

The Daimler and Benz Foundation Scholarship Programme 2020 Supporting Postdoctoral Students and Assistant Professors

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The goal of the programme is to strengthen the autonomy of our next generation of academics. The phase after completing a doctorate is particularly productive. The Foundation would therefore like to focus its scholarship programme on this stage of the career path in order to support the academic careers of dedicated researchers. The scholarship programme is aimed at young academics who have completed their PhD, are in the early stages of their postdoctoral career and have already attained a certain level of autonomy in their research. It is open to applicants across all disciplines (humanities, cultural studies, medicine and engineering as well as social, natural and life sciences) and there is no restriction on topics. Applicants must have their own research project as well as institutional ties to an academic institute within Germany.

Who can apply?

The scholarships are provided to support postdoctoral students at German research institutes, in particular assistant professors or academics in equivalent positions, such as independent heads of research groups made up of young researchers. Candidates must be in the early stages of their academic career. The Foundation has chosen not to give a precise definition of said “early stages”, as such a period may be assessed very differently depending on the academic discipline. Nonetheless, it should be clear from the application that the applicant has consciously decided to pursue a career in academia and is making every effort to pursue this goal.

Scholarships can only be requested to support the applicant’s own research project. They may be used to expand an ongoing project or to facilitate an entirely new one.

The Foundation organises regular meetings which enable the scholarship recipients to exchange ideas with one another and remain in contact with the Foundation. Applicants must be prepared to attend these meetings.

Scholarship payments

The scholarship is granted for a period of two years and consists of an annual sum of 20,000 euros. Scholarship recipients must report on the progress and results of their research in an interim report after one year and a final report at the end of the scholarship period. The scholarship will be paid via the third-party funding office of the research institute where the applicant works.

The scholarship may be used at the applicant's discretion, primarily for the following purposes: research trips, conference attendance and the organisation of conferences by the recipient, temporary employment of research assistants, computers, laboratory equipment and special chemicals. The scholarship is not, however, to be used to finance the recipient's own living costs and also cannot be used to cover routine expenditure by the research institute (e.g. overheads, printing costs, consumables such as basic chemicals, paper etc.).

Any other grants received by the applicant will not affect the sum of the scholarship provided by the Foundation.

Application procedure

In order to apply, please submit the following documents:

1. Proof of institutional ties for the entire duration of the scholarship (e.g. confirmation by head of institute);
2. Title and brief description of the research project for expert assessment, including details of the methodology planned (maximum four A4 pages including literature references);
3. Brief description of the research project for a general audience (maximum one A4 page);
4. Approximate project timetable including general information on the planned use of the scholarship (maximum two A4 pages);
5. Curriculum vitae covering the applicant's academic career (including publications, grants, prizes, achievements in the area of scientific communication);
6. Copies of Master's degree or Diplom and doctoral degree (provisional certificates will not be accepted); for foreign documents, please attach a certified German or English translation;
7. Two confidential letters of recommendation (one of which should come from an institution where the applicant is not employed) discussing both the applicant as an individual and the project for which they intend to use the scholarship. The letters of recommendation must use the official letterhead of the institution at which the author is employed. Informal or unsigned letters of recommendation will not be considered.

Applications may be written in German or in English and must be received in full (i.e. including the confidential letters of recommendation) by 1 October 2019 (midnight) via the online application portal (www.daimler-benz-stiftung.de). The minimum acceptable font size is 11 pt.

The confidential letters of recommendation can only be uploaded via the online application portal. This can only be done after the applicant has entered the email addresses of the authors of the letters of recommendation in the correct place in the portal. As soon as the applicant has done so, an email with login information will be automatically generated and sent to the authors. From experience, the Foundation recommends that the applicant inform the authors of the letters of recommendation about the exact procedure and deadlines for the submission of the letters in good time.

After the application deadline, a preliminary selection will be carried out. The candidates chosen will be invited to a seminar at the offices of the Daimler and Benz Foundation in Ladenburg, Germany. This will provide them with the opportunity to personally introduce their projects to representatives of the Foundation as well as external assessors. Applicants must attend this selection seminar in order to be considered for a scholarship. Reapplication is not possible. The selected candidates are usually announced in February of the following year; the exact start date of the scholarship is determined jointly by the Foundation and the recipient.

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