

Information Sheet: Bielefeld Young Researchers' Fund, Funding line doctorate students, Career Bridge Master – Doctorate

This information sheet is intended as guidance only. For legally binding information, please refer to the document „Richtlinien der Universität Bielefeld zur Vergabe von Promotionsstipendien aus dem Bielefelder Nachwuchsfonds“, dated 09th February 2021.

1. Eligibility for filing an application

You can apply for a Career Bridge Master – Doctorate if you obtained a university degree which entitles you to continue with doctoral studies (usually a Master's degree) within the last year, or if you are in the final phase of such a course and will have finished it by the time of the start of the funding. Your grades and study performance must be above average and usually we would expect your final thesis grade to be a first class honours. However, special circumstances which may have led to a lower grade may be considered (see below).

The career bridge Master – Doctorate should be used to establish your idea for a doctorate in order to increase your chances of successfully applying for scholarships, third-party funded positions, doctoral programmes at Bielefeld University and other doctoral positions. Due to the fact that you are currently in the transition phase between studying and commencing your doctorate you must not be admitted to a doctoral programme at the time of application. However, you must show in your application in which doctoral programme you intend to enrol and/or who you expect to be your supervisor during your doctorate.

2. Funding

The career bridge Master – Doctorate is awarded for a period of up to 6 months with a monthly scholarship of € 1,000. Additionally, a child benefit supplement of € 250 per child will be paid. You may take employment for a maximum of 8 hours a week outside Bielefeld University (i.e. you cannot be employed at Bielefeld University and receive the scholarship at the same time). However, the scholarship cannot be granted if you receive different funding for the same purpose and the same period. You have to terminate your scholarship early if you start an employment contract or other scholarship.

3. Deadline for application and start of the funding period

For each year, two rounds of funding are designed to take place. The deadlines for application are in early April and early October: Please check the call for applications or the website for the exact dates each year. A decision on the two funding rounds is intended to be made by the end of May and end of November, respectively.

The start date of the funding can be individually adjusted: For the funding round of April, the earliest date the scholarship can start is 1st July, the latest start date is the end of that year. For the funding round of October, the earliest possible start date will be 1st January of the following year, the latest date is 30th June of the year after the application. Please adjust the deadline for your application so that you fulfil the requirements at the start of the funding period.

4. Notes on the application

To submit your application, please use the online application form, which you will find on our [website](#) under “Applications”. Forms in PDF format are no longer valid.

In the application, we ask you to briefly describe the idea for your dissertation project. Please note that your application will NOT be read by reviewers from your own field. Usually, reviewers will not be members of your faculty. Take this into account for your phrasing and explain technical terms, if necessary. The same is true for your explanations of how your project will fit in with the current state of knowledge/research in your field and which parts of the project can be considered innovative, and how you are going to approach your research question.

Apart from the project description, we ask you to submit a brief time schedule for your work steps during the time between your application and the end of the funding. Please make sure that reviewers from outside your field can understand what you are planning and how long you expect to take for each step.

You will also need to give information on your immediate future career plans. As the Career Bridge is intended to help you prepare for a doctorate, we would like to know which plans you have for obtaining a doctoral position/other funding for your doctoral project and which preparatory steps you may have already taken. These could be e.g. applications you already filed, information you already gathered on scholarships options and deadlines, or discussions you have had with a potential supervisor concerning third-party funding options. If you expect to obtain a position offered by your supervisor or the University, please let us know whether the funding for this position is already established, or whether it will be or has already been applied for/approved. Please include all steps towards securing your funding into your time schedule, too.

To be eligible for selection, your application must be endorsed by your future supervisor during the Career Bridge programme and by the faculty management (dean or head of administration). To this end, please specify your supervisor and (future) faculty on the form. Please note: your application can only be made available to your supervisor and faculty for approval once you have completed and submitted it in full. You should therefore submit your application well in advance of the deadline and inform your supervisor in advance that their approval is required before the application can be formally received by us.

5. Reference

As part of your application, we also need a written reference from someone familiar with your study performance and/or scientific work. Usually, this will be one of your professors or university instructors. The reference will be requested automatically once you have completed the first page of the application form and saved it. The person you have named as your referee will then receive an email containing a link to the reference form. We strongly recommend that you inform the relevant person of this in advance and ask whether they are willing to provide a reference for you within the specified timeframe. If the reference is not received by the application deadline, your application cannot be accepted. So, if necessary, please remind your referee once again to submit the reference by the deadline.

6. Award procedure and assessment criteria

The Commission which awards Rectorate scholarships deliberates on the applications which have been submitted. The following criteria are relevant for such deliberation:

1. Your scientific qualifications

Here, we will assess your grades during your studies, the duration of your Master's and the written evaluation we receive (see above). Additionally, we ask you about further aspects and achievements which can strengthen your application but which are not required. Hence, you are very welcome to apply and are fully eligible for funding if you do not yet cover of those aspects. However, if you do cover some of them, we will consider this. These aspects are e.g. participation at conferences, publications, prizes or awards, outreach to the public on science-related topics, learning a language necessary for your studies/research, experience relevant to your research gained during employment or volunteering, involvement in university bodies/committees, and courses for qualifications beyond your field of research which are useful for a career in science. You will find a more detailed list of examples in the application form.

2. Scientific quality of your Master's project and the planned project

In the application, you will have to provide a description of your Master thesis, including an explanation of how your research fits into the current state of the art, your hypotheses and methods. Once again, remember that your reviewers will not be familiar with your field of research. Usually, they are not members of your faculty. Make sure that the reviewers can follow your lines of argument, understand the scientific value of your research and assess your time schedule. When asked about the relevance of your research, bear in mind that this refers not just to potential applications of your results, e.g. for products or medicine, but also to the relevance of your results to your field of research.

We will also consider your planning and preparations of your doctoral project and which plans for your time after the Career Bridge are already discernible. You will find more information and details on this in the application form.

If you would like to include information on special circumstances which have impacted your qualification, your scientific performance or project, you are welcome to do so in the form. These circumstances can then be taken into account when assessing the criteria above. This information is voluntary and will be treated confidentially. Examples for personal circumstances we consider are long or chronic illness, disability, child care, single parenthood, parental or other family leave, being a carer for other relatives, military, civil or voluntary service, constraints due to the Covid-19-pandemic, earning your livelihood during your studies through employment, being part of the first generation in your family to study, international migration, integration phases, acquiring of new languages and asylum applications.

Financial needs will not be taken into account.

A preselection of the projects which are eligible for funding is made based on the application documents. Applicants who are eligible for funding after the preselection process may sometimes be asked to present their project to the University Commission. Subsequently, the University Commission makes a recommendation to the Rectorate. The Rectorate decides on the allocation of funds based on the funds available and the quality of the applications.

7. Funding report

All those who have received financial support are requested to submit a brief funding report at the end of the funding period. In this final report, it should be stated whether the doctorate was completed within the framework of the completion scholarship and if this is not the case the reasons for this should be described.

8. Information session & contact

All forms and information on the BYRF can be found at uni-bielefeld.de/en/nachwuchsfonds.

Should you have further questions, please attend our information session. The dates for each applications round's event can be found on the website. If you have questions outside the event, please email us at nachwuchsfonds@uni-bielefeld.de.