

## SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES FOR DORA PLUS ACTIVITY 1.1 SHORT STUDY VISITS

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### PURPOSE, SCOPE, RESPONSIBILITY

The purpose of the guidelines is to set out the terms and procedures for the scholarships of the activity 1.1 "Short study and research related visits<sup>1</sup> of Estonian young researchers and master's degree students abroad" (hereinafter the short study visits) of Action 1 "Participation of young researchers in the international circulation of knowledge" of the programme "Internationalisation of research and higher education, supporting mobility and new generations Dora Plus"<sup>2</sup>. The general conditions for the provision of the support are determined by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Research No. 1.1-2/15/471 from 9 December 2015.

The calls for scholarship applications for short study visits are organised and beneficiaries are selected by the higher education institutions. The payments to the beneficiaries are made by the Education Agency of Archimedes Foundation (hereinafter the foundation).

### PURPOSE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

1. The purpose of the scholarship for short study visits is to improve the awareness of beneficiaries of diverse teaching and research practices, encourage their involvement in international co-operation projects, improve the completion rates of doctoral studies, and strengthen the compliance of doctoral studies at Estonian universities with the principles of innovative doctoral studies.

### CONDITIONS FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP

2. The higher education institution may nominate a candidate for the scholarship if that person is the institution's:
  - 2.1. master's or doctoral degree student;
  - 2.2. student of integrated study programme who has accumulated at least 180 credit points;
  - 2.3. resident physician not older than 35 years (as per first day of the study visit); or
  - 2.4. lecturer or researcher not older than 35 years (as per first day of the study visit) or having less than 5 years from the date of defending the doctoral thesis. Institutions can extend these limits proportionally for candidates who have been on parental leave. The age limit does not apply to students.
3. The scholarship is awarded to support the participation of young researchers and master's degree students from Estonian higher education institutions in the research conferences, seminars, training courses or other academic activities abroad (activities related to learning and research, such as working at the library, using a lab, developing teaching materials, collaborating with the supervisor, consulting with experts, participating in field work, and the like).
4. The short study visits can last for up to 30 calendar days, including the time used for travelling to the study destination and back. The length of the study visit is determined on the basis of official programme of the event or the timetable provided in the individual work plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Study visit is a physical move to a foreign country in order to study, participate in training or non-formal/informal learning.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.struktuurifondid.ee/et/oigusaktid/meetmepohised/2014-2020/>

## SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT

5. The financial support for participation in short study visits is provided in the form of scholarships the amount of which is calculated on the basis of the minimum rate of daily allowances for official travel abroad, and fixed unit prices for accommodation and travel<sup>3</sup>. The scholarship amounts are calculated on the basis of the scholarship period stipulated in the contract. The participation fee of the event is reimbursed on the basis of actual costs.
6. The travel grant can be pursued to cover the cost of return travel from the point of departure to the destination (the place of the event or individual work). The scholarship cannot be awarded for one-way travelling. For calculating purposes, the starting and end points of travels shall always be in the same city. Both the visits starting from Estonia and abroad can be supported<sup>4</sup>, yet the points of departure and destination have to be in different countries. The necessity of starting and ending the study visits abroad shall be assessed by the higher education institution nominating the candidate.
  - 6.1. The amount of the travel grant depends on the distance between the point of departure and destination of the visit. The online calculator of the European Commission shall be used for calculating the distance: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/distance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/distance_en.htm).
  - 6.2. If the distance between the point of departure and destination is up to 99.99 km (included), the costs shall be compensated on the basis of actual costs, but only in the amount of up to 180 euros. The actual costs shall be substantiated by the tickets or their invoices (if the price is not indicated on the ticket) or fuel cheques. The use of private car is allowed with the prior consent of the foundation. In case of ferry tickets, only the transportation of passengers can be reimbursed (the crossing of vehicles shall not be covered). The cost of public transportation is covered during the scholarship period only.
  - 6.3. If the distance between the point of departure and destination is 100.00 km or more, the costs shall be reimbursed on the basis of rates of the fixed unit prices<sup>5</sup>, as provided in the following table:

	Distance from city to city (one way) <sup>6</sup>	Travel grant for a return trip (from point of departure to destination and back)
1	100 – 499 km	180 euros
2	500 – 1,999 km	275 euros
3	2,000 – 2,999 km	360 euros
4	3,000 – 3,999 km	530 euros
5	4,000 – 7,999 km	820 euros
6	8,000 or more km	1,100 euros

The travel grant established on the basis of fixed unit prices includes all costs related to the travel, including transfer to the airport and from airport to the final destination.

7. The accommodation grant is calculated based upon the period of the event or individual work in days. In justified cases, one night before and one night after the event or individual work can be included (see clause 9). Three rates are used for the calculation of accommodation grant:

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<sup>3</sup> Annex 2 “The use of fixed unit prices of learning mobility in the programme “Internationalisation of research and higher education, supporting mobility and new generations Dora Plus” to the Decree of Minister of Education and Research No. 1.1-2/15/471 from 9 December 2015.

<sup>4</sup> For example: if the short study visit is pursued by the Estonian PhD student studying abroad with the support of Dora Plus PhD student mobility scholarship, the beneficiary can use the travel grant only if he/she returns to the same country after the short study visit and continues the activities in the university or research institution abroad.

<sup>5</sup> For example: if the point of departure is Tartu and destination Uppsala, the distance between those two cities according to the European Commission calculator is 543.47 km. This falls to the range of 500-1,999 km. The travel grant for the travel on the route of Tartu-Uppsala-Tartu is, therefore, 275 euros.

<sup>6</sup> If the distance calculated with the online calculator falls to the range of 499-500 km, 1,999-2,000 km, etc., it shall be rounded to the nearest whole number to determine the unit price.

	Duration of visit	Accommodation grant per night
1	2-6 days	80 euros
2	7-14 days	60 euros
3	15 or more days	35 euros

8. In calculation of daily allowance the standard rate of 32 euros per day of visit is used. Daily allowance can be pursued for up to 30 calendar days. Daily allowance is awarded for the periods supported by scholarship (see clause 9).
- 8.1. If the higher education institution compensates to the beneficiary the difference between the minimum rate of daily allowance covered by Dora Plus and institution's internally established rate for daily allowances (maximum 18 euros for the first 15 days of the visit, but not more than 15 days per calendar month), the beneficiary shall submit to the foundation, in addition to the documents established in clause 24, the copies of the travel order, travel report and payment order. The institutions cannot use the EU structural support as a source of additional funding.
9. The scholarship period of the short study visit is determined on the basis of official programme of the event or the timetable provided in the individual work plan. In justified cases, one additional day before and one day after the event or individual work can be supplemented. The beneficiary shall justify the necessity for the additional days in the data file submitted for the contract. Scholarship period is stipulated in the contract.
- 9.1. The request for additional days does not require further explanation in following cases:
- 9.1.1. If the point of departure and destination are in different continents;
  - 9.1.2. If the planned activities start at 11 AM or earlier on the first day and/or end at 16 PM or later on the last day of the activity (according to the official programme or timetable).
- 9.2. The request for additional days shall be explained by the specific circumstances in following cases:
- 9.2.1. If there are no means of transportation for travelling on the same day;
  - 9.2.2. If it is impossible to participate in the event in full when travelling on the same day;
  - 9.2.3. If the awake time is unreasonably long when travelling on the same day;
  - 9.2.4. If travelling on the same day leaves insufficient time for the preparation of presentation;
  - 9.2.5. Other reasons that do not enable the high quality realisation of the objectives of the visit.
- 9.3. More economical travel expenses cannot be taken account as a justification for the request for additional days.
- 9.4. If the additional days are allocated, the daily allowance is calculated per every added day and accommodation grant per every added night.
10. The participation fee shall be covered on the basis of actual cost. After returning from the study visit, the invoice of the participation fee and confirmation of its payment shall be presented to the foundation (if not presented beforehand).
- 10.1. If the participation fee includes the accommodation costs related to the event, the accommodation grant can be pursued to cover the accommodation costs of the night before and after the event, which the participation fee does not include.
  - 10.2. If the participation fee is paid in cash during the event, the confirmation of payment shall be accompanied by a statement explaining the reasons for the cash payment and confirming that the same cost is not reimbursed from multiple sources.
11. The maximum amount of the scholarship (the travel grant, accommodation grant, daily allowances and event's participation fee in total) is 2,000 euros per visit, regardless of its duration and destination country.
12. The costs covered by the scholarship for short study visit cannot be simultaneously covered from other sources, except in cases described in the clause 8.1. The event's participation fee can be funded fully from another source, provided that the foundation is informed thereof.

- 12.1. If the scholarship is awarded to a doctoral student studying abroad on a PhD student mobility scholarship (Dora Plus activity 1.2)<sup>7</sup>, it must be taken into account that the scholarships for the PhD student mobility and for the short study visits cannot be granted for the same periods of time. The use of the PhD student mobility subsistence grant shall therefore be temporarily suspended with the annex to the financial contract. The beneficiary shall return to the foundation the PhD student mobility subsistence grant awarded for the period, before the scholarship payment for the short study visit can be made (see also clause 6).

## APPLICATION PROCESS

13. The calls for applications for the short study visits shall be organised by higher education institutions, which are responsible for the selection of beneficiaries based on the scholarship guidelines, institutional priorities and other terms as well as the quota established by the foundation. The requirements and application deadlines shall be publicly available. The higher education institution may nominate as beneficiaries only the students and employees of the same higher education institution, complying with the requirements set out in clause 2.
14. The quota for the scholarships of short study visits shall be based on the total number of master's and doctoral degree students at the higher education institution and, starting from the second year, also the extent of the previous year's quota utilisation shall be taken into account.
15. The higher education institutions can submit the data of new beneficiaries to the foundation by the 10th day of every month (except 10 July). The higher education institution shall present the list of beneficiaries as a digitally signed comprehensive document and submit the data of beneficiaries through the electronic application system ([www.archimedes.ee/taotlused](http://www.archimedes.ee/taotlused)) at the earliest opportunity, generally not later than 6 weeks before the beginning of the study visit. The data must include the beneficiary's name, contact data, the purpose, destination and duration of the study visit and the amount of the allocated scholarship.
16. If it turns out before the payment of the scholarship that the nominated beneficiary cannot use the scholarship for any reason, the higher education institution may submit another beneficiary to the same application round.

## SIGNING THE CONTRACT WITH THE BENEFICIARY

17. For further actions, the foundation shall contact the beneficiaries on the basis of the data presented by the higher education institution. The beneficiary shall submit a data file for the contract through the electronic application system ([www.archimedes.ee/taotlused](http://www.archimedes.ee/taotlused)) with the following mandatory documents:
- 17.1. The event's programme (if there is no final programme yet, a link to the event's website shall be given), if participating in an event, or the individual work plan approved and signed by the thesis supervisor or immediate superior at work, if the purpose of the visit is independent work. If the thesis supervisor has not been assigned, the individual work plan shall be signed by the person assigned by the higher education institution's internal regulations to approve the study plans of students going to study abroad.
- 17.2. The confirmation of registration to the event or the official invitation or confirmation of acceptance from the host (except in case there is no host institution) or a quote from the website (in the form of a link) of library, archive, museum or any other publicly accessible institution indicating that the beneficiary has access to the services during the study visit.
- 17.3. The confirmation of participation fee amount and payment (if paid beforehand), if pursuing compensation of the fee.
18. The individual work plan or letter of confirmation referred to in clause 17 may be submitted via the application system as scanned copies. The foundation may examine their authenticity if necessary.
19. If the pursued scholarship amount diverges from the amount calculated on the basis of fixed unit prices or is otherwise incompatible with the terms set out in the guidelines, the foundation shall have the right to adjust the data submitted by the beneficiary informing the beneficiary and higher education institution thereof.

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<sup>7</sup> The scholarship guidelines for Dora Plus activity 1.2 PhD student mobility

20. The beneficiary confirms the correctness of the data provided in the data file by signing the financial contract. Generally, the foundation shall sign the contract with the beneficiary no later than 4 weeks before the beginning of the study visit. The contract establishes the scholarship amount and terms for the use of the scholarship.
21. If the purpose, duration or any other essential condition of the study visit does not comply with the established requirements, the financial contract will not be concluded.

#### **PAYMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE USE OF SCHOLARSHIP**

22. The advance payment of scholarship shall be made within two weeks after the signing of the contract, except for the following cases:
  - 22.1. If the distance between the point of departure and destination is less than 100 km and the travel costs are reimbursed on the basis of actual costs, the payment of the travel grant shall be made after the expense receipts have been submitted to the foundation;
  - 22.2. If the beneficiary has not fulfilled the obligations undertaken with the previous contracts with the foundation, the payment of the scholarship may be made on the basis of documents submitted after the study visit.
23. The scholarship may be used only to cover the costs of the study visit described in the contract. If, after the conclusion of the contract, a justified need arises to adjust the study visit's duration, destination or purpose, the change shall be agreed with the foundation in writing and the contract amended, if necessary. The contract shall be amended if the scholarship amount or scholarship period is adjusted. The foundation shall inform the higher education institution about the amendments to the contract.
24. After returning from the study visit, the beneficiary must submit to the foundation the following documents:
  - 24.1. The formal confirmation of attendance issued by the host institution or organiser of the event, containing the actual dates of studying and working abroad or confirmation letter of Estonian supervisor/direct superior and transport tickets, which prove that the study visit had taken place in the period stipulated in the contract (only if there is no host institution based on contract);
  - 24.2. The invoice of the participation fee and confirmation of payment by the beneficiary<sup>8</sup> (if the participation fee is reimbursed and the documents were not submitted earlier);
  - 24.3. The copies of the travel order, travel report and confirmation of payment in cases described in clause 8.1;
  - 24.4. If the travel costs are compensated on the basis of actual costs, also the transport tickets or invoice for the tickets (if the price is not indicated in the ticket) or fuel receipt (if the use of private car has been agreed beforehand). Ferry tickets, flight tickets and fuel receipts shall be submitted together with confirmation of payment, which prove that the beneficiaries have covered the cost themselves.
25. The digital documents proving the use of the scholarship must be submitted through the electronic application system ([www.archimedes.ee/taotlused](http://www.archimedes.ee/taotlused)) no later than on the 15th calendar day after the end of the study visit. Paper documents shall be uploaded to the system in the form of scanned copy. The foundation may examine their authenticity if necessary.
26. The foundation shall verify compliance of the documents with the terms of the guidelines and the contract signed with the beneficiary.
27. The foundation shall have a right to reclaim the part of the scholarship from the beneficiary if:
  - 27.1. the confirmation of attendance issued by the host institution indicates a shorter period of participation in the activities than agreed in the contract;
  - 27.2. the transport tickets indicate shorter period of travel than agreed in the contract (only if there is no host institution based on contract);
  - 27.3. the beneficiary does not submit the invoice of the participation fee and/or confirmation of its payment within reasonable time after the foundation's reminder.
28. The foundation shall have a right to reclaim the scholarship from the beneficiary in full if:

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<sup>8</sup> If the participation fee was initially paid by a third party, a confirmation shall also be presented concerning the repayment of the participation fee to the third party.

- 28.1. The beneficiary's participation in the activities for which the scholarship was awarded is not substantiated with documents;
- 28.2. The beneficiary does not submit original confirmation of attendance or transport tickets (only if there is no host institution based on contract) within reasonable time after the foundation's reminder, and therefore the participation in the activities is not verified;
- 28.3. It is discovered that the scholarship was used for a purpose other than agreed in the contract or that the costs covered by the scholarship have been be simultaneously covered from other sources.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

29. The Dora Plus scholarships for short study visits are funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Estonia. The information requirements of European Union Structural Funds shall be followed and respected when using the scholarship. The articles, publications, slides and the likes, and oral presentations related to the study visit shall acknowledge the support of European Union, by using the European Regional Development Fund's double logo<sup>9</sup> or referring to the support verbally (for example: "The research for this article was conducted with the support from the European Regional Development Fund").
30. The lists of beneficiaries are public.

#### **DATE OF ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES**

31. The guidelines are applied to the financial contracts with the beneficiaries registered from 1 September 2018 onwards.

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<sup>9</sup> The logos are available at <http://www.strukturifondid.ee/nouded-avalikustamisele/>