

Scholarship Department

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SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES (PhD)

June 2025

USie/UGD 06/25

Please check our website (www.boell.de/scholarships) for the latest version of this information before submitting your application as details of application requirements and information for specific target groups are updated regularly.

Table of Contents

1. Requirements for your scholarship application	1
2. Selection procedure, stages and criteria	2
3. Deadlines	3
4. Documents to include with your application	3
5. Important notes for applicants	5
6. Checklist	6

1. Requirements for your scholarship application

The Heinrich Böll Foundation's Scholarship Department awards scholarships to German and foreign PhD students in accordance with the guidelines issued by Germany's Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) and the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt).

You will find details of special focus programmes on our website at www.boell.de/de/stipendium-studium.

	Germans/Foreign students educated in Germany	EU nationals/Students not educated in Germany	Non-EU nationals/Students not educated in Germany
Admission to doctoral studies	Proof of admission to doctoral studies by a state or state-recognised university, as a rule in Germany, must be included in with the application.	Proof of admission to doctoral studies by a state or state-recognised university, as a rule in Germany, must be included with the application.	Proof of admission to doctoral studies by a state or state-recognised university, as a rule in Germany, must be included with the application.
Application date	The university diploma must be submitted. Preliminary work on the PhD project must have been completed and a valid timetable for completion must be presented.	The university diploma must be submitted. Preliminary work on the PhD project must have been completed and a valid timetable for completion must be presented.	The university diploma must be submitted. Preliminary work on the PhD project must have been completed and a valid timetable for completion must be presented.
Application procedure at Studienwerk (scholarship division)	As of 1 st March and 1 st September	As of 1 st March and 1 st September	As of 1 st March and 1 st September
Subjects	All PhD subjects related to focal points of the Foundation's activities will be given priority.	All PhD subjects related to focal points of the Foundation's activities will be given priority.	All PhD subjects related to focal points of the Foundation's activities will be given priority.

	Germans/Foreign students educated in Germany	EU nationals/Students not educated in Germany	Non-EU nationals/Students not educated in Germany
Up to one year's funding to complete PhD studies	Not possible	Not possible	Not possible
Regular duration of scholarship	3,5 years as a rule (three years, may be extended at most by 6 months)	3,5 years as a rule (three years, may be extended at most by 6 months)	3,5 years as a rule (three years, may be extended at most by 6 months)
Proof of proficiency in German	–	Level B2 or DSH 1 (with certificate)	Level B2 or DSH 1 (with certificate)
Scholarship amount (Possibly plus family and/or childcare allowance, health insurance or similar)	€1550,- per month basic scholarship plus €100 per month research costs allowance*	€1550,- per month basic scholarship plus €100 per month research costs allowance*	€1400 per month, plus € 100 mobility allowance per month, plus various individual allowances
Funding of limited periods spent abroad for research purposes	Additional funding available for scholarship-holders only	Additional funding available for scholarship-holders only	For scholarship-holders only: Funding is available for limited periods spent abroad.
Funding of tuition fees	Not possible in Germany. Possible to a limited extent in other countries	Not possible in Germany. Possible to a limited extent in other countries	Not possible

*from October 2025: €1650,- per month basic scholarship

Refugees can apply regardless of their asylum status.

2. Selection procedure, stages and criteria

The Heinrich Böll Foundation's selection procedure for scholarship applicants consists of **three stages**:

1.1 Stage 1: Submission of **written application documents**

Two staff members from the Studienwerk and from another department of the Heinrich Böll Foundation decide whether the application will be forwarded to the second stage.

1.2 Stage 2: An interview with a **liaison lecturer**

1.3 Stage 3: Digital interview with committee with **3 to 4 committee members, including 1 to 2 external members, one scholarship holder and one staff member of the Studienwerk.**

At each stage a small group is selected for the next stage. You will be notified in writing of the decision reached at each stage of the selection procedure.

Stage 1: Submission of written application documents

The key criteria for assessing written applications and admission to the next stage of the procedure are:

- **very good school and university academic record**
- **A convincing research project (exposé, innovative line of enquiry, realistic timetable, preliminary work that has reached an advanced stage)**
- **Social commitment and political interest**
- **Convincing arguments for applying to the Heinrich Böll Foundation**

Stage 2: Interview with a liaison lecturer

At this stage a **report** by the liaison lecturer is added to your application. It is based on an interview of about **an hour** with the liaison lecturer appointed by the Heinrich Böll Foundation (on site, conducted by telephone or as digital interview).

The main points dealt with in the interview with the liaison lecturer will be:

- PhD thesis subject, theoretical and methodical approach, relevance, status of preliminary work, timetable and, if appropriate, relationship between academic research, practice and politics
- Main focus of research work, research interests
- Career prospects, goal orientation
- Social commitment and political interest as appropriate
- Personal suitability

The liaison lecturer will then write an expert report on the interview covering the above-mentioned points.

Stage 3: Digital interview with committee

On the basis of the liaison lecturers' and the quality of the exposé applicants will be invited to attend the digital interview with committee.

The interview will focus mainly on assessing applicants' professional and personal abilities as described in our Mission Statement on Promoting Young Talent (see [www.boell.de/en/Mission Statement](http://www.boell.de/en/Mission%20Statement)).

The committee consists of university lecturers from different disciplines. Most of them are not from your subject area or have detailed expertise of your field of study. Please keep this in mind when presenting your research project.

NB: If you have already attended the third stage of our selection procedure and received a letter of rejection you may not re-apply.

3. Deadlines

Application deadline (please note: we only accept online applications)	By 1 March*	By 1 September*
Stage 2: Interview with liaison lecturer	Generally by mid May	Generally by mid November
Stage 3: Digital interview with committee	May/June/July*	Dec./Jan./Feb.*
Notification of scholarship award	June/July	January/February
Probable commencement of scholarship payments	Timely (at the latest 1 October)	Timely (At the latest 1 April)

* Application deadlines are binding, with no exceptions permitted. You will be notified of your digital interview with committee in stage 3 date.

Please note that additional special focus programmes (with a thematic focus or for a focus group) will be advertised in irregular intervals. Here, too, the above-mentioned deadlines for German and international students apply.

Please consult our website <https://www.boell.de/en/scholarships>.

The password-protected web portal for online applications is accessible at least six weeks before the application deadline.

4. Documents to include with your application

If you are interested in the Heinrich Böll Foundation's scholarship and funding programme, please use the web portal on www.boell.de/en/application for your application.

A complete set of application documents needs to be uploaded to the web portal as pdf versions of the following documents.

I. Application form for a scholarship for doctoral studies (PhD)

The document's template is available from our website and from the download center of the application portal www.boell.de/en/application. Please enter the following data online into the pdf form.

- Your personal data and CV
- Your motivation for applying to the Heinrich Böll Foundation
- An outline of your social commitments and political interests
- An outline of your PhD thesis project et al.

II. Copy of your degree certificate or equivalent

If applicable, a translation of the documents in German or English, and with an explanation of the grading if it differs from the German system (cf *Modifizierte Bayerische Formel* on the Internet). The degree certificate or equivalent must be available at the time of application.

III. Certification by the university of admission to doctoral studies or if necessary, justified confirmation by the supervisor

IV. For international applicants: Proof of German language proficiency

- **Minimum requirement:** „Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang“ **DSH 1** or Level **B2**
- The proof is absolutely necessary.

V. Detailed exposé of your research project/PhD thesis (max. 10 pages)

The exposé should be structured as follows:

- A detailed outline of your research project, including the research topic, current status of research, theoretical background, methodological approach and a research plan, academic and social relevance, including a bibliography of works cited (up to 8 pages)
- Overview of the structure of your PhD thesis (1 page)
- A preliminary research plan and timetable for, at most, 36 months, including a detailed description of the preliminary work you have undertaken to date (1 page)

VI. A third-party reference on your social commitment (form “Referenz Social Commitment”)

This should be a confirmation and detailed description of your social previous and current commitment by a person of your choice who knows you well and is able to assess your commitment. This referee should be neither a friend nor a member of your family. Wherever possible, he or she should be a representative of an institution or

an organisation. Internship testimonials are not suitable for this purpose. Foreign applicants from conflict areas or similar who are unable to provide a reference must explain why.

Please inform your reference writer that for the reference he or she needs to use **the form provided**. It can be downloaded from the [website](#).

The reference should above all contain the following informations:

- A description of your social commitment, especially in areas in which you have actively assumed responsibility, outlining what exactly you have done or achieved to date, assessing in particular aspects of your commitment that are not sufficiently apparent from your CV or your motivation outline.
- A personal assessment of your specific concerns and which particular causes you support
- An assessment of your ability to reflect on political affairs and an appraisal of your personality
- The context in which the referee made your acquaintance and how long he or she has known you.

You can upload the reference to the application portal. The reference must include the author's contact details (full name, institution/organization, phone number, etc.) at the top **and must be signed**.

Alternatively the reference writer can send it by post or may email the personal reference directly to the Heinrich Böll Foundation. A signature is not required if the reference is emailed directly by the author from his*her email account.

Please ensure **that only ONE submission method** is used: either upload it in the application portal, have the author send it via email at studienwerk@boell.de, or send it by post with the original signature.

Please note:

The reference for the Social Commitment (VI) and the expert reports (VII) must come **from different persons**.

VII. Two expert reports from university lecturers (form Expert Reference English)

The two expert references on your doctoral project should be written by a professor, an assistant professor or a private lecturer (“Privatdozent*in”). One of them must be the main supervisor of your PhD thesis.

Please inform your expert reviewer that for the expert reference he or she needs to use the form provided. It can be downloaded from the [website](#).

The expert reference should preferably be sent directly to the scholarship department of the Heinrich Böll Foundation by the author by email. If the reference is sent directly via email from the author's email address, the signature is not required. The email address of the scholarship department is studienwerk@boell.de. If the expert reference is in your possession in case of an exception, please submit it directly with your application documents and upload it to the application portal yourself. Then be sure, that **the form is signed**.

To avoid duplication of work, please ensure that the expert reference **is submitted to us only once** – either directly by the referee by email or by post or by yourself in the application portal. The original reference must be legible, typed (not handwritten), and signed. A signature is not required if the reference is emailed directly by the referee from his/her own email account.

Please note:

The reference for the Social Commitment (VI) and the expert reports (VII) must come **from different persons**.

VIII. Refugees are requested to enclose a document providing information on their residence permit (asylum status).

5. Important notes for applicants

Please note...

... on how to present your application documents:

- **The complete application – i.e. all application documents including (possibly separately submitted) expert and personal references – must be submitted by the 1st March or 1st September.** Only then can the application be deemed complete and ready for processing. The confirmation from the university regarding your acceptance as a doctoral candidate is the only document that may be submitted at a later date. We kindly ask for understanding that incomplete applications cannot be processed. If your application documents are not complete, we will let you know and inform you about the next application date.
- References sent to the Heinrich Böll Foundation by the referees directly must also reach us by the respective application deadline.
- Personal and expert references by university lecturers must contain the referee's original signature. This does not apply in case the referee sends the document directly to the Heinrich Böll Foundation by email.
- All documents have to be provided in **German** (we also accept personal reference, expert references and exposé in English).

... on data protection:

- When you submit your application, your personal details will be saved electronically and later deleted in accordance with statutory data protection requirements.

... if your application is rejected:

- There is no legal entitlement to a scholarship or to funding.
- Please appreciate that we receive so many applications that we are unfortunately unable to state specific reasons why your application was unsuccessful.

...if you need more informations:

- Please look at our [FAQ-Page](#). If you need further informations you can contact us:

Further information:

Adriell Kopp, Tel.: 0049 30 28534-400
email: studienwerk@boell.de
www.boell.de/en/scholarships

Office hours:

Telephone times are available on the website.

6. Checklist

Checklist		
PhD International PhD Students (EU members and non-EU members) Refugees		
Required Documents	Notes	Provided
Application form	Application <u>form</u>	
Copy of your degree certificate or equivalent If document is not available in German / English: Certified translation of the certificates in German or English	If applicable, please provide an explanation of the grading system if it differs from the German system (cf Modifizierte Bayerische Formel on the Internet).	
Certification by the university of admission to doctoral studies	If not yet available, a justified confirmation letter by the supervisor of your PhD program	
Written proof of good German language skills	German (international) Abitur, or proof of at <u>least</u> B2 or DSH1	
<i>Special Program</i> <i>„Transformationscluster“</i>	---	
Detailed exposé of your research project/PhD thesis	Max. 10 pages	
Social commitment reference*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form in <u>German</u>, Form in <u>English</u> No membership certificates, employment references, certificates, etc. 	
1st expert report/Academic Reference*	Form in <u>German</u> , Form in <u>English</u>	
2nd expert report/Academic Reference*	Form in <u>German</u> , Form in <u>English</u>	
<i>Refugees:</i> Document providing information on residence permit (asylum status).	If not available, please state your situation in the application form (Bewerbungsbogen) under H4.	

* Academic and Social commitment references must be submitted by different experts/entities/individuals.

Note: Please refer to the informations [above](#) for more detailed information on the documents to be submitted.

Please note that **only complete applications** will be considered during the selection process.

We wish you success in preparing your application!