

## Rules of the Visegrad Scholarship Program

Under Articles 1 and 2 of the Statute of the International Visegrad Fund (hereinafter the “Fund”) the Conference of Ministers is issuing these conditions to determine the Rules of the Visegrad Scholarship Program (hereinafter the “VSP”).

The VSP is a specific program of the Fund created to facilitate academic exchanges by providing financial support to students or researchers who are citizens of the V4 countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (hereinafter the “Member States”) and for foreign citizens to study in the Member States. All universities accredited by the governments (Ministries of Education) and Institutes of Academies of Sciences are eligible to be host as well as home institutions. The aim of the VSP is to support the mobility of students and researchers among the specified countries.

Visegrad Scholarships are provided for study/research projects specified in the submitted application form. The country of citizenship shall be different from the host country. The applicant’s home and host university must be different, i.e. the previous level of university studies must be completed in a country other than where the applicant applies for studies. An applicant for the VSP shall submit no more than one application within one deadline. In the event that the applicant submits more than one application, the Fund shall register and consider the first delivered.

Successful applicants are eligible to apply for the VSP again; however, the Fund’s maximum term of support is 4 semesters.

The length of the supported period of study/research shall be 10 months (2 semesters) or 5 months (1 semester). The maximum length of supported studies for applicants within the In-Coming Scholarship scheme applying for Master’s Scholarship is 20 months (4 semesters); it is possible to support an entire Master’s study program through one application. The level of supported studies shall be:

- **Master’s studies** (the student must have completed at least 4 semesters at home university prior to applying),
- **Post-Master’s** (doctoral or other postgraduate programs)

The Executive Director is responsible for the proper announcement of the VSP in conformity with the decision of the Conference of Ministers.

Within the VSP, there are the following three schemes:

- Intra-Visegrad Scholarships:** For outstanding scholars or researchers within the territory of the Member States;
- Out-Going Scholarships:** For outstanding scholars or researchers from Member States for studies at acknowledged universities in *Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia (F.Y.R.O.M.), Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine*—the same rules are applicable to Kosovar universities;
- In-Coming Scholarships:** For outstanding scholars or researchers who are citizens of the following countries: *Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia (F.Y.R.O.M.), Moldova, Montenegro, the Russian Federation, Serbia and*

*Ukraine* wishing to study in the Member States—the same rules are applicable to Kosovar scholars.

The Secretariat of the Fund has the obligation to provide each applicant with an application form. The application form is available on-line on the website of the Fund. The application for financial subsidy shall be filled out and registered in English on-line in the prescribed form and then sent in hard copy to the Fund's secretariat.

**Compulsory annexes** to the application form are as follows:

- A. A copy of the certified translation of the Master's or last obtained diploma (in the event the applicant has not finished his/her Master's studies, he/she shall submit a certificate stating current year of study at home university and expected date of obtaining his/her Master's diploma, issued by the home university). In applying for the Master's Scholarship, a transcript of academic records is also required.
- B. A letter of acceptance from the host university/institution which is not older than 3 months when submitting the application. If the applicant applied for courses that require admission tests or personal interview (results of which will be known only after the deadline for the VSP applications), the applicant shall submit a proof of his/her application for studies at the host university/institution. The actual letter of acceptance shall be submitted before the signing of the contract with the Fund, by the end of July of the respective year at the latest. If applying for a Post-master's scholarship, a letter of recommendation from the home university is needed (also stating that the supervisor at the home institution agrees with the proposed stay abroad).
- C. A working plan of the study/research period, accepted by the host university/institution which is not older than 3 months when submitting the application. If the applicant applied for courses that require admission tests or personal interview (the results of which will be known only after the deadline for the VSP applications), the applicant shall submit a draft of the working plan. The working plan accepted by the host university/institute shall be submitted before the signing of the contract with the Fund, by the end of July of the respective year at the latest.

The application shall be registered on-line as well as sent by post or delivered personally to the following address:

International Visegrad Fund  
Kráľovské údolie 8  
811 02 Bratislava  
Slovak Republic

More details: <http://www.visegradfund.org/>

The Secretariat of the Fund shall register all applications in the order of receipt. The applicants will be informed of the receipt of their applications by e-mail. The Secretariat of the Fund shall review the received applications to check their compliance with the formal requirements. Deadline for the applications—the latest date of the postmark and e-mail communication—is January 31 each year. The earliest date for commencement of the study/research project is September of the respective year.

The Executive Director shall review each application with regard to its content and its compliance with the regulations of the Fund in particular. The Secretariat shall be entitled to verify the data given in the

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application. The Executive Director shall prepare a written statement in which he/she shall present his/her position on the eligibility of the applicant. The Executive Director shall provide the complete list of received applications to the members of the Council of Ambassadors.

Applicants for the Intra-Visegrad and Out-Going Scholarships shall undergo an interview in front of the VSP Selection Committee. The Committee shall consist of four members from academia (one from each country) and four from the Ministry of Education (one from each country). The Committee shall decide upon the ranking of candidates acting on the basis of consensus. The Selection Committee will evaluate the applicants based upon their scientific merit and originality; in case of Master's Scholarships, the applicants' motivation and transcript of records will also be considered.

Sessions of the VSP Selection Committee shall be organized in the Member States by the respective Ministry of Education in close cooperation with the Fund's Secretariat before April 30 each year. The official language of the Selection Committee Meeting is English.

For Intra-Visegrad, Out-Going and In-Coming Scholarships, the Selection Committee shall prepare, after each session, a list ranking the successful applicants, starting with the best and indicating the host country. The Executive Director of the Fund shall summarize the records from all selection sessions and present to the Council of Ambassadors a final list of recommended applicants, taking into consideration the principle of equal distribution of applicants among the Member States.

At its session (by May 15 each year), the Council of Ambassadors shall approve the final lists of successful applicants. Decisions made by the Council of Ambassadors are final. Those decisions shall present no grounds for legal proceedings and require no detailed reasoning.

In the event that the distance between the present university/employer and host university of the scholar is more than 1,500 km, the Fund can, in reasoned cases, give a travel grant to selected scholars. The travel grant is a one-time contribution of the Fund towards the travel expenses of the scholar, related to the approved study/research project. The travel grant will be provided at the beginning of the scholarship period together with the 1st installment of the scholarship, after the Fund receives a written confirmation of the scholar's arrival from the Host University/Institute. The scholar cannot accept any other travel grant from any of the V4 member states or the EU for the same study/research project.

In case of an approval of the scholarship application, the Council of Ambassadors shall authorize the Executive Director to sign a contract with the scholar and host university/institution (samples of which are available on-line on the Fund's website). In case of an approval of the travel grant, the Council of Ambassadors shall authorize the Executive Director to sign an amendment to the contract with the scholar. In the event of failure to sign the contract or the amendment, the Fund shall contact the next applicant according to the selection ranking.

The scholarship application shall be considered definitely approved after the signing of the contract.

The contract between the Fund and the scholar must be signed before September 15.

The Fund's Executive Director shall have the obligation to inform the applicants of the rejection or approval of their applications for scholarships by the Council by May 15 of the respective year.

The Fund's Secretariat shall cover expert fees, transport and accommodation costs for Academic Members of Selection Committees.

The Conference of Ministers shall set out and announce financial conditions of subsidies provided by the VSP in advance (presumably in October each year).

The scholar shall have the obligation to study or to conduct research in compliance with the time limit and financial conditions agreed upon in the contract. The payments from the Fund will be transferred in the beginning of each semester (a 5-month period in the case of researchers) after the Fund receives a written confirmation stating the date of arrival of the scholar; further installments (if relevant) will be transferred to the account of the scholar after the Fund receives a written confirmation containing the following information:

- the dates of planned completion of the supported studies/research and
- the progress of the supported research in the case of postgraduate studies or a transcript of records/report on progress of the supported studies in the case of Master's Scholarship, issued by the host University/Institution.

In the event that the scholar fails to fulfill his/her duties toward the host university/institution, through his/her own fault, or voluntarily terminates his/her studies or research, he/she shall be obliged to return to the Fund all the funding already paid within the scholarship in accordance with the relevant provisions of the contract concluded between the scholar and the Fund. The Council of Ambassadors should approve any exemption of this obligation only in exceptional cases, upon a written request by the scholar.

These Rules shall enter into force on the day of their approval by the Conference of Ministers.