

Helmut-Schmidt-Programme

Master's Scholarships for Public Policy and Good Governance 2026

OBJECTIVE

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With the **Helmut-Schmidt-Programme**, the DAAD strives to contribute to promoting good governance and civil society structures in developing and emerging countries.

The Programme

- offers **future leaders** master's courses in disciplines that are of special relevance for social, political, and economic development
- prepares students in a **practice-oriented course** for **responsible positions** in or for their home regions and contributes to establishing economic and social institutions that are democratically oriented and designed to overcome social inequalities

WHO CAN APPLY?

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Graduates from developing and emerging countries
(bachelor or equivalent)

- with a **well-qualified first university degree** and above-average grades (upper third) in Social and Political Sciences, Law, Economics, Public Policy and Administration
- willing to actively contribute to the social, political and economic **development of their home countries/regions**
- who have already gained **practical experience relevant for the programme** (professional experience, internships, political/social commitment)

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED?

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Academic education in one of the **master's courses**, listed below and selected by the DAAD, will take place from **September/October 2026**. The courses have an international focus and are offered in **English**.

Throughout their studies, all scholarship holders of the Helmut-Schmidt-Programme benefit from **accompanying support services** provided by the programme coordinators at the respective study locations.

Scholarship holders benefit from **events and seminars** organised specifically for them, as well as **close exchange with other international scholarship holders**.

Planning also provides for participation in interdisciplinary **networking events**.

DAAD scholarship holders are **exempt from paying tuition fees**.

VALUE

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The scholarship holders will receive

- **scholarships (of currently € 992 per month)** for master's courses at German higher education institutions
- **health insurance cover** in Germany
- appropriate **travel allowances** for travel between Germany and the respective developing and emerging countries
- **a study and research grant**
- **rent subsidies** and **family supplements**, as applicable
- preceding **German language course** in Germany, lasting up to 4 months; participation is mandatory

The following deviation regarding funding benefits applies for the “**Social Protection**” master's course due to its blended learning concept: **A sur place rate of € 500 per month** is paid in the **4th semester** (mandatory online semester in the student's country of origin or another developing/emerging country).

APPLICATION PROCESS

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All applications must be submitted in **English or German**.

You may apply for up to two master's courses listed below.

1. Please read the **DAAD selection criteria included in our checklist** carefully and take care of every single point listed in the checklist.
2. Please complete the DAAD “Application Form” only once and indicate your selected master's course or courses.
3. If you are applying for two master's courses: Please rank the courses in order of preference in your motivation letter, i.e. why your first choice of master's course is your first choice and why your second choice is your second choice. For each choice of course, please provide clear reasons why you think it will advance you academically and professionally. You must submit the same letter of motivation to both courses you are applying for.
4. Please submit the application form to the master's course(s) of your choice (max. two), along with the required documents (see below). Scholarship applications must be sent **directly to the master's courses**.

SELECTION

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The **selection** will be made by a selection committee in **October/November 2025**. The committee comprises professors from the participating master's courses and representatives of the DAAD.

Next step: The candidates that were proposed for a scholarship are contacted by the DAAD and asked to **upload their full documents to the DAAD portal**. Please do not upload any application documents unless you are nominated (by email) by the DAAD.

Important: Please make sure that you have a **full set of copies of your application documents** in PDF format. Please submit original documents; only if you are explicitly asked to do so by the master's course.

Thus, the selection process is finalised. **All applicants are informed in writing** after the end of the selection process, expected in **December 2025/January 2026**.

SELECTION CRITERIA

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The most important selection criteria are:

- a conclusive account of **your academic, professional and personal motivation** for the study endeavour in Germany and for choosing and prioritising the master's courses
- this motivation should clearly relate to the **goals of the Helmut-Schmidt-Programme**
- **practical experience** relevant to the programme (professional experience or internships, political activities or service to your community, such as volunteering or work for charities or NGOs)
- a first **higher education degree completed with above-average grades** (upper third)

Formal requirements:

- **Candidates who already hold a master's degree** must make a well-argued case as to why they should be funded for another postgraduate degree.
- The candidates' **last university degree** should not date back more than six years (date of issue not before 1 January 2019).
- Candidates who have spent **more than the past 15 months** in a country not listed on the DAC list are not eligible.

All master's courses have their own selection criteria (degree, grades, language skills, practical experience, etc.) that must be met in addition to the DAAD's selection criteria.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

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The requirements for language skills and the required language certificates **vary depending on the respective master's course**.

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

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The required application documents are:

- a ticked off **checklist** and **list of criteria**, signed by hand (print it out, sign it by hand, scan it and include it in your documents), indicating place and date of issue
- the **DAAD application form**
- **a single letter of motivation (even when applying for two master's courses)** including the date of issue and a precise account of your academic, professional and personal reasons for wishing to participate in the Helmut-Schmidt-Programme, as well as a detailed explanation of your choice of master's course(s), indicating why your first choice of master's course is your first choice, why your second choice is your second choice and how they will advance you academically and professionally, max. two pages long. You must **provide the same letter of motivation to both courses** you are applying for.
- **a curriculum vitae in reverse chronological order** including the date of issue (format: [europass](#), please note: the europass template does not include a date, please add it yourself) with exact information about your studies and practical experience; **gaps of three months or more must be explained**
- copies of your **higher education degree certificates**. Please provide a certified translation if the original is not in German or English and make sure these are clearly legible.
- a copy of your **full set of transcript of records** including an explanation of the grading system. Please provide a certified translation if the original is not in German or English and make sure these are clearly legible.
- confirmations of relevant **professional experience or internships** and/or proof of relevant **political activities or service** to your community, such as **volunteering or work for charities or NGOs**, on headed paper, including an original (not scanned) or code certified digital signature, the date of issue and a stamp. If necessary, please provide a certified translation
- **proof of English language skills**
- **a current written reference** from your current employer or from a university lecturer only if you are a student at present, on headed paper, including an original (not scanned) or code certified digital signature, the date of issue and a stamp. If necessary, please provide a certified translation

Applicants from the People's Republic of China are asked to submit an APS Certificate with their application documents.

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The application period for all seven higher education institutions is from **1 June until 31 July 2025**.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

APPLICATION LOCATION

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Please submit your application documents for the master's course(s) and the DAAD scholarship **to the master's course(s) of your choice**, and not to the DAAD.

PLEASE NOTE

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Please note that applications may be rejected for formal reasons or due to missing or incorrect information.

Applications addressed to more than two higher education institutions and/or that do not include a clear and consistent prioritisation in the letter of motivation, will be excluded from the selection process.

Only applications including all required documents will be considered. Applications sent to the DAAD will not be forwarded to the respective master's course(s). Such application documents including any attachments, samples, etc. will become the property of the DAAD, without any compensation. They will not be returned.

Any deviations from the application process will result in exclusion from the selection process.

INFORMATION AND ADVISORY CENTRES

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For further information, please contact the **master's courses'** contact persons (see list below).

MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

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The following master's courses are part of the Helmut-Schmidt-Programme (Master's Scholarships for Public Policy and Good Governance):

1. Social Protection

University of Applied Sciences Bonn-Rhein-Sieg

(teaching language: English, duration: 4 semesters)

Blended learning concept:

1st semester at the higher education institution

2nd semester online, in Germany or the home country/a developing country

3rd semester, practical term in Germany/home country/third country

4th semester online, dedicated to preparing the master's thesis in the home country/a developing country

Email: msc-socialprotection@h-brs.de

2. Development and Governance

University of Duisburg-Essen

(teaching language: English, duration: 2 semesters)

Email: ma-devgov@uni-due.de

3. **Public Policy**

Willy Brandt School of Public Policy at the University of Erfurt

(teaching language: English, duration: 4 semesters)

Please apply [online](#).

Email: admissions-mpp@uni-erfurt.de

4. **Peace and Conflict Studies**

University of Magdeburg

(teaching language: English, duration: 4 semesters)

Email: pacs@ovgu.de

5. **Management in Nonprofit-Organisations**

University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück

(teaching language: English, duration: 4 semesters)

Email: ppgg@hs-osnabrueck.de

6. **Development Studies**

University of Passau

(teaching language: English, duration: 4 semesters)

Email: information.ppgg@uni-passau.de

7. **Governance and Public Policy**

University of Passau

(teaching language: English, duration: 4 semesters)

Email: information.ppgg@uni-passau.de

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