

I. Objectives of the Scholarship

The SBW Berlin Scholarship program supports young people from abroad who come from financially disadvantaged family backgrounds and who intend to use the acquired skills from their study program to develop non-profit projects, preferably in their home countries, during their studies and thereafter.

We award our scholarships to pursue a bachelor's or master's degree program at a university or University of Applied Sciences in Berlin or Potsdam based on the applicant's academic qualifications, personal aptitude, and social needs. In general, all scientific and artistic disciplines can be funded.

In special cases, the scholarship may support a vocational training in Berlin or Potsdam.

The intention to pursue their professional goals for at least 18 months in their respective home countries after the end of the funding period or after the graduation or to engage in non-profit work in Germany, considering however the repayment plan, and to continue to participate in regular check-ins to update SBW Berlin on their professional development (project and job) are important prerequisites for the SBW Berlin scholarship. For this reason, SBW Berlin supports all scholarship recipients from the beginning of the funding period to achieve their professional goals in their home countries. This is done through networking with other organizations, assistance in finding a job in the country of origin, through support in preparing application documents and through targeted development of the non-profit project in connection with the scholarship recipients' respective home countries.

Studies or vocational trainings in the applicant's home country or in other German federal states cannot be funded.

Further funding, after the regular study/professional training period ends, is unattainable.

II. SBW Berlin's Expectations for Applicants and Incoming Scholarship Recipients

The SBW Berlin scholarship program not only supports scholarship recipients financially as well as allows them to live in Germany, but also presumes certain expectations of SBW Berlin.

Our scholarship program focuses on the scholarship recipients' social commitment and the development of non-profit projects strongly connected to or based within their home countries. These projects aim to support people or animals who are disadvantaged compared to others. This helps to improve the situation in the scholarship recipients' respective home country and has a greater benefit for society, in general.

If a scholarship recipient does not intend to return to his or her home country after the end of the funding period, the scholarship converts to a loan that must be repaid. The previously agreed upon repayment plan of twelve installments beginning three months after the scholarship recipient's graduation, however, is indeed a great burden. It is important to note that there are other more convenient alternatives if a scholarship recipient intends to stay in Germany from the beginning of the funding period without taking on such a great financial burden.

During the participation in our scholarship program, the scholarship recipients attend additional workshops at SBW Berlin, submit project reports, and prepare talks and presentations on their projects.

Applicants therefore must demonstrate their motivation for non-profit work. SBW Berlin also expects from all scholarship recipients to work proactively on their project during the funding period and be able to prove this at any time.

III. Who can apply?

- Foreign nationals, whose home countries appear to have a particular need for development assistance¹
- Homeless foreigners
- Recognized refugees²
- Holders of a settlement permit
- Holders of an EU long-term residence permit
- Students from EU and EEA countries who have already worked in Germany in an activity related to their studies, before taking up their studies
- Students from EU/EEA countries with permanent right of residence as defined by the Freedom of Movement Act (Freizügigkeitsgesetz EU)

Students whose studies in Germany are already being funded by another scholarship are not eligible to apply.

An exception to this rule is assistance under the Federal Education Assistance Act (BAföG). In this case, the amount of the scholarship is adjusted according to the BAföG allowance.

IV. Application Requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- between 18 and 30 years old
- professional or volunteer experience in the non-profit sector
- strong intention to work in their country of origin for at least 18 months after graduation or to engage in non-profit work until the repayment plan³ has been fulfilled.
- able to prove a relatively low net income⁴
- no first-degree family members who reside permanently in Germany
- able to prove that they have not stayed in Germany for more than 18 months before the application
- average grades corresponding to a German grade point average of at least 2.0.⁵

¹ We believe that this applies particularly to many countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America due to their current economic and/or social situation.

² See also the SBW Scholarship for Refugees.

³ The repayment plan begins three months after the end of the funding period. The due amount is distributed over twelve months.

⁴ The total household income of the applicants does not exceed the average income which has been officially stated for their home country. The income of all household members and all sources of income of the family (e.g., from employment, business activities, property, child benefit or pensions) will be considered.

⁵ To convert the average grade: Subtract your received grade from the highest possible grade of the foreign grading scale and divide this by the difference of highest possible grade minus the minimum grade to pass multiplied by 3 and add 1; or

- application before the start of their university education or fully enrolled in the first, second or max. third semester at a state-recognized university (in Germany or abroad) or application for a master's degree shortly before or after obtaining a bachelor's degree

Applicants who do not meet all the requirements stated above cannot be considered.

V. Deadlines and Application Documents

Application documents can only be submitted online through the SBW Berlin website between November 15 and December 31 and between May 15 and June 30 each year.

SBW Berlin does not charge any application or processing fees.

The final decision whether a scholarship (starting the following semester) will be granted can be expected mid-February and mid-August of each year.

Only complete applications can be considered. Applicants must submit at least the following documents:

- application form (online form on the SBW Berlin website)
- project description (two to five pages long)⁶
- current curriculum vitae⁷
- information about the net household income⁸
- copy of the last school or university certificate that shows the grade point average and a grade overview
- copy of the highest academic degree (high school diploma or university certificate) that shows the grade point average and a grade overview.

If available, copies of the following documents should also be included:

- qualification for university entrance
- admission to the university in Berlin or Potsdam where you intend to study (or are already studying)
- internationally recognized language certificate for the language in which your studies will be taught⁹
- all previous work, training, apprenticeship and internship certificates and references
- all already obtained university certificates and records of achievements (graded and ungraded)

mostly B+ and higher; Upper Second Class; 80% or higher.

⁶ For more information on the guidelines for the project description visit our website. In general, the description should provide information on the project idea, the target group, short- and long-term goals, and a timeline etc.

⁷ The CV is already included in our application form and does not have to be submitted as a separate document.

⁸ This information is also already included in the application form and does not have to be submitted as a separate document. Please submit appropriate evidence such as pay slips, pension notices, and/or bank statements.

⁹ If an official language certificate is not included in the application documents, the certificate must be submitted by the verification process latest.

We recommend to all applicants to submit the following additional documents, which are not mandatory:

- one or two letters of recommendation from professors, schoolteachers, employers, etc.
- evidence of the net household income¹⁰

The application and all enclosed certificates and supporting documents must be submitted in German or English. If the original document was issued in another language, we also ask for a translation into German or English.

Non-certified copies and translations are sufficient for the application.

If the application successfully passes the selection process, the applicant must submit certified copies of some of those documents by the verification process.

VI. Selection Criteria

The following criteria are decisive for the selection of incoming scholarship recipients:

In need of assistance are all applicants who meet the requirements of § 1 BAföG (German Federal Education Assistance Act). The individual amount of funding will depend on the personal circumstances of each applicant.

Applicants whose household income does not exceed the average income officially stated for their country of origin are also deemed in need of assistance. The income of all household members and all sources of income of the family will be considered (e.g., wages, income from entrepreneurial activities, property income, child benefit or pensions).

Eligible are all applicants whose intellectual abilities, as substantiated by the application documents and during the interview, justify the expectation that the applicant will easily meet the performance requirements of the funded studies and degree.

Worthy of assistance are all applicants whose personality and social commitment suggest that they will achieve the goals of this scholarship during and after their studies.

In addition, the applicant's non-profit project will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Importance/Relevance of the project for the home country and SBW Berlin
- Documentation (structure, completeness, clarity of the project description)
- Feasibility of the goals
- Feasibility of the project's time schedule
- Cooperation with a partner organisation in or in connection with the home country (preferred)

We will decide on a case-by-case basis if additional financial resources for the implementation of a proposed non-profit project will be granted.

VII. Selection Process

During the first phase of the selection process, the completed application form, the project description, grades, and the applicant's financial situation will be analyzed.

¹⁰ If the application only included information on the net household income, proof of evidence must be submitted during the verification processes.

During the second phase of the selection process, a personal interview or video conference will be conducted with each candidate who has been deemed suitable after all documents have been carefully reviewed. There also might be a task assigned to the candidates that must be addressed during the interview. In addition, the candidate's proposed social non-profit project, the proposed objectives and the timeline outlining the first six months are discussed.

The final selection follows thereafter.

VIII. Verification Process

If they have not already been submitted, the following documents will be required after the selection in the so-called verification process:

- copy of your passport with a current passport photograph
- copy of your student visa
- evidence of the net household income
- evaluation report from Uni-Assist or other evidence converting grades to the German grading system
- copy of your university entrance qualification
- admission to a university in Berlin or Potsdam where you intend to study (or are already studying) or confirmation of enrollment, if already issued
- copy of your latest school or university certificate with a grade overview if another certificate has been issued,
- certified copies of all university certificates and performance records that you have obtained so far (graded and ungraded)¹¹
- certified copies of your study-specific work, training, and internship certificates
- legalization of your highest academic qualification (university-entrance diploma from school or university diploma like the Bachelor certificate) if this certificate is from a foreign institution
- copy of an internationally recognized language certificate for the language in which your study program will be taught.

In special circumstances SBW Berlin may cover the costs for the required certification and legalization of the documents.

During the verification process, SBW Berlin and the candidate agree upon the final details of how to conduct and oversee the non-profit project which becomes binding. The project description then becomes part of the scholarship contract.

IX. Scholarship Benefits

For the duration of the scholarship (max. funding period is equivalent to the regular period of the study program), SBW Berlin covers the necessary living expenses of the scholarship recipients. The scholarship includes:

- a room in our shared student flats in Berlin

¹¹ Candidates who apply for a scholarship to pursue a master's degree must also provide certified copies of all university certificates and performance records from their bachelor's program.

Rules and criteria for the SBW Berlin Scholarship

- cost-of-living allowance currently in the amount of 480 Euro per month,
- tuition fees¹²
- possibly also a travel allowance for the journey to Berlin before the start of your studies and for the journey home after you have completed your studies¹³

First payments can only be made after the scholarship recipient moved into the shared student apartment. Part-time jobs are generally not approved by SBW Berlin.

Applicants who receive benefits in accordance with the Federal Education Assistance Act (BAFöG) will only receive an allowance that does not count as income under the terms of § 21 para 3 Nr. 2 of BAFöG. These applicants usually only receive a flat rate (book allowance) of 100 Euro maximum a month because the cash value of the accommodation that SBW Berlin provides must be considered.

X. Duration of our Assistance

Our assistance will be provided for a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 48 months, depending on the standard duration of the study program you have chosen. We grant assistance for a limited period, usually for the duration of the following semester.

Before each semester ends, SBW Berlin determines if the funding's continuation is justified. It is important to note that the continuity of the selection criteria, passing most exams within the previous semester of funding, and proof of the project's substantial development (e.g., evident in the project report) are decisive.

Funding after the regular study period has ended is unattainable.

We have a total of 20 scholarships available. Each semester, we can award as many scholarships as there are vacancies.

SBW Berlin can terminate the funding if a scholarship recipient fails one required course or postpones two exams. Another reason to terminate the scholarship is the failure to meet set target agreements or goals for the scholarship recipient's non-profit project.

XI. Return to the Home Country and Repayment Obligation

The SBW Berlin scholarship program consists of a limited scholarship recipient's limited stay which is equivalent to the regular duration of the study program. During this period, SBW Berlin awards scholarships as matter of a loan which will be repaid after the funding period ends. The obligation of repayment relinquishes when the scholarship recipient returns to his or her home country after his or her graduation. If the scholarship recipient continues to stay in Germany after the funding ended which is equivalent to his or her graduation, it is important to note that the repayment plan must begin three months after the funding ended and that the amount due is distributed over twelve months. Scholarship recipients are obliged to continue their social non-profit work in Germany until the repayment plan has been fully implemented.

¹² If tuition fees exceed the national average, a deductible can be expected.

¹³ The budget for trips within Europe is max. 500 Euro and for travel outside of Europe max. 1,000 Euro.

Rules and criteria for the SBW Berlin Scholarship

XII. Final Provisions

Scholarship recipients must inform SBW Berlin immediately if their circumstances change that had been relevant in awarding the scholarship and funding.

In addition, they must inform SBW Berlin about their graduation and submit a copy of their diploma.

During the funding period, all scholarship recipients must submit updated university transcripts and/or performance records (graded and nongraded) after each semester.

Further rights and obligations of the scholarship recipients are outlined in the scholarship contracts and may slightly differ from one another.