

Information Sheet: Bielefeld Young Researchers' Fund, Funding line doctorate students, Doctorate Completion Scholarship

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 Doctorate Completion Scholarship if you are a doctorate student at Bielefeld University, the financial support of your doctoral project is coming to an end, and you have no other options for financial support. You have to demonstrate that you have carried out your doctoral project promptly, have almost completed it and that it can be expected to be completed within the funding period of 6 months provided by the Bielefeld Young Researchers' Fund.

2. Funding

The doctorate completion scholarship is awarded for a period of up to 6 months with a monthly scholarship of €1,250. Additionally, a child benefit supplement of € 250 per child will be paid. The scholarship can be increased by the faculty/working unit by a maximum amount of € 500. 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 defend your thesis before the end of the period you applied for, or start an employment contract/other scholarship. The scholarship ends upon the defence of your doctoral thesis or upon expiry of the period for which you have applied (max. 6 months), whichever comes first. The scholarship cannot be extended.

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 your dissertation project, including your research questions, the current state of the art in the field, your methods, and the supervision you receive. Please note that your application will NOT be read by reviewers from your own field. Usually, reviewers will not be members of your faculty. Bear this in mind both when phrasing your work schedule and texts (e.g. explain technical terms, if necessary) and when elaborating on how your project fits into the current state of research in your field, and how your project is innovative

In addition to the project description, you will also have to supply a time schedule explaining which tasks are still missing for your dissertation, and when you are planning to work on them. Again, write this section so that reviewers from outside your field can understand what you are planning and how long it is going to take you.

To be eligible for selection, your application must be endorsed by your supervisor and by the faculty management (dean or head of administration). To this end, please specify your supervisor and 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. Usually, this will be written by your supervisor. However, you can also name another academic familiar with your academic performance and scientific work. 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 and doctorate, the duration of your doctorate, publications, participation at conferences 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 in applications for third-party funding, 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 doctoral project

In the application, you will have to provide a description of your dissertation, including an explanation of how your research fits into the current state of the art, your hypotheses, methods and an indication which aspects of your work were designed by yourself, which were set by your supervisor, and whether you used or established collaborations with other researchers.

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. In the time schedule, please include all working steps necessary between the time of the application and the submission of your dissertation.

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 considered when assessing the criteria above. This information is voluntary and will be treated confidentially. It will be shared with the review commission but not with your supervisor and faculty. 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 are not considered.

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](https://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.