities, committee work, exchange organisations, mentoring programmes, working as a student spokesperson etc.)</p>

Category 3) Notable personal or family-related circumstances

(Judged on a case-by-case basis: “To what extent has the applicant had to overcome these circumstances in order to achieve excellence in their studies?”)

Criteria:
Disability or chronic illness
Caring for one’s own child
Caring for immediate relatives in accordance with Section 7 (3) of the Home Care Leave Act (Pflegezeitgesetz)
Special family-related circumstances (first generation student)
Working for the family business (min. 6 months with min. 5 hrs./week or 20 hrs./month)
Current (as of the application) gainful employment as part of an officially recognised dual / part-time study arrangement (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.