

Doctoral Scholarship of the Ad Infinitum Foundation: FAQ

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).

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 considers the information on the dissertation project and on career goals (section III of the application), the CV and the letter of recommendation.

When will I know if I get the scholarship?

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

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").

The decision is based on the information on the dissertation project and on career goals (section III of the application), the CV and the letter of recommendation by your supervisor.

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 have an income or financial resources that can be used to support your PhD project (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...)?

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 400 € a month may be received without decreasing the applicant's scholarship. For applicants who receive more than 400 € a month (in cash or in kind; in the course of 12 months on an average the amount exceeding 400 € a month will be deducted from the scholarship. Applicants who receive an overall income higher than the maximum amount of an AIF scholarship + 400 € (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 dispose of substantial financial assets, the amount of the scholarship may be reduced.

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

If you dispose of substantial financial assets, the amount of the scholarship may be reduced. This applies especially if those 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 (barring 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 evaluating your financial situation and your need for support. 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 % (432,- € * 1,2) and on the monthly semester fee (367,- € / 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".