

# Doctoral Scholarships of the Ad Infinitum Foundation: FAQ

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## Scholarship Conditions and Evaluation Process

### How much is the scholarship?

The AIF supports PhD candidates with a scholarship of up to 1.350 € per month for two years. The precise amount depends on the applicant's financial situation.

- Income - of any kind - on an average up to 460 € a month may be received without decreasing the applicant's scholarship. For applicants who receive more than 460 € a month (in cash or in kind; in the course of 12 months on an average), the amount exceeding 460 € a month will be deducted from the scholarship. Applicants who receive an overall income higher than the maximum amount of an AIF scholarship + 460 € (monthly average over the course of 12 months) are not eligible for an AIF scholarship. This includes any kind of income.
- If you are obliged to pay high costs for private reasons or for your research project, this may be taken into consideration in your favor.
- If you possess substantial financial assets, the amount of the scholarship may be reduced.

### When will I know if I get the scholarship?

The grant approval letter will be sent at the end of June.

### How is the decision on my application made?

GRADE verifies the need for support based on the information on the applicant's financial situation (section II of the application) and the supporting documents enclosed in the application.

A committee of the Faculty of Modern Languages examines the aptitude of the candidate for scientific work and the quality of the dissertation project. The committee takes into account the information on the dissertation project and on career goals (section III of the application) and additional relevant documents (CV, letter of recommendation, exposé).

## Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

### Can I apply if I'm not enrolled in German Studies?

The scholarships are available for doctoral candidates in German Studies as well as candidates in other disciplines at the Faculty of Modern Languages whose work has a substantial relation to German Studies, particularly in General and Comparative Literary Studies, General Linguistics, Scandinavian Studies or Theatre, Film and Media Studies. If you're not enrolled in German Studies, use the field "Subject matter of the dissertation and relation to German Studies" in the application form to demonstrate the relation of your project to German Studies. The relation to German Studies may also be mentioned in the letter of recommendation.

What is meant by „academic age“?

The biological age of the candidates is an unscientific criterion and thus irrelevant for the award of the scholarships. According to the mission of the foundation, the candidates should have completed their studies and previous research quickly and purposefully, and they should be at the beginning of their academic careers. Thus, please specify in the table all time periods spent studying for a degree or a doctorate or as a research assistant. This entire time – your “academic age” – should not exceed 8 years at the application deadline. “Should” means: An exception is possible, if there are special reasons (like raising children, long-time illnesses). If this applies in your case, you can indicate it in the CV.

What are the criteria for the evaluation by the scientific committee? What should I emphasize in my application?

The main criteria for the scientific evaluation are

1. qualification of the candidate,
2. quality of the dissertation proposal / project,
3. feasibility of the dissertation project (timetable, resources) and
4. relation of the dissertation project to German studies (“Germanistik”).

During the evaluation, the scientific committee will consider

1. the information on the dissertation project and on career goals in section III of the application,
2. your CV and the letter of recommendation by your supervisor included in the application and
3. the full exposée of your project which you submitted to the faculty with your application as a doctoral candidate.

What are the evaluation criteria regarding the financial situation?

The scholarships are intended for persons in need of support. Thus, persons who can finance their PhD from other sources without difficulty are not eligible. If you have additional financial resources at your disposal, the scholarship can be reduced accordingly. For the evaluation of your financial situation, the following questions are important:

- Do you already have an income or financial resources that can be used to support your PhD project for its entire duration without restricting your time for scientific work (e.g. a job as a research assistant, income from financial assets...)?
- Are there particular financial challenges for you and your PhD project (e.g. alimony / support for children and relatives, high research costs...)?

You should therefore present your income and your financial situation completely and transparently in the four tables. Use the free text field to describe any special circumstances which should be taken into account when your financial situation is assessed.

## Application Form

What should I consider regarding the table on assets/debts?

If you possess substantial financial assets, the amount of the scholarship may be reduced. This applies especially if these assets generate an income for you (interest payments, income from rent...). Yet if you do have assets, it is not necessarily an obstacle to a scholarship. Assets like retirement provisions or a car that you need are not detrimental.

Please specify any assets in all the categories completely and comprehensively. False statements may make your application ineligible, even if the assets in question would have been irrelevant, if stated correctly.

What should I consider regarding the table on persons responsible for maintenance / alimony?

Under certain circumstances, other persons may be responsible to pay maintenance / alimony for you while you are a doctoral candidate – e. g. your spouse. If they are wealthy enough to support you without difficulty, the funding may be reduced accordingly. Yet, if someone is liable to support you, it is not necessarily an obstacle to a scholarship. Thus, please specify such persons, if they exist, and their financial circumstances.

Please note: Parents are generally not responsible to pay maintenance / alimony for you as a doctoral candidate (except in cases where doing a PhD is a direct qualification for a certain profession).

What should I consider regarding the table on expenses?

A realistic estimate is sufficient. You do not need to calculate accurately to the nearest Euro. If you have unusually high expenses in specific categories for understandable reasons, this will be considered when your financial situation and your need for support are evaluated. Please specify reasons for unusually high expenses in the field “supplementary information”. Regarding the individual rows:

- Health insurance: This refers to a so-called “voluntary health insurance”, which you would have to take out as a scholarship holder, but not as a regular employee. Social security contributions deducted directly from wages count neither as revenue nor as expenditure.
- Research expenses are, e.g., expenses for books, working materials, conference travel.
- For general living expenses, we estimate a lump sum based on the standard rate for unemployment benefits plus 20 % (449 € \* 1,2) and on the monthly semester fee (376 € / 6). The standard rate includes costs for food, clothing, telephone and internet etc.
- “Child support or alimony payment” refers to the sum of actual payments for the support of dependents. This includes alimony payments, but not exclusively.
- “Additional particular expenses” can be, e.g., costs due to illness and disability, above-average travel costs between the place of residence, the place of work and / or the center of one's life, or the initial furnishing of an apartment. Please explain the expenses in the field “supplementary information”.

What is important when describing your dissertation project and your career goals in the application form?

Address the criteria for the scientific evaluation shortly and succinctly. In the field “Subject matter of the dissertation and relation to German studies”, you do not need to convincingly demonstrate the scientific quality of the dissertation project. You should focus on the relation to German studies instead. A close relation to German studies is an essential prerequisite for funding. For the evaluation of the scientific quality of your project, we will rely the letter of recommendation by your supervisor and the full exposé of your project which you submitted to the faculty with your application as a doctoral candidate.

The fields in the application form are purposefully small, detailed statements are not expected. Please keep your text suitably short and the font legible, even if the font size may be editable by certain software.