
Scholarships for international students, PhD students, university teachers, researchers and artists

The Government of the Slovak Republic approved the establishment of the National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic for the support of mobility of students, PhD students, university teachers, researchers and artists in 2005. The National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic (NSP) is funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and by the European Union – NextGenerationEU.

The National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic supports mobility of international students, PhD students, university teachers, researchers and artists for scholarship stays at higher education institutions (<https://www.euraxess.sk/en/main/research-in-slovakia/heis/>) and research organisations (<https://www.euraxess.sk/en/main/research-in-slovakia/>) in Slovakia.

1. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants for a scholarship in the framework of the NSP:

A) **students** who:

- are university students at universities outside Slovakia;
- are students of the second level of higher education (master's students), or are students who at the time of application deadline have already completed at least 2.5 years of their university studies in the same study programme;
- will be on a study stay in Slovakia during their higher education outside Slovakia and who will be accepted by a public, private or state university in Slovakia for an academic mobility¹ to study in Slovakia.

All 3 conditions must be met. This category does not apply to doctoral (PhD) studies (or their equivalent).

- Duration of a scholarship stay (students): 1 – 2 full semesters (i.e. 4 – 5 or 9 – 10 months) or full 1 – 3 trimesters, in case the academic year is divided into trimesters (i.e. 3 – 4 or 6 – 7 or 9 – 10 months).

B) PhD students whose higher education or scientific training takes place outside Slovakia and who are accepted by a public, private or state university or a research institution in Slovakia eligible to carry out a doctoral study programme² (e.g. the Slovak Academy of Sciences) for an academic mobility¹ to study/conduct research/artistic stay in Slovakia.

- Duration of a scholarship stay (PhD students): 1 – 10 months.

C) international university teachers, researchers and artists who are invited to a teaching/research/artistic stay in Slovakia by an institution with a valid certificate of eligibility to carry out research and development, which is not a business company³ and it has its seat in Slovakia.

- Duration of a scholarship stay (university teachers, researchers or artists): 1 – 10 months.

[1] Section 58a of the Act No. 131/2002 on higher education institutions, as amended.

[2] External education institution according to the Act No. 131/2002 on higher education institutions, as amended.

[3] Legal entity according to the section 7 letters a) – c) of the Act No. 172/2005 on organisation of state research and development funding, as amended, which has a valid certificate of eligibility to carry out research and development according to the section 26a article 11 or article 12 of the same Act – i.e. public, private or state universities, research institutions eligible to carry out a doctoral (PhD) study programme (i.e. external education institutions), Slovak Academy of Sciences and its institutes, departmental research institutes or non-governmental organisations carrying out research and development.

Citizens of any country in the world (except the citizens of Slovakia) can apply for a scholarship stay in Slovakia in the framework of the NSP.

The National Scholarship Programme does not support:

- international students and PhD students accepted for full degree higher education (bachelor, master, doctoral studies) in Slovakia, or those already studying in Slovakia (full degree higher education) who would like to fund their studies in Slovakia by the NSP;
- university teachers, researchers and artists without PhD degree (or its equivalent) and at the same time with more than 4 years of work experience as a university teacher/researcher/artist (PhD studies are considered as work experience) on the indicated application deadline; however, the scholarship programme administrator may, after consulting the selection committee in individual cases worth special consideration (especially considering situations caused by force majeure⁴), accept as eligible applicants also candidates without PhD degree (or its equivalent) and at the same time with more than 4 years of work experience but not more than 7 years of work experience, however such applicants may be awarded a scholarship only in the amount corresponding to applicants without PhD degree (or its equivalent) and with less than 4 years of experience;
- international applicants who within the period of 36 months prior to the application deadline have spent in the territory of the Slovak Republic 15 or more months (in total);
- international applicants who are receiving a scholarship in Slovakia in the framework of other scholarship programmes funded from public resources (e.g. International Visegrad Fund,

Erasmus+, CEEPUS, bilateral agreements, etc.).

[4] Eg. the previous stay was affected by the pandemic, terrorist attack, etc...; career breaks due to the applicant's maternity / parental leave may also be considered.

In case of repeated scholarship award, the following rule applies: If the applicant has already been receiving a scholarship in the framework of the NSP for 5 or more scholarship months (in total) on the day of the respective application deadline, he/she can be awarded the next scholarship only after 3 years from the completion of his/her last scholarship stay in the framework of the NSP; this condition does exceptionally not apply to application deadlines after March 2020 due to the worldwide spread of the Covid-19 disease – the scholarship programme administrator may decide to terminate this exception, taking into account the recent statement of the World Health Organization (WHO), but not later than on the day of opening the call for applications related to the specific call deadline.

2. Scholarship stay and use of the scholarship

The scholarship is intended to cover international scholarship holders' living costs, i.e. the costs related to staying in Slovakia (food, accommodation, etc.), during their study, research/artistic or teaching stay at universities and in research organisations in Slovakia. The scholarship holder can ask for assistance concerning accommodation and formalities related to entering and staying in the territory of the Slovak Republic either his/her host institution, or he/she can handle all the necessities him-/herself.

3. Amount of the monthly scholarship

a) university student of the second level of higher education	400 €
b) PhD student	734 €
c) university teacher/researcher/artist:	
• without PhD degree (or its equivalent) and at the same time less than 4 years of work experience as a university teacher/researcher/artist	734 €
• with PhD degree (or its equivalent) and at the same time less than 10 years of work experience as a university teacher/researcher/artist	980 €
• with PhD degree (or its equivalent) and at the same time more than 10 years of work experience as a university teacher/researcher/artist	1 050 €

Note:

- *To determine the monthly scholarship amount (in case of university teachers, researchers and artists) with regard to their work experience, only work experience until the day of the application deadline is taken into consideration.*
- *PhD studies are considered as work experience, however, up to a maximum of 6 years.*

Scholarship holders whose scholarship stay in Slovakia lasts longer than 90 days and who are citizens of countries outside the European Union, European Economic Area and Switzerland are obliged to submit to the foreign police office a confirmation that they do not suffer from any disease threatening public health within 30 days from being awarded the temporary residence. Scholarship holders will be reimbursed the costs related to medical examination and issuing of this confirmation, up to 250 € per scholarship holder, after delivering original of the bill issued by the respective medical institution to SAIA, n. o., in Bratislava. A list of competent medical institutions will be provided to scholarship holders by the respective foreign police offices in Slovakia. Scholarship holders are obliged to deliver the bill to SAIA, n. o., in Bratislava within the deadline for submitting the final report; otherwise, they will lose their right for the reimbursement of the costs.

In addition, **students and PhD students** [eligible applicants under the category A) and B)] can be awarded a **travel allowance**, (travel grant), if they apply for it along with their scholarship application. Travel allowance is awarded as a lump sum and it will be paid to the scholarship holder at the end of his/her stay together with the last scholarship payment. Travel allowance amount depends on the distance (in a direct line) between applicant's place of residence and the place of his/her stay in Slovakia⁵:

- distance up to 350 km – **0 €**,
- distance more than 350 km, max. 2,000 km – **250 €**,
- distance more than 2,000 km, max. 7,000 km – **500 €**,
- distance more than 7,000 km – **1 000 €**.

[5] To calculate the distance, please, use the "Distance Calculator", provided by the European Commission for Erasmus+:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/distance_en.htm (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/distance_en.htm). SAIA, n. o., may use also other ways of calculating the distance in order to set the amount of the travel allowance.

4. Application deadlines

- **31 October at 16:00 CET** – scholarship stays during the summer semester of the current academic year ([en/main/tips-for-applicants#timeframe](#))
- **30 April at 16:00 CET** – scholarship stays during the next academic year ([en/main/tips-for-applicants#timeframe](#))

Note: International applicants who need visa in order to enter the territory of the Slovak Republic are recommended to take into consideration time necessary for visa application procedure when determining the date of the beginning of their potential scholarship stay (up-to-date information about visa application procedure is provided by the Embassies of the Slovak Republic abroad). Further, scholarship holders who are citizens of countries outside the European Union, European Economic Area and Switzerland and whose scholarship stay in Slovakia lasts longer than 90 days are recommended to take into consideration the time necessary for temporary residence permit application procedure when determining the date of the beginning of their potential scholarship stay.

5. Application procedure

Scholarship applications are submitted online at www.scholarships.sk (<http://www.scholarships.sk>). Online application system is opened at least 6 weeks prior to the application deadline. Applications can be filled in only in case that the online application system has already been opened.

Note: Applicants are recommended not to submit their applications at the last moment. Number of operations executed within the last minutes prior to the application deadline may influence the reaction time of the application system. Please, keep that in mind, in order not to miss the application deadline. In such case, the programme administrator does not take any responsibility if the applicant does not submit his/her application.

Applicants are allowed to submit (fill in) applications and the required attachments **in Slovak or English language only** (in case of documents written in other languages⁶ the application must contain the original documents together with their official translation into Slovak or English language – translation can be certified by the same institution that issued the respective document; if, due to extraordinary circumstances caused by force majeure, it is not possible to provide an official translation, the scholarship programme administrator may also accept unofficial translations made by the applicant herself/himself, but if such an applicant will be awarded a scholarship, before the official letter of award is issued and sent to him/her, he/she will be obliged to submit an official translation corresponding to the unofficial translation – the deadline for submitting the official document is to be set by the scholarship programme administrator.

In case of documents, that are attached to the application and that are issued by a person other than the applicant (e.g. recommendation letters, confirmations of study, diploma/diploma supplement/state examination certificate, admission/invitation letter) it is necessary to upload the scan of these documents to the online application. The applicant is obliged to keep and archive all originals of documents that he/she has attached to the online application in electronic format, and if requested, to submit these originals (or certified copies of these originals) to the programme administrator. In the event that due to extraordinary circumstances caused by force majeure (without the fault of the applicant and the person / institution that has issued the requested document) it is not possible to obtain originals of the documents from persons responsible for issuing the document, it is also possible to upload into the online system scans of documents while originals are being kept by the author - in this case, unless otherwise specified, the applicant is obliged to obtain and keep the original before leaving his/her country, in order to present it to the scholarship programme administrator if necessary.

Exceptionally, i.e. in the event of extraordinary circumstances caused by force majeure (without the fault of the applicant and the person / institution that has issued the requested document), certificates, resp. documents missing the signature of the person who has issued them (resp. missing the official confirmation of the institution), may also be accepted, provided that the content of the document is in line with these terms and indicates, that it is a statement of a relevant legal or natural person (e.g. e-mail from the respective person with the required content or an informative extract from the university's electronic system without a signature from the responsible person, etc.). If the applicant has been awarded a scholarship, he/she is obliged to submit documents, which are signed by the responsible person and correspond by their content to the documents submitted in the application to the scholarship programme administrator at the latest by the deadline set by the scholarship programme administrator.

If the applicant is reapplying for a scholarship because his/her previous stay supported by the scholarship was substantially influenced by extraordinary circumstances caused by force majeure (e.g. due to force majeure the stay had to be terminated earlier, or the stay was completed, but the planned programme could not be fully implemented e.g. due to the closure of the institutions as a preventive measure, or the stay could not be conducted at all and for that reason the applicant cancelled the scholarship which had been awarded to him/her) and he/she wishes to continue or resume the approved stay, he/she is required to indicate all facts and extraordinary circumstances explicitly in his/her application.

[6] According to the current legislation, it is not necessary to translate documents issued in the Czech language

In order to take the extraordinary circumstances during the selection process into account, the applicant is required to describe and explain these circumstances in detail in the application (e.g. in a separate document attached, etc.) and the administrator will assess their possible impact during the formal evaluation of the applications for the purposes of the selection process.

The application must be submitted on-line by the application deadline – i.e. the applicant must fill in the online application, attach all required documents in the prescribed form and submit the application by clicking the "SEND" button (the application can only be submitted if all fields are filled in and all required attachments uploaded).

***Note:** Applicant should receive a scan of his/her admission/invitation letter issued by his/her host institution in Slovakia, since he/she should attach it to his/her online application. Without the admission/invitation the applicant cannot submit the online application, i.e. his/her application will not be further assessed. The original of the admission/invitation letter has to be submitted when the applicant has been awarded a scholarship.*

Required documents that must be attached to online application for a study stay in case of international students (eligible applicants under the category A):

- curriculum vitae;
- motivation letter;

- **detailed study programme** (it is necessary to state the date of the beginning of the stay, duration of the stay, list of subjects that the applicant would like to study during his/her stay and number of credits that the applicant will gain for the respective subjects);
- **two recommendation letters issued by applicant's university teachers** (the document must contain signature, position and contact details of the person who issued the document; if it is not possible to issue a recommendation on the letterhead paper of the respective institution, the document has to contain a clear identification of the institution, which the person who issued the recommendation letter is affiliated with [generally the name of the institution, address, website link]); recommendation letters cannot be older than 3 months on the day of the application deadline;
- **confirmation issued by the applicant's home university confirming that the applicant is a regular student of the respective university at the time of applying** – the confirmation must contain information on the expected date of the completion of applicant's studies;
 - In the event that due to extraordinary circumstances caused by force majeure, the applicant cannot obtain a confirmation of studies from his/her university, the applicant may submit a declaration of honor that he/she is a student of the respective university instead. In the declaration the applicant indicates the reasons why he/she failed to obtain the document, indicates the year and the level of study (i.e. bachelor or master studies / other equivalent) and also the date of expected completion of this study. If such an applicant is to be awarded a scholarship, he/she is obliged to submit an official confirmation from the university corresponding to the declared information about studies before the official letter of award is issued to the applicant. The deadline for submitting the confirmation will set by the scholarship programme administrator.
- **scan of applicant's bachelor's diploma, diploma supplement and state examination certificate** (if applicable);
- **admission/invitation letter issued by applicant's host university in Slovakia indicating the period of stay.** In this document, the university commits itself to accept the applicant for a study stay. Admission/invitation letter is an official document usually on the letterhead paper of the respective university, signed by the person who has issued the document, and containing position and contact details of that person; if it is not possible to issue the document on an institution's letterhead paper, it has to contain a clear identification of the institution, which the person who issued the document is affiliated with (i.e. generally the name of the institution, address, website link). Admission letter should be issued for the same period as the period stated by the applicant in his/her online application and it cannot be older than 3 months on the day of the application deadline.

Required documents that must be attached to online application for a study/research/artistic stay in case of international PhD students (eligible applicants under the category B):

- **curriculum vitae;**
- **motivation letter;**
- **detailed study/research/artistic programme** (it is necessary to state the date of the beginning of the stay, duration of the stay and a detailed time plan of the stay);

- **recommendation letter issued by applicant's dissertation supervisor** (the document must contain signature, position and contact details of the person who issued the document; if it is not possible to issue the recommendation letter on an institution's letterhead paper, the document has to contain a clear identification of the institution, which the person who issued the recommendation letter is affiliated with [generally the name of the institution, address, website link]); recommendation letter cannot be older than 3 months on the day of the application deadline;
- **confirmation issued by the applicant's home university/research organisation confirming that the applicant is on the application deadline a regular PhD student of the respective university/research organisation**– the confirmation must contain information on the expected date of the completion of applicant's PhD studies;
 - In the event that due to extraordinary circumstances caused by force majeure, the applicant cannot obtain a confirmation of PhD studies, the applicant may submit a declaration of honor that he/she is a PhD student instead. In the declaration the applicant indicates the reasons why he/she failed to obtain the document, and also indicates the current year of his/her PhD study and the date of expected completion of this study. If such an applicant is to be awarded a scholarship, he/she is obliged to submit an official confirmation of PhD studies corresponding to the declared information about PhD studies before the official letter of award is issued to the applicant. The deadline for submitting the confirmation will be set by the scholarship programme administrator.
- **scan of applicant's master's diploma, diploma supplement and state examination certificate** (if applicable);
- **list of publications/artistic activities in required form (_user/documents/NSP/dokumenty na stiahnutie/List of publications 2020.docx)**
- **admission/invitation letter issued by applicant's host university/research organisation in Slovakia indicating the period of stay.** In this document, the university/research organisation commits itself to accept the applicant for a study and/or research/artistic stay. Admission/invitation letter is an official document generally on the letter-headed paper of the respective university/research organisation, signed by the person who issued the document, containing position and contact details of that person; if it is not possible to issue the document on an institution's letterhead paper, it has to contain a clear identification of the institution, which the person who issued the document is affiliated with (i.e. generally the name of the institution, address, website link). Admission/invitation letter should be issued for the same period as the period stated by the applicant in his/her online application and it cannot be older than 3 months on the day of the application deadline. In case of PhD students, the admission/invitation letter should not be just a formal admission for a scholarship stay, but it should reflect a certain level of host institution's interest in applicant's study and/or research/artistic stay in the framework of the NSP.

Required documents that must be attached to online application for a teaching and/or research/artistic stay in case of international university teachers/researchers/artists (eligible applicants under the category C):

- **curriculum vitae;**
- **detailed teaching and/or research/artistic programme** (it is necessary to state the date of the beginning of the stay, duration of the stay and a detailed time plan of the stay);
- **scan of applicant's diploma of the highest academic degree achieved;**
- **list of publications/artistic activities in the required form (_user/documents/NSP/dokumenty na stiahnutie/List of publications 2020.docx)**
- **invitation letter issued by applicant's host university/research organisation in Slovakia indicating the period of stay.** In this document, the university/research organisation commits itself to accept the applicant for a teaching and/or research/artistic stay. Invitation letter is an official document usually on the letterhead paper of the respective university/research organisation, signed by the person who issued the document, containing position and contact details of that person; if it is not possible to issue the document on an institution's letterhead paper, it has to contain a clear identification of the institution, which the person who issued the document is affiliated with (i.e. generally the name of the institution, address, website link). Invitation letter should be issued for the same period as the period stated by the applicant in his/her online application and it cannot be older than 3 months on the day of the application deadline. In case of university teachers/researchers/artists, the invitation letter should not be just a formal admission for a scholarship stay, but it should reflect a certain level of host institution's interest in applicant's teaching and/or research/artistic stay in the framework of the NSP.

6. Selection procedure

Scholarships and/or travel allowances (travel grant) are not legally enforceable; granting of the financial support from the NSP sources is influenced by meeting all the formal requirements of the programme according to the respective call for applications, applicant's quality, content of applicant's proposed stay and its necessity, and NSP budget availability related to the respective call for applications.

The applicant is responsible for the final completeness of the application and for the correctness of the information provided in the application and its annexes; due to sufficient time for the preparation of the application in the period between the opening of the electronic application system and the deadline for submitting the applications, as well as to the applicant's declaration when submitting the application, that all the information provided in the application is complete, actual and true and that the application is complete and contains all the required annexes and documents, the scholarship programme administrator is not obliged to give the applicant an opportunity to amend the application (the application is therefore assessed as submitted by the applicant).

SAIA, n. o., as the scholarship programme administrator, is responsible for the administration of the selection process. The programme administrator acts within each selection in a way to ensure equal treatment of applicants during the respective selection process.

The administrator will assess whether the applications meet the formal requirements of the programme on the day of the application deadline. The administrator may reject applications for formal reasons:

- if they are in conflict with the terms of the programme (in particular regarding the eligibility of applicants or scholarship holders, or in absence of an appropriate category of support), or

- if the application or its annexes do not meet the formal requirements, or
- if the facts presented in the application and its annexes are in conflict with each other, or
- if the administrator in the reviewing process finds out that the applicant's statements confirming that the information is complete, true and correct are not true.

When making its decision the administrator may consider whether that fact may have an essential influence on the content assessment of the application. The administrator may consult his/her findings with the Selection Committee. The administrator shall also take into account the recommendations and requirements of the Selection Committee from previous selection rounds.

Applications that have not been rejected by the administrator for formal reasons will be forwarded to the Selection Committee for further selection.

Selection of scholarship holders is carried out by the Selection Committee appointed by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The Committee focuses mostly on:

- reasons, why the applicant has decided to study, teach, conduct research or artistic activities in the respective host institution in Slovakia;
- programme of applicant's study/research/artistic/teaching stay and how the applicant will use the results of his/her scholarship stay for further studies or research activities, or his/her career development;
- applicant's professional and personal qualities; as well as assessment of the proposed programme of the scholarship stay in the recommendation letters;
- study or research achievements;
- contribution for the host institution;
- overall quality of the submitted application.

The Selection Committee may, with special regard, consider applications submitted by applicants who were awarded a scholarship but who have not started their approved scholarship stay due to force majeure (e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic) or had to shorten their stay due to force majeure, or under the influence of a situation caused by force majeure, the planned purpose could not be fully implemented. In such cases, compared to other applicants, the Selection Committee may proceed in a specific way, if it is considered necessary in the respective call for applications. However, any such application will be assessed individually in accordance with the terms of the programme and must be relevant in terms of quality; it is not possible to approve such applications automatically solely because of the prior approval of the scholarship and the fact, that it has been negatively influenced by force majeure.

The administrator respects the selection of the scholarship holders carried out by the Selection Committee and grants scholarships in accordance with that selection. SAIA, n. o., will inform every applicant about being/not being granted financial support from NSP sources usually within 8 weeks from the application deadline.

Applicants who have been awarded a scholarship must submit the original of the admission/invitation letter. Eligible applicants under the category A) and B) (students and PhD students) are also obliged, in case of being awarded the scholarship, deliver original of confirmation on studies to SAIA, n. o., in Bratislava. This document will confirm that the scholarship holder is still a regular student or PhD student of the respective university/research organisation during his/her study/research stay in Slovakia (in case that the confirmation is issued in other than Slovak or English language, official translation of the document into one of aforementioned languages is required). Subsequently, SAIA, n. o., can issue a Letter of Award confirming the approval of the scholarship within the NSP and will send it by post to the scholarship holder together with other information and requirements for the scholarship payment. Only after the applicant, who has been awarded a scholarship delivers a written acceptance of the conditions of the scholarship to SAIA, n. o., a contractual relationship between SAIA, n. o., and the scholarship holder will be concluded.

If awarding of the scholarship is conditioned by submission of other documents in accordance with the terms of the programme, the Letter of Award and other related documents can be sent only after the mentioned conditions have been met (the programme administrator decides whether the conditions have been met).

Any applicant who has reasonable grounds to suspect that the administrator or the Selection Committee made a mistake in the process of administering and assessing applications submitted within the respective application deadline is entitled to file a claim to re-examine the case no later than 1 month after publishing the results of selection of applications submitted within that deadline. Claims have to be submitted by the applicant in writing and addressed to SAIA, n. o., as the organization administering the programme. The claim must contain the applicant's identification data, the respective application number, reasons for objections (including facts which according to the applicant led to the mistake). SAIA, n. o. after reviewing the claim will inform the applicant of the result of the review process, usually within 1 month from the submission of the claim.

Please note, that the Slovak version of the terms and conditions is binding for all applicants. Other than Slovak versions are only of informative value facilitating the application process.

More information:

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(<https://www.saia.sk/en/>)

SAIA, n. o.

(Slovak Academic Information Agency)

The National Scholarship Programme supports mobility of students, PhD students, university teachers, researchers and artists. The programme is administrated by SAIA, n. o., based on a contract with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

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