

I. Action recommendations for the DAAD regarding “Mobility with a disability/chronic illness”

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force in Germany in 2009. Pursuant to Article 24 of the convention, the “States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others”.

The DAAD promotes national and international exchange between students and academics, thereby facilitating access to the best opportunities for academic study and research. Persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses are particularly dependent on high qualification to increase their chances of getting a job corresponding to their abilities. The DAAD therefore supports the call for equal opportunities in higher education stipulated by the “UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. Students with disabilities and chronic illnesses are encouraged to spend part of their academic studies abroad in order to improve their language skills and establish international contacts.

Secure financing is an important prerequisite for successful completion of a period of study abroad. This has to take into account both course-related and living costs, as well as cover all additional costs incurred due to the disability, e.g. for medical care, nursing or study assistance needed. Provision of an appropriate general framework should be the responsibility of the federal government, states and social services providers. Social law regulations have not yet been (adequately) adapted to modern styles of education.

For this reason, the DAAD offers financial funds for additional costs attributable to a visit abroad and a disability or chronic illness, which are not borne by any other party. This applies both to individual funding of persons and diverse project funding by the DAAD. In the past, the DAAD has been actively committed to improving the insurance coverage of its scholarship holders and will continue to do so in the future.

1. DAAD funding of individuals:

German scholarship holders

In order to facilitate the international mobility of German DAAD scholarship holders with a disability or chronic illness, the DAAD assumes additional costs (normally of up to EUR 10,000) incurred due to an international stay and disability or chronic illness on request. This applies provided the costs – following earlier review – are not assumed by other parties or the health insurance.

International scholarship holders

The DAAD also assumes additional costs attributable to mobility and disability or chronic illness for international scholarship holders with a disability or chronic illness (students, graduates, doctoral candidates) for a stay in Germany. This is subject to the provision that these – following earlier review – are not assumed by other parties or cannot be assumed fully or partly by the DAAD's group insurance. Through efforts regarding the DAAD group contract, the DAAD was able to achieve extended insurance coverage for disorders precedent to the policy for international scholarship holders (students, graduates, doctoral candidates), which includes almost 100% pre-existing conditions.

The complexity of the issue makes it impossible to set down regulations applicable across the board. All enquiries regarding this topic must be reviewed on a case-to-case basis.

2. DAAD project funding:

Mobility-related additional costs for German and foreign students, doctoral candidates or academics should also be assumed within the scope of project funding by the DAAD, provided these are caused by disability or chronic illness and cannot be assumed by other parties. A standard upper limit of EUR 10,000 is set. The same opportunities and limitations specified for individual funding are applicable.

3. Information on mobility funding issues:

Information about questions relating to studies abroad or in Germany for international students with a disability or chronic illness is freely and easily accessible on the DAAD website (<https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/mobility-with-a-disability/>). Competent and specifically trained contact persons at the DAAD should furthermore be named.

Information on the subject should be extended or included in various key information and guidance brochures of the DAAD. The respective specialised sections/departments should identify suitable publications in this regard.

4. Training and seminars:

The responsible academic adviser(s) at the German higher education institutions should also be sensitised on the subject by the DAAD. These include representatives of the international offices and central course guidance services, as well as lecturers and student representatives. Since these are often the first point of contact for students, whether or not a student with a disability goes on a visit abroad often depends on their level of knowledge in this area. More attention should be paid to this subject during conferences, events, seminars and training sessions (such as the international DAAD Academy iDA).

II. Action recommendations for DAAD member universities with regard to “Mobility with a disability/chronic illness”

1. Information on the subject “Studying abroad with disabilities and chronic illnesses” should be easy to find on the web pages of the universities. It should be freely accessible and provide links to corresponding DAAD pages. Specific contact persons should be named.
2. International office staff etc. should be informed about the subject “Studying abroad with disabilities and chronic illnesses” regularly and be sensitised regarding the special needs of students.
3. Social assistance authorities often request explicit recommendation of the study visit abroad in the study regulations for assumption of extra costs. This aspect should therefore be taken into account in the formulation of curricula and/or study regulations.