

Conditions & extensions – PhD fellowships

Conditions apply

Before applying for a Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BIF) PhD fellowship, please carefully read the following conditions as well as Who can apply.

If you want to apply for an extension, please go directly to conditions and application for extensions.

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Conditions for PhD fellowships

Taking up the PhD fellowship

Grantees can take up their Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds PhD fellowship by sending us their signed fellowship conditions, desired start date, and details of their bank account. The fellowship expires if not taken up within six months of the date of the letter of approval.

Monthly payment and additional benefits

The basic monthly stipend amounts to 1,650 euros. In most countries, fellows are paid an additional flat rate of 150 euros per month to cover minor research-related costs (books, travel expenses, etc.). To adjust, e.g. for differences in living costs, country-related premiums may be added (in the United Kingdom, Austria, and the Netherlands currently 650 euros, in the USA 1,175 euros, in Switzerland 1,600 euros, in Canada and Sweden 600 euros, in Denmark and Belgium 700 euros, and in Germany 200 euros). Depending on the cost of living, most other countries are grouped into one of these categories. For example, an unmarried fellow working in Germany currently receives 2,000 euros, in the USA 2,975 euros, in the United Kingdom 2,450 euros, and in Switzerland 3,400 euros.

Furthermore, a spouse allowance of 200 euros, a child allowance of 200 euros per child and/or childcare allowance of up to 500 euros may be added depending on the personal situation.

The initially awarded stipend sum is based on the information provided in the application. The fellowship holder is obligated to inform the BIF about any changes in his/her personal or financial circumstances (change of marital status, income of spouse, etc.) so that the BIF can adjust the amount of the stipend. The stipend is transferred in euros by the middle of each month.

In addition, fellowship holders can apply for travel allowances to present their research projects at international scientific conferences, to participate in methods courses, or to perform research in cooperating laboratories. Besides, the BIF offers its fellows and alumni exclusive meetings, seminars, and training.

Duration of the PhD fellowship

PhD fellowships are granted for 24 months and can be extended once for a maximum of 18 months. However, if the fellow began working on his/her PhD before taking up the fellowship, that period will be deducted from the maximum extension period. The beginning of the PhD work is considered by BIF to be the date of the final examination on the official certificate (e.g. BSc, MSc, Diploma, DEA, Licenciatura, Laurea) if the fellow continued to work in the same research group, or the date of arrival at the PhD laboratory if the fellow changed research groups.

In the event of illness, the BIF usually continues payments for two months, after which time assistance would cease. Upon recovery, the fellowship may be extended by the period of absence due to illness.

Obligations

The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds does not intervene in the work of fellows who, in turn, are obligated to make proper use of the allocated funds and to adhere to the rules of good scientific practice according to what is delineated for scientists in the “Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice” of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG, German Research Foundation). Each fellow must devote his/her whole energy to his/her particular PhD project. In the laboratory, fellows should only be assigned to tasks directly connected to their PhD projects.

The fellowship has been granted to pursue the PhD project described in the application and in the laboratory specified therein. If a fellow decides to change the topic of the PhD project or the laboratory, he/she must inform the BIF without delay. Major project changes require approval by the BIF to continue the stipend. In the event of the project being successfully completed prior to the expiry of the fellowship, payment will be discontinued.

Fellowship holders must present a project report for publication in the *Futura*, the BIF’s international journal, at the beginning of the fellowship and a final report no later than two months after the PhD examination (defence). Furthermore, they are expected to acknowledge the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds in all publications resulting from the work during the fellowship. They are required to supply the BIF with PDF documents of such publications, also if they are published after the fellowship has ended. Please note that the BIF should be referred to in the acknowledgements as “**Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds**”, not as “Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation”. The latter is a different non-profit charity.

Insurance

The BIF does not provide any kind of insurance for its fellowship holders. They must insure themselves and their families against any possible costs and consequences caused by illness, accident, personal liability, etc.

Applications to other institutions

The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds must be notified if an application is submitted to any other research-sponsoring institution. Should an applicant take up an award from another institution prior to the decision of the BIF, the application to the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds is considered withdrawn and the BIF must be notified immediately. Please note that only written notification is legally binding.

Additional funding

The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds fellowship is intended to cover the living expenses of the recipient. A BIF stipend may therefore generally not be held while receiving a regular personal income from any other institution or research institute with the following exceptions:

- An employment or a working contract of up to five working hours a week yielding a minor income while holding a BIF PhD fellowship is possible provided that the contract is not issued on the research project(s) supported by the BIF and that the salary is fixed according to the standard PhD salary at the fellow's host institution.
- Tuition, bench fees, and overheads are not reimbursed by the BIF. Therefore, an additional fellowship from another institution covering exclusively tuition fees can be accepted.
- Due to the current legal requirements and fiscal treatment of stipends, fellowship holders in Austria, Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland may hold a standard employment contract for PhD students at their host institutions. Prerequisite is that the host institutions agree to pay the required taxes, social security contributions, etc. and that the fellowship holders will receive at least the same remuneration as the other PhD students at the respective host institution. If such a contract is concluded and an agreement between the institution and the BIF is signed, the BIF can transfer the fellowship to the host institution.

Legal and tax issues

Fellowships awarded by the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds do not constitute any form of employment. In Germany (EStG § 3 No. 44) and in countries that maintain a double-taxation agreement with Germany, fellowships are usually exempt from tax. Fellowship holders should inform themselves whether the conditions for tax exemption are met and are responsible for paying possible taxes. A fellowship is not considered to be remuneration as defined by Article 14 of the German Social Law IV and is therefore not liable to social insurance. Provision of laws governing formation of capital, saving premiums, and residential building premiums do not apply.

The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds reserves the right to adjust the stipend, e.g. due to currency fluctuations, and to reclaim any surplus payment or money paid in error. Furthermore, the BIF may cancel the fellowship and demand repayment if the fellowship was obtained under false pretences or not used for its intended purpose, if the obligation to submit the final report is not fulfilled, or for any other sound reason.

Please note that the decisions of the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds are incontestable.

→ **PhD conditions – PDF**

How to apply for a PhD fellowship extension

Maximum extension period

(may be prolonged due to the COVID-19 pandemic, see below)

Our PhD fellowships are initially awarded for 24 months and can be extended once by up to 18 months. The length of your possible extension depends on the time you have worked on your PhD prior to starting the fellowship.

BIF defines the start of your PhD work as follows:

- if you changed research groups, the date of your arrival at your PhD laboratory, or,
- if you continued working in the same research group, the date on which you obtained your highest degree (e.g. BSc, MSc, Diplom, DEA, Licenciatura, Laurea) before embarking on your PhD.

For example: if you joined your PhD laboratory two months prior to beginning your fellowship, these two months are deducted from the maximum extension period, so you can apply for an extension of sixteen months. If you are in doubt about your possible extension or have any other questions in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Application deadlines

15 January, 15 May, 15 September of each year

Extensions are decided upon at the meeting of the Board of Trustees approximately two months after the respective deadline. The meetings take place in mid-March, mid-July, and mid-November. Please apply early enough to ensure that there is a board meeting between the extension deadline and the end of your fellowship. For example, if your fellowship expires at the end of February, you need to submit your application by 15 September of the previous year for it to be considered at the November board meeting (the January deadline will not suffice, as the March board meeting takes place after the end of your fellowship).

Please submit your application in two versions: as a printout via regular mail and as a PDF file. The PDF needs to reach us no later than the respective deadline and the printout must be postmarked no later than this date as well.

Content of application

You should state in your cover letter when you joined the laboratory of your PhD supervisor and for how many months of extension you are applying. Please make sure to sign the letter.

The application itself should comprise about five to seven pages (including figures and excluding references) and be written like a short research proposal. Please summarize your original aims and, in the major part of the application, describe the results you have achieved so far (including two to three well-designed data figures). If you changed approaches or worked on aspects not mentioned in your original application, you must explain the reasons for these changes and describe approaches, rationales, and results. Furthermore, it is important that you describe in detail what you plan to work on during the extension and include a timetable for the planned experiments.

Please list all your publications (published, in press, submitted) and conference contributions (posters and talks) and send manuscripts of your publications (for submitted ones, abstracts suffice).

In addition, we need a letter of recommendation from your supervisor – signed and on official letterhead. It might be included in the application or sent separately via regular mail or email.

Extra extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic

BIF has extended the maximum extension period of the fellowship by six months from 12 to 18 months for all its PhD fellows. This extension shall also counterbalance delays in the project caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, if your research project has been delayed by more than six months due to the pandemic, you can apply for an extra extension and add the time of the delay to your regular extension application.

Your application for an extra extension due to the pandemic should follow the general guidelines outlined above and include the following additional information:

- A thorough explanation in your cover letter as to why your research project has been delayed and the length of this delay (also addressing what you were able to do while the institute was closed).
- A confirmation by your supervisor of how much time you lost in your PhD project due to the pandemic. This should be included in his/her recommendation letter. We would appreciate your host institution or supervisor covering some of the delay in their follow-up financing, ideally 50 percent.

→ **PhD Fellowship extension – PDF**