

Starting scholarships for international doctoral candidates

– Frequently Asked Questions –

What are the prerequisites for an application?

- Either faculty letter of admission as doctoral candidate at Goethe University Frankfurt or a specific declaration by your supervisor that she / he will supervise your doctoral project
- Start of doctoral project within the last year counting from application deadline
- Degree qualifying you as a doctoral candidate awarded by institution outside of Germany
- No German citizenship (applications by binational candidates are possible)

Who will decide on my application?

The applications are screened and summarized by members of the central GRADE support unit. The GRADE Board of Directors makes the final decision based on the supplied summary material and the original applications. The Board of Directors includes faculty members from different academic fields and also PhD and postdoc representatives.

When will I get feedback about my application?

We will try to process the applications as quickly as possible. The selection is made by the GRADE Board of Directors after a careful review. Therefore, it might take 6-8 weeks until a final decision is reached.

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

The main criteria for the evaluation are

- the scientific potential of the candidate,
- the scientific quality, feasibility and careful planning of the dissertation project and
- realistic prospects for the establishment of the doctoral project at Goethe University.

Thus, you should carefully consider the following points when preparing your application:

- Explain your potential as a promising young researcher in your CV (e.g. mention scholarships, honors and awards, if applicable: publications and conference contributions).
- Explain your research project clearly and succinctly in the proposal (research question, scientific methods, working plan and timetable).
- Prepare a preliminary plan for funding the whole duration of your doctoral research, together with your supervisor (including possible financing options and a timetable for next steps to make use of them, like applications for long-term scholarships).

If applications are comparable in terms of their academic merits, social aspects and the financial situation can be considered as an additional selection criterion.

Why do I have to specify my current contract situation and details about other scholarships?

To a certain extent, starting scholarships can co-exist with other types of funding. But for legal reasons, you cannot receive a starting scholarship and have a full-time-employment or have a second scholarship at the same time. Permitted forms of employment during a starting scholarship include:

- An employment of up to 16 hours / month with an income of no more than 6.000 € / year, if the content and purpose of the employment are clearly different from the scholarship
- Teaching assignments at the university
- An employment as a scientific assistant at the university of no more than 42 hours / month

Detailed guidelines can be found in the „[Guidelines of the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main on awarding stipends to doctoral candidates and post-doctoral candidates](#)“. We are required to check for and take into consideration any double financing.

What if my contract situation changes after the submission of my application?

The starting scholarships can be combined with other types of support under certain conditions. Since we need to find a specific solution for each single case, it is important that you inform us about any changes concerning your positions, scholarships, and contracts after your application has been submitted. Otherwise, we cannot ensure that the starting scholarship can be disbursed.