

Federal Foreign Office Guidelines  
on the funding, support services and follow-up services  
provided to foreign students, trainees, graduates and  
academics  
(Fellowship Guidelines)  
updated version of 01 July 2017

Introduction

The funding of highly-qualified foreign students, trainees, graduates and academics during periods of training, study, research and work at a university establishment, extramural research institute or other host institution in Germany or abroad constitutes a significant element of the foreign cultural and educational policy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Funding via fellowships, grants and support services and follow-up services aims to attract highly-qualified young foreign academics and elite students to Germany as a centre of science and academe, where it is hoped that they will become lasting partners and friends of the country. The funding also supports the propagation of the German language and the promotion of a positive image of Germany abroad. Fellowship holders are expected to foster a positive image of Germany in their countries of origin after their fellowships have ended, and to act as multipliers in sharing the experiences gained during their time in Germany with others. This accommodates both the legal obligation of the diplomatic service to cultivate and promote foreign relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, and the relevant designated purposes of the annual budget legislation.

Furthermore, these measures aid in the strengthening of Germany as a centre of science, research and business, the consolidation of its leading role in global academic networks, the funding of a global educational and knowledge transfer and creation of a worldwide learning community and, not least, global conflict prevention via a dialogue of values.

These tasks, which are a matter of significant government interest, are performed by independent intermediary organisations and fellowship organisations which receive allocations in accordance with Articles 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) for this purpose. In the process, they are bound by law and statute, the specifications of their business plans declared binding by the awarding authorities or recognised financing plans, the General Auxiliary Conditions and the following Guidelines. These are designed to guarantee the consistency of funding practices, particularly the standard benefits, as far as this proves reasonable and necessary; no claims may be derived therefrom.

## Article 1 Scope of application

- (1) These Guidelines apply to the fellowships, grants and support services and follow-up services, funded by the Federal Foreign Office, for foreign students, trainees, graduates and academics who, at the time of application, have not resided in the Federal Republic of Germany for longer than 15 months. However, this time limit shall not apply to
  - a) foreigners who have travelled to the Federal Republic within the context of a degree course, a doctorate or in order to perform another form of academic work and have already been in Germany for a longer period, or to
  - b) individuals who have been granted refugee status in duly substantiated exceptional cases.

As a general rule, German nationals and non-mobile foreign students do not fall within this ambit. German nationals may also be funded for overseas stays with the agreement of the Federal Foreign Office, provided that this is conducive to achieving the objective of a funding programme, e.g. within the context of programmes which serve the establishment of international alliances between universities, and thus require a degree of reciprocity in terms of mobility. Articles 1 to 4 apply to funding in the Federal Republic of Germany. Article 5 and Article 6 apply to funding in the countries of origin of the funding recipients, and in third countries (equipment donations, 'sur-place' and third country programmes). Article 7 elucidates the special provisions applying to programmes in which part of the funding is provided by a partner (cooperation programmes). Article 8 applies to the implementation of additional funding measures.

- (2) Insofar as funding is only intended for long-term measures, a funding period of at least six months is mandatory. In these cases, the cost of longer study and research phases abroad essential to the achievement of the fellowship objective may be funded (particularly when this is prescribed by the corresponding study regulations), in the event that these do not exceed the stipulated 25 per cent limit of the anticipated overall funding period.
- (3) The level of individual funding benefits is determined by the Federal Foreign Office with the agreement of the Federal Finance Minister and is adapted, as necessary, in line with respective changing needs and cost developments. The Federal Foreign Office can re-determine the stipend for category I in accordance with increases in the amount paid in compliance with paragraphs 13 and 13 a of the BAföG. The applicable maximum amounts are listed in Appendix 1.
- (4) The Federal Finance Minister agreed to the Guidelines on 25 April 2017 after consultation with the Federal Audit Office. Amendments to the Guidelines must be made according to the same procedure. In justified individual cases, deviations are possible in coordination with the Federal Foreign Office.

- (5) A transitional period of two years with effect from the entry into force of these Guidelines shall apply to the introduction of a maximum lower deviation of the fellowship payments.
- (6) The Guidelines shall enter into force on 01 July 2017, and replace those in the version dated 30 March 2012.

## Article 2 Regular fellowship benefits

- (1) The fellowship shall comprise the monthly payment to the fellowship holders, allowances for accompanying family members and insurance contributions. The benefits should ensure that German fellowship schemes remain attractive to highly-qualified applicants. The level of the payments is divided into various categories and aligned to the fellowship holders' academic qualifications and the standard of living of comparable German academics; the specific needs and cost burdens of foreign fellowship holders must also be taken into account. Important reference parameters used in the determination and adjustment of payment amounts are included in the applicable categories and payments outlined in Appendix 1. Additional fellowship categories may be formed in agreement with the Federal Foreign Office.
- (2) Daily rates may – particularly in the case of academics – be paid in the case of short stays, which, in principle, amount to one thirtieth of the respective monthly payment; in the case of stays of up to 22 days, the daily rate calculated thus increases by 35 per cent; from the 23rd day onwards, the full monthly amount shall be paid.
- (3) Trainees may receive monetary compensation to the amount of the fellowship category to which their level of training corresponds in the event that the hosting company fails to pay a sufficient trainee wage.
- (4) In the event of long-term measures, accompanying family members staying in Germany for a minimum of three months shall receive an adequate family allowance in accordance with Appendix 1, Section 2.
- (5) Supplementary income earned by the fellowship holder must be offset against the fellowship payment.  
Full-time professional activities pursued in parallel with the studies are not permissible. A tax-exempt amount not exceeding the current lump sum limit for part-time employees shall apply to the determination of the level of permissible supplementary income, which may be earned on a monthly (currently 450 EUR gross) or, depending on the funding period, annual basis (currently up to 5,400 EUR gross). The same shall apply to income from the accompanying spouse which is offset against the family allowance. Fellowships or partial fellowships from foreign agencies also constitute imputable supplementary income. Exempt from the above is remuneration for services rendered in special cases on behalf of German authorities and in the immediate interests of cooperation with foreign countries.

(6) The fellowship benefits shall also include health insurance contributions (including nursing care insurance) for the fellowship holders and accompanying family members. The fellowship provider shall also bear charges agreed with insurance companies for personal accident and liability insurance and, if stipulated, for professional liability insurance, details of which should be passed to the Federal Foreign Office.

### Article 3 Grants and subsidies

- (1) The regular fellowship benefits may also be supplemented by grants and subsidies in accordance with available budgetary resources, as far as this proves necessary. The respectively applicable levels of these ancillary benefits (maximum amounts) are determined in Appendix 1, Section 3; within the context of and in addition to the regulations outlined in the latter, benefits shall be granted by the agencies awarding fellowships in line with the principle of budgetary rigour.
- (2) Grants and subsidies of this nature include:
  - a) travel costs incurred by the fellowship holder – estimated, as necessary – within the context of the most economically reasonable means of transport; additionally the costs of the accompanying spouse and their children in justified exceptional cases,
  - b) costs incurred by interim trips to the country of origin on imperative professional or personal grounds, or in the wake of a two-year stay in Germany in the event that at least one university year must still be completed after the individual's return. Married fellowship holders with children who receive no funding for the purposes of family reunification may also receive subsidies amounting to half the total of saved family and child allowances for the purposes of making homeward journeys, this at shorter intervals.
  - c) subsidies within the framework of a monthly/annual mobility allowance, particularly for the funding of research trips or the participation in academic congresses,
  - d) costs for regular fees and contributions levied by the university for study purposes,
  - e) an annual flat-rate grant to cover ancillary costs in Germany, including clothing, books, stationary costs for seminar papers and dissertations, study-related trips within Germany, course and congress fees, other fees (except for language courses) and equipment subsidies such as computer grants (only for long-term measures in the in the categories III to VI),

- f) a one-off initial grant at the beginning of the academic activity or commencement of study at the German university location, particularly an accommodation subsidy to cover hotel or guest house expenses during the process of apartment hunting at the university location for a maximum of two months, excess baggage costs during travel, costs of a 2nd class rail card and costs of medical examinations required in the granting of residence permits,
- g) a one-off book grant for the procurement of specialist literature (for short-term measures only),
- h) an equipment/support costs subsidy in the event that the fellowship's academic income cannot be assured in any other manner (only in categories IV to VI),
- i) language course fees for fellowship holders up to a maximum period of six months, and for accompanying spouses up to four months; unavoidable transitional periods prior to or after the language course and necessary interim journeys to the university location will be subsidised in accordance with federal regulations governing travel expenses; an allowance shall be granted for the duration of the participation in a language course; in addition, subsidies for language courses during the fellowship period may be granted. As necessary and if possible, the fellowship holders should attend a German language course in their countries of origin prior to commencing their fellowships.
- j) an adequate rent allowance, in the event that the fellowship holder is obliged to expend an unreasonable amount of the fellowship payment, when the amount remaining to cover living expenses is considered, on appropriate accommodation customary in the place of residence, which may amount to a maximum of 40 per cent of the overall sum of the monthly fellowship payment, including the family allowance,
- k) printing cost subsidies in the case of doctorates and the granting of completion subsidies and bridging grants,
- l) flat-rate course fee allowances within programmes including participation in university summer or winter courses,
- m) a flat-rate monthly child allowance (for children under eighteen years of age) for single academics of both sexes,
- n) the equivalent of up to twelve months of fellowship funding for fellowship holders with children (up to the age of twelve) for the purposes of a fellowship extension of up to 12 months, or, in the

cases of fellowship holders in categories I - III, for the financing of verified childcare costs.

- (3) In exceptional cases, to which stringent standards must be applied, fellowship holders may be granted subsidies as compensation for unreasonable hardships. This shall also apply in the event that the success of studies cannot be guaranteed in any other manner, for reasons for which the fellowship holder is not responsible. It shall apply, in particular, in cases in which health insurance companies refuse to cover inevitable treatment costs, or in the event of repatriation due to illness or death.

#### Article 4 Support services and follow-up services

- (1) The funding measures for fellowship holders outlined below aim to elicit the recruitment of future professionals and executives via the provision of support and follow-up services to foreign students, trainees, graduates and academics, in addition to contributing to the academic and political education enjoyed by the foreign fellowship holders. The chief priority of the government is that, via the fellowship measures, individuals are recruited whose specific qualifications, personalities and socio-political efforts in their countries of origin make them potential holders of leadership positions. The measures also promote the networking of students and graduates from all countries, thus serving peaceful international exchange, which in turn can have a positive effect on the purposes of democracy-building and rule of law, the creation of civil societies and long-term crisis prevention.
- (2) Support measures include
  - a) events, particularly introductory events, specialised events, events relating to Germany and other countries, and reintegration events,
  - b) excursions related to the enhancement of study- and research-related knowledge, to specific information regarding state establishments, culture, economy and society within the Federal Republic of Germany and those furthering encounters between individual participants,
  - c) the drafting and provision of informational materials related closely to the funding benefits and
  - d) the requisite use of student assistants in order to perform the measures outlined in sections a) to c), above.
- (3) The support measures may also include other fellowship holders funded using federal resources in the event that the measures in question aim to promote academic, cultural and personal links between the fellowship holders. This shall also apply to fellowship holders funded within the context of programmes implemented collectively by fellowship organisations and third parties.
- (4) In addition to the support measures, follow-up measures are implemented for purposes of maintaining and consolidating the academic, cultural and personal links between former fellowship holders, in which previous fellowship holders from the GDR and those funded using federal resources within their countries of origin or a third country may be included. The regulations in Article 4, Para. 3 shall apply accordingly. Follow-up measures implemented in accordance with the performance specifications outlined in Articles 2 and 3 shall include, in particular:

- a) maintaining contact with former fellowship holders abroad,
  - b) publishing follow-up materials compiled by the organisations awarding fellowships,
  - c) the approval of specialist journals, publications, small devices and, to a limited extent, consumables,
  - d) repeat invitations for a further stay in Germany of up to three months for academic study trips,
  - e) invitations related to active participation in congresses in Germany and, in exceptional cases, abroad,
  - f) invitations to participate in specialised courses and training seminars for former fellowship holders,
  - g) the hosting of other follow-up events in Germany or abroad, such as the promotion of specialist events or those related to Germany by alumni associations.
- (5) After completing their fellowship periods, the fellowship holders should enter their addresses in the unified database for alumni maintained by the respective diplomatic missions, in order to benefit from the follow-up measures outlined in Article 4, and to uphold their availability as multipliers in their respective countries of origin.

#### Article 5 Equipment donations

- (1) Upon application, academic devices may be donated to academic institutions, chiefly those of a university nature. Returning and former fellowship holders, particularly from countries on the current version of the DAC list, and their German partner organisations, are eligible for such donations.
- (2) Equipment donations with a total value exceeding 30,000 EUR require a statement from the diplomatic mission and the agreement of the Federal Foreign Office, which shall seek approval from the Federal Ministry of Finance.
- (3) At all events, the diplomatic missions must be informed prior to the delivery of equipment donations.



## Article 6 'Sur-place' and third country programmes

- (1) With the agreement of the Federal Foreign Office, fellowship programmes may facilitate the funding of foreign students, trainees, graduates and academics by fellowships in their countries of origin or in third countries.
- (2) 'Sur-place' and third country programmes aim to promote German university projects abroad and, with this, Germany as a study location. They may also serve the further development of foreign university systems, the advancement of the young academics resident in these countries and their connection both to Germany and their homelands.
- (3) Within these programmes, in addition to taking account of the fellowship holders' academic qualifications, the fellowship payments are aligned to the cost of living in the countries in question; the amounts granted by the fellowship organisations with the approval of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research for stays by German funding recipients in these countries shall be deemed the maximum limits. In addition to the fellowship payments, regular fellowship benefits and grants and subsidies in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 may be granted, insofar as these do not apply specifically to stays within Germany. Other fellowship benefits necessary on the grounds of the circumstances prevailing in the countries in question, or as a result of the specific objectives of the respective programmes, may only be granted with the approval of the Federal Foreign Office.

## Article 7 Cooperation programmes

- (1) In addition to the traditional fellowship programmes, other programmes financed in part by a partner, e.g. a foreign government, may be procured in consultation with the Federal Foreign Office.
- (2) These cooperation programmes aim to consolidate educational collaboration with other countries and expand foreign cultural and educational policy via the involvement of partners in the fellowship programmes.
- (3) The fellowship benefits provided by Federal Foreign Office resources within these cooperation programmes may not exceed the rates stipulated in these Fellowship Guidelines. However, fellowship benefits not covered by these Guidelines or covered to these particular values may be provided by the respective partners.
- (4) The Federal Foreign Office must be informed in advance of agreements required for the purposes of the creation of a cooperation programme by the fellowship organisation with the partner without the financial involvement of the former.

## Article 8 Additional funding measures

- (1) Additional funding measures may be financed on the grounds of current political developments, or in order to achieve strategic objectives within foreign cultural and educational policy, this at the instigation of the Federal Foreign Office.
- (2) These funding measures shall be determined in a programme-specific manner with the approval of the Federal Foreign Office. The regulations stipulated in these Guidelines shall apply to the nature and amount of these funding measures.