

GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING FOR ESTOPHILUS SCHOLARSHIP. PROGRAMME OF THE ACADEMIC STUDIES OF ESTONIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ABROAD

PURPOSE, SCOPE, RESPONSIBILITY

The purpose of the guidelines is to establish the conditions for applying for and using the Estophilus scholarship of the programme of academic studies of Estonian language and culture abroad and arrangements for payment thereof. The Estophilus scholarship finances the studies and research of the academically advanced students in study centres and of the students interested in-depth in the Estonian language and culture in Estonia. The scholarship is granted by the programme council (hereinafter: the Council) who also involves experts, if necessary. The programme council is composed in accordance with Decree No. 246 of the Minister of Education and Research of 15 June 2018.

The scholarship is funded by the Ministry of Education and Research from the funds allocated to the Education and Youth Board (hereinafter: the Board) for that purpose.

The activities are organized by the Education and Youth Board. Organizing involves, among other things, the following:

- mediation and disclosure of information on the Internet and other media, and in other information channels targeting the students;
- management of the calls for applications, including preparation of evaluation;
- communication with applicants;
- presentation of the conditions and forms of the application, including the organization of information seminars in relevant public universities;
- analysis of applications and bringing out the main reasons for rejection;
- preparation, conclusion and termination of the contracts awarding scholarships, paying scholarships, analysis of the reports and monitoring the execution of the contracts;
- counselling the grantees;
- informing the public.

The compiling and improving of the given guidelines and the awarding of scholarships is coordinated by the department of internationalisation of the Education and Youth Board.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

THE PURPOSE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF SCHOLARSHIP

1. The purpose of the activity is to support the studies and research of the students enrolled in universities abroad and of international researchers interested in the Estonian language and culture (in Estonia), by thus contributing to the exchange of knowledge and making Estonia more visible. The activity results in increased number of studies related to Estonia and of the students interested in the Estonian language and culture.
2. The scholarship may be applied for by the foreign nationals final year BA students, master's students, PhD students and post-doctorate researchers from universities abroad while staying in Estonia for conducting research or collecting material about Estonia. When applying for the scholarship, the Estonian language proficiency is an advantage but not a requirement. The applicant must be the end-user of the scholarship.

3. The Council may grant a scholarship for up to five months, except for BA students who are granted with two months maximum.
4. The scholarship period is the period from the first day of tuition until the last day of tuition while staying in Estonia and conducting research. The duration of one scholarship period cannot be shorter than 30 days. The scholarship period may not begin before the date mentioned in clause 25.
5. The scholarship is paid only for the period of stay in Estonia. The absence from Estonia during the scholarship period has to be coordinated with the Board.
6. The applicant has the opportunity to divide the scholarship period into two parts if dividing the period is necessary due to conducting research or studies. For example in case of scholarship period of three months, it is possible to divide it between different semesters (e.g. 60 days in autumn and 30 days in spring). In case the time of staying in Estonia takes place in several parts, the scholarship period is added up.
7. The applicant is required to have a supervisor from an Estonian research or development institution while applying the scholarship. The Estonian supervisor has to own a research grade and hold competence for supervising the research.

AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIP

8. The scholarship is intended to cover the living expenses, travel costs, tuition fees and research-related expenses. All other costs have to be covered by the grantee (incl costs for visa or residence permit).
9. The scholarship consists of grant for living costs and a travel grant. The amount of the grant for living costs is 500 euros per month for all the grantees.
10. The travel grant is paid once during the scholarship period, regardless of whether the grantee stays in Estonia in succession throughout the scholarship period or the scholarship is divided between different periods.

10.1. The amount of travel grant depends on the distance between the point of departure and the destination of the learning mobility. When calculating the distance, only the European Commission's web-based calculator is used

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/distance_en.htm.

10.2. If the distance between the point of departure and the destination is 100,00 km or more, the travel expenses shall be reimbursed on the basis of standardized unit price¹, on the basis of the rates brought out in the following table:

	Distance from a city to a city (one direction) ²	Grant for a round trip (to the destination and back)
1	100 – 499 km	180 euros
2	500 – 1999 km	275 euros
3	2000 – 2999 km	360 euros
4	3000 – 3999 km	530 euros
5	4000 – 7999 km	820 euros
6	8000 km and more	1100 euros

¹ For example, if the point of departure is Tartu and the destination is Uppsala, the distance between the two cities is 543,47 km according to the European Commission's calculator, which falls in the range of 500-1999 km. The amount of travel grant for travelling on the route Tartu-Uppsala-Tartu is 275 euros.

² If the calculated distance falls in the range of 499-500 km, 1999-2000 km, etc., the result will be rounded to the whole number prior to the determination of the unit price.

11. If the distance between the point of departure and the destination is up to 99,99 km (inclusive), the travel expenses shall be reimbursed in the amount up to 180 euros on the basis of expense receipts.
12. The Council cannot increase the amount of scholarship.
13. It is allowed to use other sources of funding to cover the costs incurring during the scholarship period, if the conditions of these other sources of funding render it possible. Receiving additional financing has to be declared in the application.

DEADLINES

14. Scholarship applications are accepted twice a year. The application rounds will be decided by the head of the department of internationalization and are made public on the Board's website.
15. The application must be submitted no later than by the announced deadline.

APPLICATION

16. The scholarship application along with all the required annexes are submitted electronically in Estonian or in English. The application system can be found at <https://taotlused.edu.ee/>. The possibility to submit applications opens one month before the announced deadline.
17. The applicant must timely submit the following documents to the Board:
 - formal application;
 - research plan;
 - curriculum vitae;
 - proof that the applicant is a final year BA student, MA or PhD student or a document verifying the PhD degree;
 - confirmation of the Estonian supervisor about the acceptance of the candidate and confirmation of his/her preparedness of supervising the candidate. In the Estonian written confirmation, the receiver must briefly describe the research topic and justify the importance of the research for Estonia.
18. Required documents (listed above) have to be submitted through the application system. The applicant does not have to send the application and other documents via (e-)mail. The application has to be filled in and submitted (by clicking `submit` after filling in the application). The applicant does not have to sign the documents. By submitting the documents in application system the applicant has confirmed that all required documents are correct, and submitting is being considered as the applicant's signature.

BASIS OF SELECTION

19. Eligible applications will be evaluated by a three-member evaluation committee, which will be composed for each application round by members of the Council. The evaluation committee is set before the application round opens (one month before the application deadline at the latest).
20. The evaluation committee will take into account the following criteria during evaluation:
 - quality of the application (clear objectives, work plan, expected results, etc.) and focus on Estonia-related topics;
 - expertise of the applicant related to the proposed research plan;
 - connection and importance of the learning mobility in regard to the applicant's scientific work;
 - soundness for the chosen higher education institution or research institution in Estonia as well as arguments in the confirmation letter;

21. The budget intended for the application round will be set and presented to the evaluation committee before the evaluation. The evaluation committee reviews the applications based on the evaluation criteria and on the basis of simple majority vote compiles a ranking list of applications which is presented to the Council as a funding proposal. The evaluation committee has a right to consult area experts and in case of grounded considerations, make a proposal to the Council to reduce the budget of the application.
22. Granting the scholarship is decided by the Council based on the proposal by the evaluation committee and in consideration with the programme budget. The Council has the right to make a final decision, including altering the ranking list of applications, reducing the budget of the application and granting scholarships in a smaller total amount than set out by the programme budget.
23. All applicants compete in the same category. In case of equal applications among BA and MA level students, the Council may favor the applicants who have chosen the topic of their thesis and who have a supervisor.
24. The reasoned funding decisions (including not granting funding) are fixed in the minutes of the meeting of the Council.
25. The evaluation and decision procedure normally takes until 45 days from the date of the announced application deadline.
26. The Board notifies the applicant about the decision of the Council.

SIGNING THE CONTRACT

27. Before signing the contract, the grantee has to submit the copy of the formal (on the form of the institution) signed invitation or the confirmation letter of the Estonian higher education institution / research institution to the Board (except in case such document has already been submitted along with the application). The confirmation letter can be sent by email.
28. The Board concludes the contract with the grantees chosen by the Council usually one month before the beginning of the scholarship period, which states the conditions for using the scholarship and travel grant.
29. First payment of the scholarship (first month's living costs and the travel grant) is transferred to the grantee's bank account no later than 14 days before the beginning of the scholarship period, but not before the grant agreement is signed (advance payment). The scholarship is transferred to the grantee in the form of monthly payments, however, the Board has the right to make one full scholarship payment. The grant is incometax-free. Payments are transferred in euros generally to the bank account opened in the euro zone.
30. Advance payments are not made to the individuals who have outstanding contractual obligations with regard to the Board.
31. In the relevant documentation and speeches, the grantee is obliged to refer to the Ministry of Education and Research, the Education and Youth Board and the programme of the academic studies of Estonian language and culture abroad as the subsidizers of the tuition.
32. In case the actual learning mobility is shorter than the one set out in the scholarship agreement, the grantee is obliged to repay the overpaid part of the scholarship to the Board doing so within 14 days from the Board's written request. The Board has the right to claim back the scholarship in case the grantee does not carry out research according to the submitted research plan (except hindered by health, family or other independent conditions), does not use the scholarship purposefully or does not submit the required report. In case the learning mobility will not take place or the purpose of the learning mobility changes without previous notification to the Board, the grantee is obliged to repay the scholarship in full amount.

REPORTING

- 33.** The grantee is obliged to submit the formal report within 14 days after the end of the scholarship period. The Board shall not preserve additional nonrequired documents.
- 34.** In case the report is not submitted in time or if it occurs that the scholarship has not been used purposefully, the grantee is obliged to pay it back.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE ABOUT USING THE GRANT

- 35.** The list of the grantees is published on the website of the Board.