

The Graduate School of the Faculty of Human Sciences

Gronewaldstrasse 2, D-50931 Cologne
Email: Graduiertenschule-HF@uni-koeln.de
Web: <https://hf-graduiertenschule.uni-koeln.de/en/>



Announcement Grants for research stays abroad

The Graduate School allows grants to individual members in order to help them carry out research abroad, either at foreign universities, university unrelated research institutions or other institutions which might provide resources particularly helpful for a successful outcome of the research project (e.g. libraries, archives, laboratories).

Funding for research abroad is capped at €3,500.00/person; as a general rule, the minimum duration of the stay is two weeks.

The scholarship is designed to cover:

- Travelling expenses to the host institution and back as well as costs for housing and boarding, in accordance with the University of Cologne's travel expense guidelines
- If necessary, additional costs for research materials or the participation in scientific/academic conferences or congresses abroad

Other costs, such as fees for health, accident or personal liability insurances or for private, additional trips within the host country, cannot be paid for by the Graduate School.

Stays abroad for the sole purpose of attending regular events or in preparation of future doctoral studies CANNOT be funded. Neither can travelling and staying abroad in order to find and choose a topic for the doctoral thesis be funded.

Third-party payments (additional scholarships, prize money etc.) are to be reported in the application and will be counted against the total scholarship amount.

Please note:

It is absolutely essential that applications for grants be submitted to the Graduate School in advance of the intended research stay abroad and in time for one of the four regular deadlines (March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15 of each year).

Unfortunately, retroactive applications for travels that have already taken place by the respective deadline cannot be considered.

Who can apply?

Members who contribute actively to the programme of the Graduate School, and do so voluntarily and regularly, are entitled to apply for study abroad scholarships. Regular activities (generally once a year) that entitle a member to apply include:

- Presentation and debate of the individual member's research project at specific presentation days, in colloquia or at other events hosted by the Graduate School
- Contributions (talks, papers, chairing of workshops or parts thereof, presentation of results or methodology, etc.) at events hosted by the Graduate School or partner organisations, e.g. guest lectures, workshops, seminars, field trips
- (Joint) organisation or presenting of events, e.g. seminars, workshops, guest lectures or field trips

- Joint organisation of or participation in networking events of the Graduate School (“Stammtisch”/social meetings, welcome days)
- Making specific recommendations (proposals) for events (e.g. workshops, conferences, congresses) and help organising them
- Serving on the doctoral committee (“Promotionsausschuss”) or commitment to working groups (“Arbeitsgruppen”)
- Serving as a doctoral representative on the Graduate School’s board

Additional forms of active membership not listed above may also entitle to apply for a grant if they constitute clearly defined personal contributions to the qualification approach of the Graduate School and are equal to the above examples.

Applicants who obtained membership of the Graduate School before 1 August 2016 are exempt from the condition of an “active membership” and can apply even if they do not meet the above-mentioned criteria.

All applicants are responsible for the preparation of their stay abroad, including but not limited to: Insurances, finding work at the foreign university, all agreements and arrangements necessary for the realisation of the research project.

Proof of sufficient knowledge of the working language/the host country’s language is required.

Which application documents are needed?

The application for funding a research stay abroad should include:

1. A written statement, detailing the reasons for applying (roughly one page).
This explanation should also inform about the applicant’s activities that entitle him or her to apply (see list above).
2. An outline of the research project (about 5-10 pages), detailing preparations as well as the goals for the stay abroad. This outline should also include a detailed work plan.
Also, it has to be argued convincingly why a personal stay abroad will be necessary or more useful for the project than a collaboration by means of electronic or online communications (e-mail, telephone or Zoom, for example).
3. Proof(s) that the stay at the host institution has been arranged in advance or an invitation by the host institution
4. Proof of sufficient knowledge of the working language/the host country’s language
5. A detailed calculation of costs (if possible, please already include receipts)
6. A statement by the first supervisor. This statement should take the following aspects into consideration:
 - How well does the first supervisor know the applicant?
 - How does the first supervisor rate the applicant’s performance and abilities in comparison to other doctoral students?
 - How does the first supervisor rate the academic/scientific quality and relevance of the PhD project?
 - How does the first supervisor rate the applicant’s work plan?
 - How important is the stay abroad for the development of the PhD project according to the first supervisor?
7. If applicable, proof of further income

Please note:

If possible, a research stay abroad should be carefully arranged in due time before an application for a grant. Still, it may happen that you are planning a research stay abroad and to apply for a grant but will not be able to obtain certain documents necessary for application (i.e. an invitation

letter by the host institution or the recommendation letter by your supervisor) within due time for the relevant deadline.

In these cases we ask you to submit these parts of your application which can be prepared by yourself in time for the appropriate deadline and indicate in the application letter which documents could not yet be obtained.

A decision on your application will then be made under the proviso that the outstanding documents are submitted as soon as possible, but at the latest before the start of the scheduled trip without being requested to do so.

Who decides upon the applications?

Based on all applications, the board of the Graduate School debates four times a year whether to grant a scholarship and also decides upon the respective funding amounts. The following deadlines apply:

- 15 September
- 15 December
- 15 March
- 15 June

Please note:

Please allow for the fact that several weeks may elapse between the application deadline and the decision on the individual applications.

If a research stay abroad has been planned at too short notice it may happen that your application has been handed in within due time but you will have to travel shortly after the deadline and before a decision about your application has been made.

If it will come to a positive decision in the meantime the amount of funding mentioned in the approval will be granted in form of a subsequent reimbursement of travel expenses and, if applicable, of additional costs; if, however, the decision should turn out to be negative, any reimbursement will have to be denied even for still pending parts of the stay abroad.

What are the selection criteria?

The following criteria will be taken into consideration:

- Plausibility of reasoning of application and work plan:
Importance of the stay abroad for the development of the PhD project, for the applicant's academic / scientific or professional development or for tying up (international) scientific cooperation
- Scientific/academic quality, originality and relevance to the discipline of the project
- Feasibility of the particular research project and its integration into the dissertation project as a whole:
It should become clear to the selection board how the intended stay abroad will contribute to the progress of the dissertation project and that the intended work abroad will correspond to the current state of progress of the dissertation
- Suitability of the situation in the host country/at the host institute:
The selection committee should see clear how careful the stay abroad has been prepared and how intense the scientific exchange, the access to data or source material and the applicant's supervision and integration will prospectively be at the host institution: Which sources, resources, observations or empirical approaches to the

research field will be accessible to the applicant? Is the applicant expected to take part in certain activities (colloquia, trials, field trips, etc.) at the host institution? Which is the additional benefit of an actual presence on site compared to an exchange only by means of telecommunications?

If it is not possible to make a selection on the basis of these criteria the board of the Graduate School will also take into consideration the quality and quantity of research and other academic performances of the applicant (publications, lectures, etc.) at the time of application.

Report and receipts:

The applicant is required to hand in a brief report (2-3 pages) about the research stay abroad no later than two months after the end of the stay. This report is supposed to document the course and results of the stay and should be written in a way that allows it to be used to inform others interested in the subject matter and might serve as an inspiration to other doctoral candidates to work on their own projects.

For internal and external doctoral candidates alike, the settlement is made as a Statement of Travel Expenses according to the State Travel Expenses Act ("Landesreisekostengesetz") in the form provided at the UoC, and, if applicable, in form of a subsequent reimbursement of additional costs for research materials or the participation in scientific/academic conferences or congresses abroad.

(For more information about the administration of travel expenses, please see https://verwaltung.uni-koeln.de/abteilung44/content/travel_expenses/index_eng.html).

Please keep in mind that even those who are not employed at the UoC and do their doctorate as external candidates, if they have been promised funding by the Graduate School, must request and obtain a formal travel authorization ("Dienstreisegenehmigung" in advance of the trip so that their trip can later be accounted for by the UoC.

In these cases the travel authorization must be signed by the respective first supervisor of their dissertation instead of an immediate superior or head of institute.

You will receive the information on the mandatory field "Financing: cost center or PSP element (mandatory information)" together with the information on funding by the Graduate School.

Please send the complete statement of travel expenses including all original receipts for the costs incurred as well as the travel authorization and the completed statement form (please leave the fields: "Funding: Cost center or PSP element (mandatory)" and "Head of institute / department (cost centre manager)" at the end of the form blank; they will be filled out by the Graduate School) to the Graduate School Office no later than four months after the end of the trip.

Please send in your application for a research stay allowance by e-mail (as one single PDF file) to:

Graduate School of the Faculty of Human Sciences
Gronewaldstrasse 2
D-50931 Cologne
Graduiertenschule-HF@uni-koeln.de