

I. Objectives of the Scholarship

The SBW Berlin scholarship for refugees supports young refugees in Germany who want to get involved with community service and/or non-profit work and use their skills they acquire during their studies and thereafter to develop social projects.

SBW Berlin awards scholarships based on professional qualifications, personal suitability, and financial need¹ to pursue a bachelor's or master's degree program at a university or a university of applied sciences (Fachhochschule) in Berlin or Potsdam. In principle, all scientific, social, and artistic disciplines can be funded.

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

The scholarship for refugees primarily supports projects that focus on the topics of migration and inclusivity and create spaces in which people with and without migration stories come together to learn from and with each other. A collaboration between a non-profit organization or social institution in Germany (in Berlin or Potsdam) or in the home countries and the interested applicant can be advantageous. Highlighted here is the applicants' previous social commitment or their motivation therefor. After the study program or the funding period ends, scholarship recipients can continue and further develop their social projects at that non-profit organization or social institution or get involved with community service otherwise.

The intention to pursue their social projects for at least 18 months after the end of the funding period or graduation or to commit to non-profit work in Germany or in the country of origin, and to continue participating in regular meetings with SBW Berlin discussing their professional development (project and job) are other important requirements for the SBW Berlin scholarship for refugees.

Beginning with the funding period, SBW Berlin supports all scholarship recipients to work towards their professional goals. This is done through practically implementing the study program's content into the social projects where possible and through networking with other organizations.

The scholarship does not cover any funding in other German federal states.

Any funding after the regular study or professional training period has ended is unattainable.

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

The SBW Berlin scholarship program supports scholarship recipients during their studies in Berlin or Potsdam but there are also expectations of SBW Berlin associated with it.

Our scholarship program focuses on the scholarship recipients' social commitment and the development of non-profit/social projects in connection with or in the scholarship recipients' respective home countries. Scholarship recipients can either work on projects specified by SBW Berlin or on their own, which they present during the application process by submitting a project description.² Projects can also be developed in collaboration with a local non-profit organization or social institution in Berlin or Potsdam. All projects aim to support people in need and have a greater benefit for society, in general.

¹ For more information on financial need and other selection criteria see point VI.

² The guidelines for the project description are posted on the SBW Berlin's website.

While participating in our scholarship program, all scholarship recipients attend additional workshops at SBW Berlin, prepare project reports, and give lectures or presentations on their projects. All scholarship recipients benefit from SBW Berlin's consistent mentorship for example in form of regular meetings on the premises of SBW Berlin.

It is therefore expected that all applicants prove their motivation for non-profit/social work in the form of a motivational statement.³

Applicants who are already working with a non-profit organization or social institution in Germany, e.g., in Berlin or Potsdam, or in their country of origin, also need a letter of recommendation from that organization.⁴ The aim is therefore to ensure that there will be a lively exchange between the scholarship recipients, the non-profit organization or social institution, and SBW Berlin during the funding or study period.

If, after the end of the sponsorship or the end of their studies, any scholarship recipients do not intend to continue working on their social projects or get otherwise involved in community service or non-profit work, which previously would have been discussed and agreed on with SBW Berlin, those scholarship recipients must repay the scholarship.⁵ In these cases, a repayment agreement is concluded, which must be notarized.⁶ This means that the scholarships or the monetary payments made by SBW Berlin to date must then be repaid in 12 monthly installments without interest, starting 3 months after the end of the funding or standard period of study. This can pose a major challenge and deep burden. It is therefore important to note that there could be cheaper alternatives if applicants and scholarship recipients do not intend to get involved socially.

All scholarship recipients work proactively on their projects during the funding period and can prove this at any time. They are required to work between 2 and 8 hours per week on the social project.

In addition, good academic performance is expected.⁷

III. Who can apply?

- Homeless foreigners living in Germany
- Recognized refugees living in Germany
- Holders of a residence permit in accordance with §§ 22, 23 para 1 or 2, §§ 23a, 25 para 1 or 2 of the Residence Act (AufenthG) in case of permanent residency in Germany
- Holders of a residence permit in accordance with §24 and § 25 para 3, para 4 sentence 2, or para 5 of the Residence Act (AufenthG) in case of permanent residency in Germany
- Holders of a settlement permit for Germany

³ The motivational statement should outline reasons for the chosen course of study and the applicant's motivation to get involved with community service or non-profit work.

⁴ The letter of recommendation should outline the applicant's responsibilities within in the non-profit organization or social institution.

⁵ In the case of the recipient's withdrawal from the social project or non-profit work, the repayment plan becomes effective and includes 12 monthly installments. For more information on the repayment plan see point XI.

⁶ A notarized acknowledgement allows any debt collection starting from the first due installment payment without taking further legal action.

⁷ It is expected to have a grade point average of at least 2.5 on the German grading scale each semester.

Students and trainees whose studies or professional training 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/social sector after the start of the applicant's stay in Germany (preferably proven by a social institution's letter of recommendation)
- Living in Germany and able to prove that they have not stayed in Germany for more than 6 years before the application
- Qualification for university entrance (if applicant wants to study)
- Intention to continue the social non-profit project's development for at least 18 months after the end of the funding period or to engage in non-profit work in Germany or within the country of origin
- Able to prove a relatively low net income⁸
- Average grades corresponding to a German grade point average of at least 2.5.⁹
- 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
- Note: One or more family members of the scholarship recipient may not be brought to the SBW Berlin premises for a permanent family reunion after the beginning of the funding period.

Applications which do not meet all the requirements stated above cannot be considered.

V. Deadlines and Application Documents

SBW Berlin does not charge any application or processing fees.

There is no fixed application deadline; applications are accepted all year round.

When applying for a scholarship, proof of the applicant's social commitment in the form of a motivational statement is required. If applicants have been working with a non-profit organization or social institution, a letter of recommendation is also required. Applicants submit the motivational statement as a PDF to application@sbw.berlin. The non-profit/social institution submits the letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant to application@sbw.berlin. After carefully reviewing the statement/letter, outstanding prospects will be granted access to the application form.

⁸ The total household income of the applicants does not exceed the officially stated average income for Germany (last status as of 2023: 2,245 Euro). The income of all household members and all sources of income of the family and/or the applicant (e.g., from employment, business activities, property, child benefit or pensions) will be considered.

⁹ 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 mostly B+ and higher; Upper Second Class; 80% or higher.

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

- Motivational statement (by email) and/or letter of recommendation written by a non-profit organization or social institution (by email)
- Application form (A link will be shared with outstanding applicants.)
- Qualification for university entrance (if applicant wants to study)
- Information about the net household income¹⁰
- Copy of the last school or university certificate that shows the grade point average and a grade overview (if available)
- Copy of the highest academic degree (high school diploma or university certificate) that shows the grade point average and a grade overview (if available)

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

- For course of study: admission to the university or university of applied science (Fachhochschule) in Berlin or Potsdam
- For vocational training: trainee contract
- Internationally recognized language certificate for the language in which your studies will be taught¹¹
- All already obtained university certificates and records of achievements (graded and ungraded)
- All previous work, training, apprenticeship and internship certificates and references

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 income¹²
- project description of an own project¹³

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.

After the successful completion of the selection process, certified copies are sometimes required in the verification process.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ If an official language certificate is not included in the application documents, the certificate must be submitted by the verification process latest.

¹² If the application only included information on the net household income, proof of evidence must be submitted during the verification processes.

¹³ After the first introductory interview, the applicants will be asked whether they should work on an SBW project or on their own during the funding period.

VI. Selection Criteria

A collaboration between the applicant and a social institution in Germany (e.g., in Berlin or Potsdam) or in their country of origin is advantageous. In addition, 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.

In need of assistance are also applicants whose total household income does not exceed the officially stated average income for Germany, last status as of 2023: 2,425 Euro. The income of all household members and all sources of income of the family and/or the applicant (e.g., from employment, business activities, property, child benefit or pensions) will be considered.

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 or training program.

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

In addition, the applicant's non-profit/social project if they propose their own will be evaluated.

The granting of any additional, financial resources to implement the project will be decided case-by-case.

VII. Selection Process

During the first phase of the selection process, the motivational statement or the letter of recommendation from the applicants are carefully reviewed. A decision is then made as to whether applicants will be granted access to the application portal. The link will be shared via email.

During the second phase of the selection process, the application form, the applicant's grades, and financial situation are carefully reviewed.

During the third phase of the selection process, an interview or video conference is conducted with candidates who, after examining their application documents, have been deemed suitable for the scholarship program. The interview(s) may include a practical task and discussion of the details of the planned community/social project, including objectives and timetable for the first six months. The project can be either specified by SBW Berlin or applicants can present their own projects.

Then the final selection is made.

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 picture
- Copy of a settlement permit or residence permit

- Evidence of the net household income
- Copy of your latest school or university certificate with a grade overview if another certificate has been issued, if available
- Copies of your study-specific work, training, and internship certificates, if available

If applicants intend to study at a university, they also need to submit the following documents:

- Evaluation report from Uni-Assist or other evidence of the grade conversion into the German grading system
- Admission to the university or university of applied science (Fachhochschule) in Berlin or Potsdam, if already available
- Copies of all university certificates and performance records that you have obtained so far (graded and ungraded)¹⁴

During the verification process, the final details of the project to be supervised are agreed with the candidates and made 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 or vocational training), SBW Berlin covers necessary living expenses of the scholarship recipients. The scholarship includes:

- a furnished room in shared student flats at Rudower Str. 67, 12351 Berlin
- cost-of-living allowance currently in the amount of 480 Euro per month,¹⁵
- tuition fees¹⁶

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

If vocational training is funded, the amount of the scholarship is adjusted to the training allowance. In this case, SBW Berlin provides a room in one of our shared flats for students and subsidizes the cost of living if the training allowance is not sufficient.

Applicants who receive benefits under the Federal Education Assistance Act (BAFöG) can only be granted benefits that are not counted as income according to §21 Para. 3 No. 2 BAFöG. The cash value of the accommodation granted must be taken into account when calculating the allowance. As a rule, these applicants only receive a “flat rate” or book allowance in the amount of maximum 100 Euro per month.

X. Duration of Funding

The duration of funding is at least 30 days up to a maximum of 48 months. The respective standard

¹⁴ Candidates who apply for a scholarship to pursue a master's degree must also provide copies of all university certificates and performance records from their bachelor's program.

¹⁵ This amount could be different in the case BAFöG was granted.

¹⁶ If tuition fees exceed the national average, a deductible can be expected.

period of study is decisive. Funding is granted on a periodic base, usually for the upcoming semester.

Before the end of each semester, it is determined whether further funding is justified. The continuation of the selection criteria, the successful completion of most academic courses in the last sponsored semester or successful performances within the training program in the last six months, and proof of the social project's proactive development (e.g., in the form of a project report) are considered.

Any funding after the regular study period has ended is unattainable.

We have a total of 20 scholarship places. Each semester only as many scholarships can be awarded as there are vacancies.

SBW Berlin can terminate any funding in the event of two failed compulsory examinations or two postponed examinations. The repeat exam must be taken in the next possible examination period, which the university or the training center must confirm. Another reason for ending the funding is the failure to meet the target agreements set for the social/non-profit project and when the funds are not used as intended. In these circumstances, there will be a repayment agreement that will be notarized. Consequently, the scholarships or the monetary benefits previously provided by SBW Berlin must then be repaid in 12 monthly instalments without interest, starting 3 months after the end of the funding period or the standard period of study.

XI. Continuity of the Project and Repayment Obligation

The SBW Berlin scholarship program usually provides for a limited stay in Germany, which is limited to the duration of your studies or vocational training.¹⁷ After the end of the funding or the end of the course, scholarship recipients have two options:

- a. They continue to run and further develop the social project agreed in the scholarship contract or any community service/non-profit work coordinated with SBW Berlin for at least 18 months after the end of the funding period and can provide evidence of the continuation. In this case, there is no obligation to repay the grant.**
- b. They do not intend to run the project or get involved socially otherwise after the end of the funding period, but consequently the financial benefits of the SBW Berlin scholarship must be repaid. The previously notarized repayment plan in 12 monthly instalments begins 3 months after the end of the study or vocational training.**

XII. Final Provisions

Scholarship recipients must inform SBW Berlin immediately as soon as the circumstances that formed the basis of the funding change.

They also inform SBW Berlin about their graduation and submit a copy of their diploma or degree certificate.

¹⁷ The return of the room provided during the funding period will be no later than the end of the month following the graduation. Scholarship recipients will not receive any financial support after their graduation.

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In addition, during the courses of study, all scholarship recipients must unpromoted by SBW Berlin submit copies of their current university transcript and/or performance records (graded and nongraded) after each semester.

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