

SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES FOR DORA PLUS ACTIVITY 1.1 SHORT STUDY VISITS

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 visits¹ of Estonian young researchers and master students abroad” (hereinafter as 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”². The general conditions for providing the grant are determined by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Research No. 1.1-2/15/471 from the 9th of December 2015.

The call for applications for the scholarship of short study visits are organized and the grantees are selected by the higher education institutions. The payments to the grantees are made by the Internationalisation Department of the Education and Youth Board (hereinafter as the board).

PURPOSE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

1. The purpose of the scholarship of short study visits is to improve the awareness of grantees 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 the 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 at the institution is:

2.1. master or PhD 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 of age (as of the first day of the study visit); or

2.4. lecturer or researcher not older than 35 years of age (as of the first day of the study visit) or who has defended their doctoral thesis not more than 5 years ago. 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 students from the 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).

3.1. Participation in a virtual event is supported if the event would have taken place abroad on-site but was cancelled due to restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the grantee has an active role at the event (presentation, participation in discussions or lead the debate, an article in a conference publication, etc.).

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 the official programme of the event or the timetable provided in the individual work plan.

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 the daily allowances for official travel abroad, and fixed unit

¹ Study visit means physically moving to a foreign country in order to study, participate in training or non-formal/informal learning

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

prices for accommodation and travel³. 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 the actual costs.

5.1. Only participation fee can be pursued in case of participation in the virtual event.

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 will not 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 supported⁴, 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 that nominates the candidate.

6.1. The amount of the travel grant depends on the distance between the point of departure and the 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.

6.2. If the distance between the point of departure and the destination is up to 99.99 km (included), the costs shall be compensated on the basis of the actual costs, but only in the amount of up to 180 euros. The actual costs shall be certified 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 board. 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 the destination is 100.00 km or more, the costs shall be reimbursed on the basis of the rates of the fixed unit prices⁵, as provided in the following table:

	Distance from city to city	Travel grant for a round trip
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 the fixed unit prices includes all costs related to the travel, including transfer to the airport and from the airport to the final destination.

³ Annex 2 "The use of the 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 the 9th of December 2015."

⁴ For example: if the short study visit is pursued by the Estonian PhD student studying abroad with the support of the Dora Plus PhD student mobility scholarship, the grantee 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.

⁵ For example: if the point of departure is Tartu and the destination is Uppsala, the distance between the two cities is 543.47 km according to the European Commission's calculator, which falls into the range of 500-1999 km. The amount of the reimbursed travel expense for travelling on the route Tartu-Uppsala-Tartu is therefore 275 euros.

⁶ If the calculated distance falls into the range of 499-500 km, 1999-2000 km, etc., the result will be rounded to the whole number prior to the determination of the unit price.

7. The accommodation grant is calculated based on the period of the event or individual work in days. In justified cases it is also possible to include one night before and one night after the event or individual work (see clause 9). Three rates are used for the calculation of accommodation grant:

	Duration of the 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 calculating the 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 those periods that are supported by the scholarship (see clause 9).

8.1. If the higher education institution compensates to the grantee the difference between the minimum rate of the daily allowance covered by Dora Plus and the institution's internally established rate for the daily allowance (maximum 18 euros for the first 15 days of the visit, but not more than 15 days per calendar month), the grantee shall submit to the board, in addition to the documents established in clause 24, also the copies of the travel order, travel report and payment order. The institutions can not 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 the 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 also be covered. The grantee 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 justification in the following cases:

9.1.1. if the point of departure and the 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 are justified by the specific circumstances in the 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 time spent awake 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 into 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 the 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 (bank statement, payment order) shall be presented to the board (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 payment confirmation or 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 (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 board is informed thereof.

12.1. If the scholarship is awarded to a PhD student studying abroad based on the PhD student mobility scholarship (Dora Plus activity 1.2)⁷, 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 according to the annex to the financial contract. The grantee shall return to the board 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 call for applications for the short study visits shall be organized by the higher education institutions, which are responsible for the selection of grantees based on the scholarship guidelines, institutional priorities and other terms as well as the quota established by the board. The requirements and application deadlines shall be publicly available. The higher education institution may nominate as grantees only the students and employees of the same higher education institution, complying with the requirements set out in the clause 2.

14. The quota for the scholarships of short study visits shall be based on the total number of master and PhD students at the higher education institution and, starting from the second year, also the extent of the previous year's quota utilization shall be taken into account.

15. The higher education institutions can submit the data of new grantees to the board by the 10th day of every month (except 10 July). The higher education institution shall present the list of grantees as a digitally signed comprehensive document and submit the data of grantees through the electronic application system (<https://taotlused.edu.ee/>) at the earliest opportunity, generally not later than 6 weeks before the beginning of the study visit. The data must include the grantee's name, contact data, the purpose, destination and duration of the short study visit and the amount of the allocated scholarship.

16. If it turns out before the payment of the scholarship that the nominated grantee cannot use the scholarship for any reason, the higher education institution may submit another grantee to the same application round.

SIGNING THE CONTRACT WITH THE GRANTEE

17. For further actions, the board shall contact the grantees on the basis of the data presented by the higher education institution. The grantee shall submit a data file for the contract through the electronic application system (<https://taotlused.edu.ee/>) 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 the library,

⁷ The scholarship guidelines for Dora Plus activity 1.2 PhD student mobility

archive, museum or any other publicly accessible institution indicating that the grantee has access to the services during the short study visit.

17.3. The confirmation (bank statement, payment order) of the participation fee amount and payment (if paid beforehand), if pursuing compensation of the fee.

18. Documents established in clause 17 may be submitted via the application system in a scanned form. Individual work plan should be preferably signed digitally with ID-card. The board may examine their authenticity, if necessary.

19. If the pursued scholarship amount differs from the amount calculated on the basis of fixed unit prices or is otherwise incompatible with the terms set out in the guidelines, the board shall have the right to adjust the data submitted by the grantee informing the grantee and the higher education institution thereof.

20. The grantee shall confirm the correctness of the data provided in the data file by signing the financial contract. Generally, the board shall sign the contract with the grantee no later than 4 weeks before the beginning of the short 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 condition⁸ of the short study visit does not comply with the established requirements, the financial contract will not be concluded.

PAYMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE USE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

22. The advance payment of the scholarship shall be made within two weeks after signing the contract, except for the following cases:

22.1. If the distance between the point of departure and the 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 board;

22.2. If the grantee has not fulfilled the obligations undertaken from the previous contracts in front of the board, the payment of the scholarship may be made on the basis of the documents submitted after the short study visit.

23. The scholarship may be used only to cover the costs of the short study visit described in the contract. If a justified need arises after the conclusion of the contract, but before the start of the study visit, to adjust the short study visit's duration, destination or purpose, the change shall be agreed upon with the board in writing and the contract amended, if necessary. The contract shall be amended if the scholarship amount or the scholarship period is adjusted. The board shall inform the higher education institution about the amendments to the contract.

24. After returning from the short study visit, the grantee must submit the following documents to the board:

24.1. the formal confirmation of attendance issued by the host institution or the event organizer containing the actual dates of studying and working abroad or confirmation letter of the Estonian supervisor or direct superior and transport tickets, which prove that the short study visit had taken place in the period stipulated in the contract (only in case there is no host institution based on the contract). The date of issue of the confirmation may not be earlier than the last date of the event;

24.2. the invoice of the participation fee and confirmation of the payment by the grantee⁹ (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 the 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 on the ticket) or fuel receipt (if the use of private car had been agreed upon

⁸ If the event is postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the grantee may use the scholarship with the consent of the higher education institution even if he or she no longer qualifies as a young researcher during the postponed event. The mission can be postponed once for a maximum of 6 months from the initial date of the event.

⁹ 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.

beforehand). Ferry tickets, flight tickets and fuel receipts shall be submitted together with the confirmation of the payment, which prove that the grantees have covered the cost themselves.

25. The digital documents proving the use of the scholarship must be submitted through the electronic application system (<https://taotlused.edu.ee/>) no later than on the 15th calendar day after the end of the short study visit. Paper documents shall be uploaded to the system in a scanned form. The board may examine their authenticity, if necessary.

26. The board shall verify the compliance of the documents with the terms of the guidelines and the contract signed with the grantee.

27. The board shall have the right to reclaim the part of the scholarship from the grantee 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 grantee does not submit the invoice of the participation fee and/or confirmation of its payment within reasonable time after the board's reminder.

28. The board shall have the right to reclaim the scholarship from the grantee in full if:

28.1. the grantee's participation in the activities for which the scholarship was awarded is not substantiated with the documents;

28.2. the grantee does not submit the original confirmation of attendance or transport tickets (only if there is no host institution based on contract) within reasonable time after the board'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 simultaneously covered by 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 the European Union Structural Funds shall be followed and respected when using the scholarship. The articles, publications, slides and the like, and oral presentations related to the study visit shall acknowledge the support of the European Union, by using the European Regional Development Fund's double logo¹⁰ 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 the grantees are public.

DATE OF ENFORCEMENT OF THE GUIDELINES

31. The guidelines are applied to the financial contracts concluded with the grantees registered from the 1st of August 2020 onwards.

¹⁰ The logos are available at <http://www.struktuurifondid.ee/nouded-avalikustamisele/>