Daimler und Benz
Stiftung

2027 Scholarship Program of the Daimler and Benz Foundation for the Promotion of Postdocs and Junior Professors

Each year, the Foundation awards a total of twelve scholarships to postdoc researchers in a position of leadership and to junior professors. The funding, which amounts to €50,000 per scholarship for a period of two years, can be used at their own discretion for research trips, participation in conferences, organization of their own conferences, temporary involvement of academic assistants, for computers, laboratory equipment, and special chemicals – but not for covering their own living expenses. The deadline for applications is September 30, 2026.

1. Motivation

With this program, the Foundation sets out to reinforce the autonomy of the next generation of academics and to support the careers of committed young academics after earning their doctorates. The program thus specifically focuses on the point in an academic career when a certain degree of autonomy in research has already been achieved, but the scientist does not yet hold a permanent position. The funding program is open to applicants from all disciplines (humanities, social and cultural sciences, natural and engineering sciences, medicine, and life sciences) and is not restricted in terms of content.

2. Applicant profile

The program is directed toward young scientists who have made a conscious decision to embark on an academic career after being awarded a doctorate and resolutely pursue this goal, among other things by undertaking a sojourn abroad. Application is open to postdocs who are active at a German research institution and have already attained autonomy – especially junior professors or independent heads of junior research groups. This autonomy should be appropriately documented in the application (e.g. through the acquisition of own funds, independent publication activities, or management of a group).

Furthermore, an applicant must be at an early stage of his or her academic activity, i.e. the doctorate must have been awarded no more than a few years prior to application. In this connection, the Foundation follows the guidelines of the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Prerequisites for an application are: a) the applicant's own research project and b) institutional affiliation with an academic institution in Germany or with a German academic institution abroad. In terms of content, this can be either a new research project or the continuation of an existing project.

Applicants must be in a position of temporary employment for the entire scholarship period or demonstrate that their living expenses are covered by other means. The scholarship from the Foundation cannot be used to cover an applicant's living expenses or to finance his or her own tenure. Scientists in a position of permanent employment are not eligible to apply.

At regular intervals, the Foundation organizes gatherings of former and current scholarship-holders; these serve for an exchange of ideas and for maintaining contact with the Foundation. Willingness to participate in these gatherings is mandatory.

3. Use of funding applied for

A scholarship is granted for a period of two years; the funding amount is €50,000 in total. This sum may be used at the applicant's discretion – above all for the following purposes: research trips, participation in conferences and organization of their own conferences, temporary involvement of academic assistants, computers, laboratory equipment, and special chemicals.

However, the scholarship cannot be used to finance typical outlay that is the responsibility of the respective research institution (e.g. overhead or publication costs, or consumables such as basic chemicals and office equipment). Any other funding received by the applicant is not offset against the scholarship.

Scholarship-holders are required to furnish an interim report on the progress of their research work after one year, and a final report on conclusion of the scholarship period. The grant is issued via the third-party funding office of the applicant's research institution.

4. Application procedure

Applications, in German or English, must be complete, i.e. including the confidential letters of recommendation (see below), and must be received via the online application portal (www.daimler-benz-stiftung.de) by September 30, 2026 (11:59 p.m.). The Foundation does not provide a template for applications, but the margins must be at least 2 cm wide and a clearly legible font size (at least 11 pt Arial) must be chosen. Applications with a smaller font size (especially in illustrations or charts) will not be taken into consideration.

Please submit the following documents for your application:

a) Proof of affiliation with an institute for the entire scholarship period, e.g. confirmation from the head of the institute or its administrative office (in the event of a positive decision by the Foundation, the scholarship period can commence no earlier than March 1, 2027; in this case, proof of institutional affiliation would have to cover the period up to February 28, 2029);

b) Title and description of the research project for the specialist reviewers, including information on the intended methodology (maximum four A4 pages; references may be added on subsequent pages);

c) Title and brief description of the research project in readily comprehensible form for the non-specialist reviewers; this text should be formulated in such a way that a reader without specialized knowledge can understand the scientific and, if applicable, societal relevance of the research project (one A4 page; no references);

d) A rough time schedule for the project (one A4 page),

e) Indication of the planned use of the grant, in tabular form (one A4 page);

f) Curriculum vitae with academic career, in tabular form (including publications, scholarships, awards, third-party funding already received, achievements in the field of academic communication);

g) Copies of the applicant's Master's certificate and doctoral certificate (provisional certificates will not be accepted; in the case of foreign certificates, please include a certified German or English translation);

h) Two confidential letters of recommendation, which include statements relating to both the applicant himself/herself and the project applied for. The Foundation makes no specifications concerning the choice of referees for these letters of recommendation, although the two referees should not be from the same academic institution; it is also advisable that one of these letters be from the institution where the applicant is currently working or intends to undertake research. The letters of recommendation must be printed on the official letterheads of the institutions at which the referees are active. Informal or unsigned letters of recommendation will not be considered and will lead to the applicant's disqualification.

The confidential letters of recommendation may only be submitted via the online application portal. They can only be uploaded once the applicant has entered the email addresses of the referees in the appropriate space. An email with access data will then be immediately generated and automatically sent to the referees. The Foundation would like to emphasize that the applicant should therefore clarify the exact modalities and deadlines for submitting the letters of recommendation together with the referees in good time. Compliance with all data privacy regulations and the protection of personal data are an important concern for the Foundation throughout the process.

5. Selection process

After the application deadline, a comparative preselection process will take place. The selected candidates will be invited to participate in a video conference to present their projects to specialist and non-specialist reviewers and to representatives of the Foundation. Personal participation is a prerequisite for the awarding of a scholarship.

The invitation to the selection seminar is expected to take place in December 2026, the video conferences in January 2027, and announcement of the selected scholarship-holders in February 2027. A disbursement of funds is possible from March 2027 at the earliest or in consultation between the Foundation and the scholarship recipient.

Unsuccessful applications are not eligible for repeated submission.

6. Contact

If you have any questions, please contact Marion Hartmann:
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