



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



# Experience Diversity by Exchange

Diversity Agenda of the DAAD

**October 2022**





## Diversity Agenda of the DAAD

Equal opportunities and diversity are elementary building blocks for shaping higher education and research for the future. For high quality in study, teaching, and research and for broad participation in society, it is essential that all talented people can contribute their diverse perspectives. In this sense, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is already an important player in increasing diversity at German universities: By providing funding for people from all countries of the world and facilitating diverse intercultural encounters, it strengthens diversity and mutual understanding.

Diversity, equal opportunities, and inclusion are also crucial for international academic exchange itself. When diverse people have access to international educational and research experiences, the dialogue between people from different countries and cultures gains further dimensions of interaction. At the same time, this increases the diversity of future, intercultur-ally competent experts and managers. As the world's largest funding organisation for the inter-national exchange of students and academics, the DAAD is therefore fully committed to diver-sity in its funding activities and organisational culture and intends to further increase diversity, equal opportunities, and inclusion.

The present agenda, which describes the path towards strengthening diversity orientation at the DAAD, was developed as part of a cross-departmental process involving all DAAD depart-ments and external expertise. An essential element of this process was to determine where diversity, equal opportunities and inclusion are already taken into account and promoted at the DAAD and what needs to be further developed. On this basis, key objectives, activities, and success indicators were developed for further strengthening the DAAD's diversity policy.

# Diversity and equal opportunities as strategic organisational objectives

## Diversity - Equal Opportunities - Inclusion: Understanding the Terms

The DAAD Diversity Agenda is based on the following conceptual definitions and the overall goals assigned to each of them:

- **Diversity** describes the socio-cultural and structural diversity of people and groups. This diversity manifests itself through age, skin colour, gender, ethnic and social background, religion and belief, sexual orientation, disabilities, and impairments, etc. The characteristics, attributions and aspects of belonging associated with these categories determine the opportunities people have in our society. At the DAAD, we want to further increase awareness of the differences and similarities of our applicants, scholarship holders, employees, etc. and anchor this awareness in our actions both internally and externally.

- **Equal opportunities** describe the equitable access to funding programmes as well as educational and professional development opportunities for everyone. The DAAD strives to ensure fair access and success opportunities for all applicants, scholarship holders and employees, appropriately considering unequal socio-cultural starting backgrounds. Furthermore, we want to reduce institutional discrimination.
- **Inclusion** seeks to improve people's participation in society and to create a culture of togetherness. In this context, the DAAD aims to gradually increase the participation and visibility of underrepresented groups among its scholarship holders and employees through targeted outreach and special offers.

We understand the path from raising awareness for the value of diversity to implementing concrete practices to increase equal opportunities and inclusion in funding activities and organisational culture as a continuous institutional learning process. At the same time, the implementation of an institutional diversity policy is a long-term and challenging collective task.

As an international funding organisation with a worldwide network and a diverse funding portfolio that addresses various target groups, we are also concerned with taking into account and making visible different cultural ideas and manifestations of diversity, equal opportunities and inclusion.

### Priority starting points of the diversity agenda

A study-related stay abroad is becoming an increasingly integral part of the educational biography of professionals in today's globalised world of work. The advantages are good job prospects, improved foreign language skills and specialised knowledge enriched by intercultural perspectives and approaches in an international context. This applies equally to career paths within and outside academia.

4 However, the international mobility behaviour of students, teachers, and researchers (especially in the field of young academics) is heterogeneous, as it is influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics mentioned above. This unequal distribution forms the central field of action of the DAAD Diversity Strategy.

We know from various studies that the following characteristics are primarily relevant for participation in international academic mobility: gender, educational and socio-economic background, ethnic and cultural aspects, family care obligations as well as physical impairments and chronic illnesses. Several of these characteristics

can overlap (intersectionality), and the relevance of individual characteristics can change in the course of an educational biography.

Against this background, the DAAD would like to pay even greater attention to the following diversity characteristics in its funding activities in the future and thus support groups that have been underrepresented so far:

- gender,
- family migration history (especially in the case of scholarship holders from Germany),
- family educational background (first generation academics),
- health impairments (people with disabilities or chronic illnesses),
- care obligations (especially single parents and academics with children),
- dependence on employment.

# Status Quo: Diversity-Sensitive Framework Conditions at the DAAD

Diversity awareness has also been part of the DAAD's overall strategy since 2020. In order to adequately address the diversity of students and academics in the DAAD's funding programmes, the Strategy 2025 formulates the objective of „continuously increasing the participation of previously less represented social groups in our programmes“. Diversity and equal opportunities are also anchored as strategic objectives in the DAAD's internal priority system. Finally, diversity, equal opportunities and inclusion form important building blocks of institutional sustainability management at the DAAD („social dimension“ of sustainability).

On this basis, a wide range of activities have already been implemented in the DAAD's funding and organisational structures. The DAAD's further development regarding diversity is therefore based on a solid foundation. The following analysis of the status quo also reveals the current imperfections and required improvements. The objectives and activities were planned according to the results of the status quo analysis.

## Communication and Marketing

With the **“studieren weltweit – ERLEBE ES!“ campaign**, the DAAD has an established tool for target group-specific and diversity-sensitive marketing. The aim of the campaign is to convince young people of the advantages of a stay abroad as part of their studies. In doing so, the campaign strives to achieve the highest possible and natural diversity in the student community. This also applies to the **Study in Germany - Land of Ideas campaign** and the **Research in Germany initiative**.

One area that needs to be addressed in this context is improving accessibility to the DAAD's information and application services. The analysis of the campaigns has also revealed the need to obtain personal feedback from students as well as young researchers from so far less represented target groups to further increase the effectiveness of the communication activities on this basis.

## Selection process and funding programmes

Since 2019, the DAAD has taken various measures to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in its funding programmes. An initial focus was to provide adequate financial support for people with special needs:

- Within the scope of individual funding, the DAAD has, among other things, significantly expanded and increased the **family benefits** for students and doctoral candidates from Germany, which were very limited before 2019. The benefits include the allowance for married persons, the child allowance, child-care costs, travel allowances for accompanying spouses or registered civil partners and for children who accompany the scholarship holders abroad for at least one month, health insurance and private liability insurance for accompanying partners and children, and accident insurance for partners. With the above-mentioned family benefits, the DAAD provides a comprehensive package designed to facilitate a stay abroad with family and children.
- Within the scope of both individual funding and project funding, the DAAD has established measures to ensure that DAAD scholarship holders with **disabilities or chronic illnesses** have equal access to a study visit abroad. For example, the DAAD can, upon application, assume the additional costs incurred abroad due to a disability or chronic illness which are not covered by any other funding body, up to a maximum of 10,000 euros as a rule. The relevant information can be found easily accessible on the DAAD website (<https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/mobility-with-a-disability/>). In addition, applicants can address their questions to the target group-specific functional email address [diversity@daad.de](mailto:diversity@daad.de), which can be found on the aforementioned website.

- Within the framework of the **Erasmus+ programme generation 2021-2027**, it is already a declared goal to increase participation in the programme. To achieve a broader participation of students who are less likely to be internationally mobile due to socio-economic factors, it is necessary to make scholarships more attractive. Therefore, the Erasmus+ National Agency for Higher Education in the DAAD, in coordination with the BMBF, has decided to increase the monthly funding rates from the call 2022. Furthermore, the target group of students who receive an additional monthly allowance due to socio-economic disadvantage has been expanded. These students now include working students as well as first-generation students. In addition, Erasmus+ will significantly expand financial support opportunities for parents who go abroad with children: As an alternative to the existing monthly top-up amounts for students with a child or children, from the call 2022 students and university staff will have the option of claiming real costs totalling up to 15,000 euros for the stay abroad with a child or children.

A second focus is the provision of targeted funding programmes that increase the participation in international exchange of groups of scholarship holders who have been underrepresented in DAAD funding to date. The following programmes are examples of this:

**HAW.International** and **Lehramt.International** (both funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)) offer tailor-made programmes for students at universities of applied sciences (HAW) and for student teachers. Students who have so far been less internationally mobile due to their socio-cultural background are very often represented in these groups and are to be particularly addressed and reached in the programmes mentioned. Initial evaluations confirm the effectiveness of this approach.

- With its **Surplace/Third Country Programme** (funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)), the DAAD promotes the training of future specialists and managers in developing countries, especially university teachers. The aim of the programme is to qualify graduates of the programme to take on responsible positions in development-relevant subjects in the field of teaching and research. Women and disadvantaged students in particular are to be strengthened in their participation.
- The **project “VORsprung”** (funded by the Federal Foreign Office (AA)) pursues the goal of tackling the demographic change in Germany and the resulting shortage of skilled workers in the STEM sector. Thanks to the time- and location-independent digital preparation, bureaucratic and financial hurdles of study preparation are substantially reduced. “VORsprung” thus also reduces the financial and bureaucratic burden and increases the diversity of applicants as well as equal opportunities for financially disadvantaged groups.
- As a requirement for improvement, it was identified that diversity orientation must be specifically strengthened in the selection procedures of the DAAD programmes themselves - both in the selection of scholarship holders in the DAAD and in the implementation of DAAD projects in the higher education institutions. In addition, the additional financial services are to be established in a coherent manner across the DAAD and, if necessary, gaps are to be filled. Achieving the Erasmus inclusion goals requires a holistic strategic approach.
- Socio-demographic information on all applicants can be obtained from the information provided in the **application form**. Information on gender and nationality (first and second nationality) is recorded here by default. To be able to take aspects of equal opportunities into account in the selection process, applicants have the opportunity to provide additional information on a voluntary basis in a free text field on special life circumstances - such as the necessity of gainful employment to finance the studies, information on illness or disability, childcare or the care of relatives.
- The DAAD also analyses the annual **selection rounds** and their development. The selection balances primarily evaluate the development of application numbers, approval rates and gender ratios. Based on the results, recommendations for action and adjustments to the programmes are formulated where necessary.
- From the **triple-wave survey of scholarship holders**, the DAAD has information on the educational background of the scholarship holders. The initial survey collects information on the highest school-leaving qualification and the highest vocational qualification of both parents. However, scholarship holders are free to answer these questions.

Against this background, the main desiderata are the gradual further development of the data basis - also considering efficiency and data protection aspects - as well as the establishment of a diversity monitoring system. There is also a need for an exchange of experience with partner organisations of the DAAD, especially the universities and the German organisations of foreign cultural and educational policy, in order to compare existing models for increasing diversity in international academic exchange and to develop joint strategies.

## Datenbasis und Monitoring

The DAAD's individual scholarship programmes already have a broad database, which provides an initial basis for more comprehensive diversity monitoring:

## Institutional gender equality and diversity policy

**Work-life balance policies** and a **recruitment policy** that is as **non-discriminatory** as possible are already structurally anchored in the DAAD. Job advertisements, for example, are formulated in a gender-neutral and non-discriminatory manner in accordance with the General Equal Treatment Act. In the context of personnel selection procedures, the requirement of non-discrimination is considered in that selection interviews are conducted based on a structured interview guide and discriminatory questions are not permitted.

In addition, the DAAD offers **jobs to enable people with disabilities to participate in the labour market**. Furthermore, the DAAD supports people who are seeking to (re)enter the labour market within the framework of **retraining and/or qualification via the second labour market**.

Through internships, among other things, the DAAD facilitates the acquisition of the necessary professional experience as well as a connection to the DAAD as a potential future employer.

It was formulated as a desideratum in this area that the equality of women has not yet been institutionally anchored through the elective office of an Equal Opportunities Officer in accordance with the regulations of the Federal Equal Opportunities Act directed at federal authorities. Another issue identified was the need to make staff recruitment more diversity-oriented and to communicate clearer and more visible signals to the staff that the DAAD is committed to diversity, equal opportunities, and inclusion.

# Diversity objectives and activities

As part of a house-wide process, five fundamental, strategic diversity objectives were developed on the basis of this status quo analysis and derived from the DAAD Strategy 2025. Each of these diversity objectives is assigned activities that address and implement the needs previously identified in the status quo analysis.



## OBJECTIVE 1 ADAPT THE DAAD'S COMMUNICATION IN LINE WITH DIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

Through target group-oriented communication, the DAAD encourages outstanding talents from diverse socio-cultural contexts to apply for its funding programmes. The DAAD addresses all interested students and researchers in such a way that they feel welcome, well informed, prepared, and encouraged for their stay abroad. In doing so, the DAAD works towards a more equitable participation in international student mobility and academic exchange.

### Activity 1.1: Communicate beyond barriers

The central online services of the DAAD such as [www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de), the websites of the external network, the campaigns implemented by the DAAD as well as the website of the Erasmus+ National Agency for Higher Education (NA) will be implemented and further developed according to the principles of accessibility. This creates barrier-free access to the DAAD's information services and fulfils most of the audit steps of the Barrier-Free Information Technology Ordinance (BITV) 2.0. Announcements for scholarship and funding programmes are checked for possible barriers for individual target groups. The foundation for barrier-free accessibility is laid through conception, design, and technical

implementation. However, some of the BITV 2.0 requirements for accessibility cannot be fully implemented or can only be implemented through daily editing.

### Activity 1.2: Make target group communication more authentic

We consult with representatives of currently less represented target groups and use this as a basis for developing suitable communication formats that are appropriate for the target group. In particular, we are increasingly addressing currently less represented target groups through testimonials from selected peers who report on their own experiences and how they deal with particular challenges in international exchange.

### Activity 1.3: Celebrating Diversity - Diversity Campaign 2022

We turn the spotlight on diversity-relevant topics and make them visible in text, images, and video on all DAAD channels. The focus is on the diversity of the people addressed and funded by the DAAD as well as on concrete examples of projects that promote diversity.



## OBJECTIVE 2

### INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF DAAD SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS

The DAAD advocates a diversity-conscious granting of scholarships within the framework of its funding programmes. It offers open access to funding for a study-related stay abroad, taking due account of the different starting conditions and life paths of our applicants. Within the framework of a diversity-sensitive selection process, everyone is given the opportunity to prove their academic and personal suitability. Our own support programmes for underrepresented target groups in international exchange have been strengthened and expanded.

#### Activity 2.1: Take greater account of the diversity of scholarship holders in the application process

Increasing the diversity of scholarship holders will be given greater consideration in the application process. To this end, a new, diversity-sensitive evaluation form is to be applied successively in the programmes for BA and MA students at German higher education institutions.

#### Activity 2.2: Make selection committees more diverse - raise awareness among committee members and staff for diversity issues in the selection process

In order to ensure a coherent approach to diversity issues in the application and selection process, DAAD staff and commission members will be sensitised accordingly. In addition, the selection committees will be made more diverse (in the short term through the participation of alumnae and alumni representing underrepresented DAAD target groups).

#### Activity 2.3: Implement scholarship programmes for underrepresented target groups

The DAAD designs and implements new scholarship programmes for underrepresented target groups (primarily incoming). On the one hand, the focus is on selected countries in the Global South, where women and refugees will receive even greater support, and on the other hand, the introduction of a pilot programme for disadvantaged students in the USA.



### OBJECTIVE 3

## SUPPORT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ACHIEVING THEIR DIVERSITY GOALS

In dialogue with higher education institutions, the DAAD creates sustainable structures and framework conditions for improved diversity and equal opportunities in the project funding programmes and within the framework of Erasmus+. It supports German higher education institutions with targeted activities to achieve their diversity goals and, together with the higher education institutions, makes its contribution to more educational equity and the development of untapped potential. This also strengthens the attractiveness and innovative capacity of Germany as a location for study and research.

#### Activity 3.1: Strengthening diversity orientation in the selection Procedures of Higher Education Institutions

In all programme calls, the DAAD explicitly refers to the aim of increasing diversity and to the corresponding (additional) funding instruments. In dialogue with higher education institutions, guidelines with good practices will be prepared and attached to the programme calls (DAAD and Erasmus+) as an aid to increasing diversity and equal opportunities.

#### Activity 3.2: Expand funding benefits in project funding

The funding portfolio of project funding will be expanded to include funding benefits that cover the additional financial needs of funding scholarship holders with special needs. The benefits for project-funded students are based on the regulations for DAAD scholarship holders. The additional benefits are to be granted primarily for stays abroad lasting six months or longer.

#### Activity 3.3: Shaping the inclusive dimension of Erasmus+ together with higher education institutions

The funding rates in Erasmus+ have been updated and thereby also adapted to the needs of currently less represented target groups. This includes the general rate increase for student mobility to possible maximum rates, the expansion of target groups for additional financial support (top-up amount or real costs) and for this the transfer of ESF+ funds to Erasmus+ (57 million EUR over 6 years). From the call 2022, students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, students with children, first-generation students and working students will receive a monthly top-up amount. Alternatively, students and university staff with a disability or chronic illness or those going abroad with children have the option of receiving limited real costs for their stay as well as for preparatory visits.

The universities are systematically accompanied and supported by the National Agency in the implementation of the new benefits.



## OBJECTIVE 4

### GAINING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DIVERSITY IN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

The DAAD, also in dialogue with the higher education institutions, is expanding its knowledge about diversity in international exchange and is using this knowledge for future programme design, in the strategic further development of international exchange and in political recommendations for action. The collection and evaluation of diversity-relevant data on the DAAD's funding activities is of particular importance in this context.

education strategy together with its member institutions. The National Agency is also organising conferences with a focus on the inclusion strategy of the Erasmus+ programme and the resulting new procedures. The results of the two conferences will be used to incorporate the identified potentials and needs at the interface between diversity, internationalisation, and higher education into the funding activities of the DAAD and the National Agency.

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#### **Activity 4.1: Shaping cultural change in international cultural and education policy**

The DAAD builds on the dialogue on diversity management between the German intermediary organisations of international cultural and education policy launched in 2021 and continues to engage in the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.

#### **Activity 4.2: Discuss diversity and internationalisation with higher education institutions**

Within the framework of a conference, the DAAD discusses the relationship between diversity and internationalisation in terms of higher

#### **Activity 4.3: Implement a diversity monitoring system**

With the aim of analysing the current situation and developing adequate intervention measures, the DAAD will expand the data protection-compliant collection of diversity-relevant information and establish ongoing diversity monitoring. As a result, potential for improvement will become visible. It will also provide a basis for the data-based further development of the diversity agenda as well as institutional practices and procedures.



## OBJECTIVE 5 EXPAND INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY IN THE DAAD

The DAAD sets itself the goal of promoting diversity among its employees and ensuring equal opportunities. In this sense, diversity orientation is to be strengthened in the areas of personnel recruitment and personnel development, among others. Disadvantages to the detriment of individual groups of persons are prevented or eliminated through new suitable and appropriate measures.

### **Activity 5.1: Strengthen diversity-sensitive human resources management**

In order to further increase the diversity of DAAD staff and to enhance the DAAD's attractiveness as an employer, recruitment and selection procedures will be further adapted to ensure that they are non-discriminatory and diversity sensitive. In terms of the public image of the DAAD as an employer, the focus will be on presenting the diverse areas of work within the DAAD. Diversity competence is becoming an integral part of human resources development. The DAAD identifies additional needs regarding the compatibility of work and family and provides appropriate offers.

### **Activity 5.2: Institutionalise gender balance and non-discrimination**

The DAAD establishes the elective office of an Equal Opportunities Officer and follows the regulations of the Federal Equal Opportunities Act (BGleig) directed at federal authorities. The DAAD also creates a contact point in the personnel department where employees can lodge complaints in the event of experiences of discrimination within the scope of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG).

### **Activity 5.3: Signing the Diversity Charter**

By signing the *Charta der Vielfalt*, the DAAD publicly documents its commitment to diversity in the world of work and opens a network of and exchange with like-minded organisations..

# Imprint

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