

Regulation on Graduate Funding in the Arts and Sciences at the Institutions of Higher Education in Saarland

Note: This translation is provided for information purposes only. In the event of any discrepancy between the translation and the original German version published in the Official Bulletin (*Dienstblatt der Hochschulen des Saarlandes*), the provisions of the latter shall take precedence.

Pursuant to Article 72 of the Saarland Higher Education Institutions Act (*Saarländisches Hochschulgesetz SHSG*) and in consultation with the University of Applied Sciences in Saarland (*Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft des Saarlandes*, htw saar), the University of Music Saar (*Hochschule für Musik Saar HfM*) and the University of Art and Design (*Hochschule der Bildenden Künste HBK*) and with the consent of the principal regulatory authority for research in Saarland, Saarland University Senate has issued the following Regulation on Graduate Funding in the Arts and Sciences at the Institutions of Higher Education in Saarland.

Section 1 Funding objectives

To support early-stage researchers who are working to acquire an advanced academic qualification in their field of scientific or scholarly interest and to support young artists in their artistic development, financial grants shall be awarded to graduates at Saarland University, htw saar, HfM and HBK in accordance with the provisions of this regulation and subject to the financing arrangements provided for this purpose in the state budget. A specific objective of the proposed framework is to facilitate cooperation between Saarland University and htw saar to enable graduates at these institutions to undertake doctoral studies, particularly through the establishment of joint supervision arrangements. Such arrangements allow Saarland University and htw saar to bear joint responsibility for supporting early career researchers and by means of such cooperation each institution is able to diversify the methodologies implemented in its doctoral studies programmes, from pure basic research to applications-driven research. Joint supervision arrangements can also be established between the other partner universities participating in the Saarland Graduate Funding Programme.

Section 2 Funding principles

(1) Graduates who have completed a university degree that entitles them to seek admission to a doctoral studies programme may apply for a doctoral studies scholarship in accordance with the provisions of this regulation if the proposed research project represents a significant potential contribution to the respective research field.

(2) Graduates from HfM or HBK who attained an above-average university qualification may apply for a scholarship in accordance with the provisions of this regulation in order to pursue an artistic development project. The project should be approved by the respective university and should have the potential to contribute meaningfully to the development of artistic forms and modes of expression. In order to establish that the applicant is suitably qualified to undertake the proposed artistic project, the applicant may, in addition to their academic credentials, submit proof of artistic accomplishments, experience and skills acquired or

demonstrated within or outside of an art college or art academy. Scholarships may also be awarded to foster the development of candidates with outstanding artistic aptitude and skill.

(3) A grant is generally awarded either as a basic scholarship or as a project completion scholarship. A basic scholarship is awarded to support a scientific, scholarly or artistic project from its inception. A project completion scholarship is awarded to support scientific, scholarly or artistic projects that are likely to be completed within one year. Where reasonable grounds exist, other scholarships may be awarded to provide start-up financing for a scientific, scholarly or artistic project or to provide interim financing to bridge a funding gap in a scientific, scholarly or artistic project that is already underway. The same project cannot receive funding through more than one type of GraduSaar scholarship. Pursuant to Article 72 of the Saarland Higher Education Institutions Act (SHSG), financial support can be provided by a scholarship or by a loan or by a combination of both funding models.

(4) The duration of a scholarship is typically

1. two years for a basic scholarship
2. one year for a project completion scholarship
3. no more than six months for other types of scholarship.

If the status of a project is such that continued funding can be justified, holders of a basic scholarship may apply to receive a funding extension of up to one year, while holders of a project completion scholarship may be awarded up to three months of additional funding. In such cases, previous periods of financial support shall be taken into account. If the project cannot be completed due to circumstances that could not be foreseen when the scholarship was awarded and that are beyond the scholarship holder's control, a basic scholarship may be extended by at most six months and a project completion scholarship extended by at most three months.

(5) The scholarship holder must intend to carry out the proposed scientific, scholarly or artistic project at one of the participating universities. If a doctoral research project is being jointly supervised, the supervising universities should, as a rule, both be part of the Saarland Graduate Funding Programme. However, in exceptional circumstances, a participating university can enter a joint supervision agreement with another 'external' university, particularly when the relevant subject area is not available at any of the universities in the Saarland Graduate Funding Programme.

(6) A scholarship shall not be awarded to anyone who has received or is receiving other funding for that same purpose from a public or private source. This does not affect the right of the scholarship holder to acquire top-up funding (e.g. additional mobility grants).

(7) Funding cycles commence on two dates each year: 1 April and 1 October. Applications for funding in accordance with the provisions of Sections 10 and 11 below must be submitted before a specified application deadline, which is normally 15 December or 15 June of each year. The corresponding funding start-dates must also be specified.

Section 3

Formation and duties of the selection committee

(1) A selection committee shall be established at Saarland University with responsibility for awarding funding in accordance with this regulation and subject to the financial resources provided for this purpose in the state budget.

(2) A supporting statement from the university or relevant faculty must be obtained before any decision on a funding award is made. The relevant university or faculty is that associated with the proposed project. The universities or faculties shall form preparatory commissions for this purpose, the composition of which is to be determined by each university or faculty itself and communicated to the selection committee.

(3) If the number of applicants meeting the funding criteria is greater than the number of scholarships available, the selection committee shall determine the best candidates for funding, whereby successful candidates must have demonstrated reasonable need for financial support for their proposed scientific, scholarly or artistic project. The selection of the best candidates shall be based on personal aptitude and on expert appraisal of each candidate's abilities and achievements in the field. Personal aptitude shall be determined primarily by the applicant's ability to undertake fundamental but also applied scientific, scholarly or artistic work, as well as by the quality of the applicant's previous academic credentials.

(4) If after assessing the content of the proposed project, the selection committee chooses not to follow the supporting statement provided by the faculty or university, the faculty of university shall be given the opportunity to be heard. Where appropriate, conciliation proceedings may be conducted if so consented to by the university involved.

Section 4

Composition of the selection committee

(1) The selection committee shall comprise:

1. a representative of Saarland University's management team, who shall chair the committee
2. a representative of the management team at htw saar
3. two members of professorial staff, one from Saarland University and one from htw saar
4. a member of the academic staff at Saarland University or at htw saar holding a doctoral degree
5. a graduate student from Saarland University or from htw saar.

There shall be parity of representation between Saarland University and htw saar with respect to the committee members defined in items 4 and 5 above. A representative of the management teams at HBK or HfM may be appointed where necessary.

(2) The following members of the selection committee shall act only in an advisory capacity:

1. the equal opportunity officers of the participating universities

2. a representative from each of the preparatory commissions
3. two members of the cooperative strategy steering group; one from Saarland University and one from htw saar

(3) The members defined in Paragraph 1 above shall be appointed by the relevant university management teams; a deputy shall also be appointed for each member of the committee.

(4) The members defined in Paragraph 1 above shall hold office for a term of two years. Members may be reappointed. If a member of the committee withdraws before the end of their term, a new replacement shall be appointed for the remainder of the term.

(5) The selection committee shall be quorate when the chair and two other members are present. If a committee vote is tied, the chair shall have the casting vote.

(6) A member acting in an advisory capacity may also simultaneously hold a voting position on the committee. Decisions regarding who to send as delegates to the committee rest with the relevant university management teams.

Section 5

Type and scope of funding

(1) Scholarships and special payments shall be issued in the form of grants. They are considered to be voluntary grants (*Zuwendungen*) within the meaning of German budgetary law. Awards are discretionary and applicants do not have automatic legal entitlement to receive a scholarship or special payment.

(2) The scholarship is paid at a basic rate of €1000 per month. In the case of artistic projects, payments may depart from the standard monthly cycle. For each dependent child, the scholarship holder shall receive a supplementary payment of €150 per month. The total monthly child supplement shall not exceed €300. The payment of a double supplement for a single child is not permitted.

(3) The scholarship holder's income will be taken into account when determining the value of the award. The scholarship is independent of parental income and of the income of the spouse or civil partner.

Section 6

Special payments to cover materials and equipment and travel expenses

(1) Special payments to cover the costs of materials and equipment and for travel expenses may be made to scholarship holders on request if such expenses are required for the purposes of their scientific, scholarly or artistic project and the payments are within the available overall budget. Payments should be made in accordance with the principles of sound financial management. Special payments should not total more than €1000 per year during the funding period.

(2) Special payments shall not be made for materials and equipment that can be provided free of charge by the university or by other institutions.

(3) Travel expenses cover the costs for transport, accommodation and attendance fees. Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Saarland Travel Expenses Act.

(4) Claimants shall provide proof of the costs for materials and equipment and for travel expenses. Special payment claims shall be accompanied by a letter of support from the project supervisor.

(5) Travel expenses may also be reimbursed for non-scholarship holders if residual budgetary funds are available and if such expenses are required for the purposes of their scientific, scholarly or artistic project.

Section 7 Secondary employment activities

Scholarship holders may carry out no more than ten hours of secondary employment activities per week. Such activities must be in a scientific, scholarly or closely-related field or be of an artistic nature and must not hinder work on the scholarship holder's scientific, scholarly or artistic project. Scholarship holders who wish to undertake a secondary employment activity whose scope exceeds that defined as 'marginal employment' in German law (*geringfügige Beschäftigung*) shall seek approval from the selection committee before taking up any such activity. The scholarship holder shall submit the request, which must be accompanied by a statement from the project supervisor, to the selection committee. The committee shall decide whether to approve the secondary employment activity and whether the activity is compatible with the scientific, scholarly or artistic project. Scholarship holders who wish to undertake a secondary employment activity that is in a scientific, scholarly or closely-related field or that is of an artistic nature and that is deemed to be marginal employment under German law (i.e. a low-wage 'mini job' or a job of short duration) do not need to notify or seek approval from the selection committee. In the case of artistic projects, the compatibility and scope of the proposed secondary employment activity shall be decided by the relevant preparatory commission.

Section 8 Income assessment

(1) Scholarships are means tested, i.e. the scholarship holder's income shall be taken into account when determining the value of the award, provided that the net annual income is greater than €7670. This threshold shall increase by €1022 for each child within the meaning of Section 5(2). The annual income of relevance for assessment purposes is that in the calendar year prior to application. The monthly scholarship payment shall be reduced by one twelfth of the assessed net income.

(2) Earnings from secondary employment activities that have been approved pursuant to Section 7 are not used to assess net income.

(3) If an applicant can provide reasonable grounds why their income during the proposed funding period is likely to be less than the annual income in the calendar year prior to application, the lower income level is used to calculate the scholarship amount.

(4) Changes in income during the funding period shall be taken into account if they would increase or reduce the monthly scholarship by more than €50. The increased scholarship shall be paid from the first day of the month in which the change in income took effect; the reduced scholarship shall be paid from the first day of the month following that in which the change in income took effect.

Section 9

Income assessment procedure

(1) The applicant or scholarship holder shall notify the chair of the selection committee of their income level and the number of dependent children, and undertakes to report any changes in income. Proof of income shall be demonstrated by presenting tax assessment notices or some other appropriate form of documentation. If it is not currently possible to furnish proof of income or if this would involve disproportionate effort, the applicant or scholarship holder shall provide a credible statement of income. In that case, the scholarship is awarded subject to final determination.

(2) In certain individual cases, income will not be assessed if and to the extent that such an assessment would mean undue hardship, particularly when the income is compensation for non-financial damage suffered.

(3) The value of the award calculated pursuant to Section 8 shall be rounded up to the nearest euro. If the amount thus calculated is less than €50, no scholarship shall be awarded.

Section 10

Application for funding

(1) The scholarships are granted by the selection committee on the basis of a written application submitted by the applicant.

Applicants shall enclose the following supporting documents with their application:

1. Application form with personal information, educational history and details of the proposed scientific, scholarly or artistic project.
2. Personal statement explaining why financial assistance is required
3. If applicable, proof of family circumstances
4. If applicable, proof of income
5. Copy of identity card, passport or comparable proof of identity
6. CV / résumé
7. Copies of relevant academic qualifications
8. Outline of proposed project (work/research plan and schedule) – not to exceed 10 A4 pages
9. Project supervision agreement, i.e. written consent from a member of university staff who is entitled to provide academic/artistic supervision (as defined in the relevant doctoral

degree regulations or, in the case of artistic projects, the applicable regulations at the applicant's university)

10. Two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a member of one of the participating universities.

The application shall also be submitted digitally (on CD-ROM or a comparable data storage device) and shall contain the completed application form, personal statement, CV/résumé, academic certificates, brief description of project, project supervision agreement and letters of recommendation.

(2) Letters of recommendation relating to scientific or scholarly research projects shall be written by persons who are eligible to be appointed as thesis examiners in accordance with the applicable doctoral degree regulations; for artistic projects letters of recommendation shall be written by persons authorized in accordance with the applicable regulations at the applicant's university.

(3) Applicants shall confirm that their project is not receiving support from any other public or private funding source. Applications submitted to other funding sources shall be declared.

Section 11

Application for a funding extension

(1) Scholarship holders shall enclose the following supporting documents with their application for a funding extension:

1. Application form with personal information and information about the current status of the scientific, scholarly or artistic project.
2. Personal statement explaining why financial assistance is required
3. Project report (work/research plan and schedule)
4. Supporting statement from the project supervisor. Scholarship holders seeking an application for an extraordinary funding extension (see Section 2(4)) are required to submit a further letter of recommendation from a qualified source.

The application shall also be submitted digitally (on CD-ROM or a comparable data storage device) and shall contain the completed application form, personal statement, project report and letter(s) of recommendation.

(2) Letters of recommendations shall be written by qualified persons as set out in Section 10(2) above.

Section 12

Interruption of project, revocation of funding and end of funding period

(1) Scholarship holders who interrupt their scientific, scholarly or artistic project shall notify the chair of the selection committee without unreasonable delay. Scholarship payments shall be suspended from the start of the interruption period, which – notwithstanding statutory provisions regarding parental leave – should normally not exceed six months. If the scholarship holder interrupts the project due to illness or some other important reason beyond their

control, scholarship payments may continue to be made for up to six weeks. Scholarship payments can resume once the scholarship holder has provided notification that the period of interruption has ended. If the duration of the interruption is such that it is doubtful whether the scientific, scholarly or artistic project can be completed within the remaining funding period, the selection committee shall decide whether to extend funding in accordance with the provisions of Section 11. Delaying the start of the funding period is also deemed to be an interruption.

(2) If a scholarship holder interrupts her scientific, scholarly or artistic project during the period of statutory maternity leave, scholarship payments may, on request, continue to be made at two thirds of the monthly amount. The funding period shall be extended by the duration of the interruption.

(3) Funding shall cease if the scholarship holder abandons the scientific, scholarly or artistic project or if it becomes apparent that the scholarship holder is not investing the time and effort that is necessary and that can be reasonably expected to ensure project completion. The scholarship holder shall be given the opportunity to be heard before any decision to revoke the scholarship is made.

(4) Funding shall finish

1. at then end of the month in which the oral defence is held or in which the final evaluation of the artistic project is made
2. at then end of the month in which the scholarship holder begins employment that is not compatible with the criteria set out in Section 7 above
3. when the decision to revoke funding in accordance with paragraph 3 above become effective.

Section 13

Reporting requirements

(1) After approximately one year of funding, the scholarship holder shall deliver an oral status report on their project in a colloquium attended by all scholarship holders from the participating universities.

(2) A written report on the status of the scientific, scholarly or artistic project shall be submitted when applying for a funding extension (see Section 11(1), item 3).

(3) Once funding has finished, scholarship holders shall submit a final report to the selection committee. If the scholarship holder conducted doctoral research on a scientific or scholarly project, they shall also present confirmation from the respective faculty that the doctoral thesis has been submitted for assessment. If the scholarship holder was awarded funding for an artistic project, they shall present confirmation from the respective university that the project has been completed. If the scholarship holder is unable to submit the required confirmation, they shall explain the reasons and provide a statement on the intended progress of the project. In this case, the scholarship holder shall provide the selection committee with an annual written project progress report by a date to be specified by the committee. This requirement shall

continue until the thesis has been submitted for assessment or the artistic project has been completed, but for no more than three years after funding finished.

(4) The project supervisor shall submit a statement regarding the annual progress report referred to in Paragraph 3 above.

Section 14

Participation in skill-enhancement and professionalization courses

Scholarship holders at the participating universities are also offered courses and advisory services that cover subject-specific research skills and key, cross-disciplinary competencies. To cover the associated personnel costs and material expenses, the universities may draw in part on funds from the overall budget provided for the Saarland Graduate Funding Programme. These skill-enhancement courses and advisory services should be used by scholarship holders to advance their academic, personal and professional development.

Section 15

Commencement and review

(1) This regulation shall come into force on the day after it is announced in the Official Bulletin of the Institutions of Higher Education in Saarland (*Dienstblatt der Hochschulen des Saarlandes*).

(2) Saarland University shall review this regulation at regular intervals and in consultation with the other participating universities in order to check the continued suitability of the funding options and funding procedures provided for in this regulation and to adapt them as necessary. The first review shall be conducted two years after this regulation comes into force.

Saarbrücken, 7 July 2020

President of Saarland University
(Univ.-Prof. Dr. Manfred Schmitt)