

International Mobility in Doctoral and Postdoc Phases at Technische Universität Berlin –

A Guide

TU Berlin Center for Junior Scholars (CJS)

Support from TU Berlin

Supporting the international mobility of doctoral researchers and postdocs is a central concern of the strategic advancement of junior scholars at TU Berlin. The Executive Board, central administration, faculties and academic chairs would like to support you in purposefully integrating stays abroad during your doctorate or postdoc. These most frequently occur in the context of international conferences and research and teaching stays at universities or comparable institutions abroad. This guide offers advice on financing options and other formal questions regarding stays abroad. A list of important service contacts at TU Berlin who are happy to advise you and answer your individual questions about international mobility is provided at the end of this document.

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Foreword by Professor Dr. Angela Ittel, Vice President for Strategic Development, Junior Scholars and Teacher Education

"I haven't been everywhere, but it's on my list." – Susan Sontag

Dear Junior Scholars,

I am delighted that you are taking a look at this guide to international mobility. As vice president for junior scholars and international affairs, it is of great importance to me to support you in making the most of your time at our university to foster your career development. We provide a wide range of offers – from individual advisory services to mentoring programs through to continuing education. A goal-oriented stay at a university or research institution abroad, however, is a particularly important component of a successful career as a researcher.

It enables you to actively advance essential aspects of your career both within and beyond research:

- Professional networking
- Experience of research collaboration on an international level as well as
- Developing intercultural competences

The German Center for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW) recently (2020) published the results of a meta-analysis examining the effects of international mobility on the careers of researchers. The results confirm what I am sure you've heard many times before: International mobility contributes both to the expansion of research networks and to an increase in research productivity and reception.

I, too, can emphatically confirm this with regard to my own experience: A stay abroad is an enormous gain for your development as a researcher and as a person. Getting to know other research systems and observing your own expert community from an international perspective broadens your horizons and contributes to your career development in many ways, even long after you have returned home.

Since March 2020, the question of how and when to plan for international mobility has obviously been influenced by some of the most pressing challenges of our time: How do we deal with mobility in times of a pandemic? How can we make mobility more sustainable in the face of the climate crisis? When it comes to digital networking and virtual collaboration formats, the world has been changing rapidly. Many things that were hard to imagine just a few months ago have now become part of everyday life. We have seen numerous flexible and sustainable approaches emerge in the context of international collaboration.

At the same time, we are painfully aware of current deprivations arising from the severe restrictions on our physical mobility. I am thus convinced that international exchange in the form of "real" encounters will continue to be of great importance for professional development in the future. We will, however, need to weigh our options in order to facilitate meaningful physical encounters and shape international mobility responsibly and sustainably in the future.

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has also addressed these issues in its recently (2021) published perspective paper "Nachhaltige Mobilität" (sustainable mobility). I would like to point out one central insight:

"Even in times of climate crisis, physical mobility is a central and necessary element of international collaboration. Funding goals such as intercultural learning, the 'immersion' in other (research) cultures, experiencing political confidence-building, international understanding or holistic personality development can be achieved particularly effectively by way of personal 'immersion' and the lived experience of being different."

We at TU Berlin are convinced that international mobility is of significant value for the careers of junior scholars and have thus defined internationalization as a core element in our Strategy for the Advancement of Junior Scholars and the respective 2019/20 Advancement of Junior Scholars Action Plan. It is a great pleasure for me to be able to provide you with this guide to support you, our junior scholars, in actively integrating work-related stays abroad in your personal qualification phase. I wish you every success and a colorful array of enriching experiences abroad!

Angela Ittel
Vice President for Strategic Development, Junior Scholars and Teacher Education

International conference travel

<p>For researchers, traveling to conferences, especially abroad, is a core part of their research work. We therefore wish to support you in taking up opportunities to present your latest research findings and to network with the expert community. It is important to plan your conference participation well in advance – especially if you want to take advantage of financial support. Do you already know the relevant conferences for your topic, where and when they take place and when contributions should be submitted?</p>	<p>Plan ahead!</p>
<p>As a doctoral researcher you should always talk to your supervisor first about such plans. Your supervisor can discuss with you which international conferences you should attend and which are most worthwhile in terms of visibility for your research project. Your supervisor can advise you on what to consider when applying to a call for a conference, and point out specifics about event formats. Your supervisor can probably also provide you with contacts or help you to think about who you should speak to at the conference.</p>	<p>Doctoral researchers: Involve your supervisor</p>
<p>In addition to your contribution, you should also plan how to finance the trip as early as possible. For positions at TU Berlin that are funded by the University budget, the academic chair might often cover expenses for conference travel – if the necessary resources are available. For junior scholars in third-party funded projects, the project budget often includes a travel budget. Fellowship holders of a Research Training Group (RTG) funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) can receive funding in the form of a flat-rate foreign allowance paid from the RTG's financial resources in addition to reimbursement of any travel and flight costs incurred. Doctoral scholarship holders of initiatives for academically gifted students (Begabtenförderwerke) or other funding institutions can often access a budget for travel expenses via the respective scholarship provider.</p>	<p>Clarify available travel funds to finance the trip</p>
<p>For doctoral researchers and postdocs, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) can be a source of funding for conference travel. This also applies to international doctoral researchers who are doing their doctorate at a German university and are not already receiving a DAAD incoming scholarship in Germany. Please refer to the DAAD's website for information about their congress travel program and their funding options for lecture trips (both pages available in German only). Applications to the DAAD must be submitted at least four months before your trip. Further current calls with regard to travel grants (e.g. from the FAZIT-Stiftung, or the Fritz Thyssen Foundation or the Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship) can be found on the central webpages of TU Berlin in the section "Advancement of Junior Scholars" and in the funding database ELFI. The Society of Friends of the TU Berlin e.V. also provides limited financial support for conference and congress travel.</p>	<p>External funding for conference travel</p>
<p>Doctoral researchers and postdocs who cannot make use of these funding options can submit an application to the Center for Junior Scholars for travel assistance / grants of up to EUR 800 for the active participation in congresses and conferences. If you would like to apply for travel assistance, please contact</p>	<p>Conference travel funds at the Center for Junior Scholars</p>

the Center for Junior Scholars as early as possible. We should receive your application at least four weeks before your trip.	
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Research stays abroad

<p>There are many good reasons for junior scholars to arrange a research stay abroad: Perhaps you would like to get to know the research work methods in another country as a visiting scholar at a university or research institution abroad while continuing to work on your own project or presenting and discussing the project at the host institution. You may want to learn a specific method at a working group or you may only be able to use a device at that one specific location. Perhaps the exchange with certain colleagues appeals to you, or you would like to stay longer at a renowned research institution because you consider your stay there to be useful for your research career. Field research stays or archive trips also often involve a longer stay abroad.</p>	Motivation
<p>Especially when planning a longer research stay you should talk to your supervisor or the project manager well in advance: Where does a research stay make sense? Are there contacts that can open doors for you? How can you finance your stay and can your supervisor or the project manager support you in applying for scholarships or travel funding? How does your employer benefit from your stay abroad?</p>	<p>Doctoral researchers: Involve your supervisor</p>
<p>Teaching and/or research associates (Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter*innen) must plan in close consultation with the head of their academic chair how to fill the gap in teaching or the project during their absence. Please clarify (see Formal aspects) whether a secondment or (academic) leave of absence are an option.</p> <p>If you are a research associate with teaching duties and are on leave for a longer period of time, your academic chair may be able to hire someone to cover your position and also take over your teaching duties in the meantime. If you are a teaching and/or research associate and your research stay is on behalf of your employer, your employment contract will continue during your absence. If you have teaching duties, these will continue as well. In consultation with the head of your academic chair you may, under certain circumstances, agree to work ahead or to offer teaching as a block course, provided that this does not conflict with curricular content and general course planning. If you are working in a third-party funded project where a research stay has not been planned in advance, the project supervisor must clarify with the funding body whether formal approval for your stay abroad is needed.</p>	<p>Make arrangements for your absence</p>
<p>For doctoral researchers, the DAAD is the most important source of funding for long-term research stays. The DAAD supports doctoral researchers from all disciplines with research grants for stays of one to twelve months. International doctoral researchers can apply for funding for a stay abroad if they are doing their doctorate at a German university and are not already receiving a DAAD incoming scholarship in Germany. Stays in your home country are usually not</p>	<p>(Additional) Funding for doctoral researchers</p>

<p>funded. If you are employed at TU Berlin, you can cover your additional costs with a DAAD scholarship – if the stay is on behalf of your employer, your income will be partially deducted. If you take special leave without pay for the time you are abroad, the scholarship will cover your living expenses. There are specific additional allowances for DAAD scholarship holders with a family, such as child and marriage allowances, allowances for travel expenses for accompanying family members as well as for childcare and insurances. Doctoral scholarship holders of the initiatives for academically gifted students (Begabtenförderungswerke) are <u>not</u> eligible to apply for DAAD scholarships. Doctoral scholarship holders of the DFG’s Research Training Groups are only partly eligible to apply. In both cases it is assumed that you can apply for additional funding for a stay abroad as part of your scholarship funding. Scholarship holders of the Elsa Naumann Program of the state of Berlin for whom a stay abroad is necessary to carry out their doctoral project can apply for a top-up scholarship called GraFöG – a top-up to the DAAD state graduate funding¹. Funding for stays abroad for binational doctorates is also available within the framework of GraFöG.</p>	
<p>For doctoral researchers of all disciplines who hold German citizenship, the Fulbright Commission provides one-year scholarships to finance research stays in the USA. You can find information on these and further calls for longer research stays abroad on the TU Berlin web pages on the topic “Advancement of Junior Scholars” and in the ELFI funding database.</p>	<p>Other funding providers for doctoral researchers</p>
<p>Postdocs also have a variety of options to finance a stay abroad. If you acquire third-party funding from research funding institutions, you can usually also use this third-party funding to finance stays abroad, e.g. by already integrating a project phase abroad in your third-party funding application. Postdoc scholarships such as the stipend of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation or the fellowship of the DFG’s Walter Benjamin Program also allow you to go abroad under certain conditions. Please refer to the regulations of the respective funding institutions. Short-term scholarships for stays abroad of three to six months are available from the DAAD for doctoral graduates up to four years after their doctorate. Applications are open to German citizens and persons with foreign citizenship who hold an equivalent status to that of German citizens according to Section 8 of the German Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG). And lastly, for postdocs in particular it is also worth taking a look at the ELFI research funding database.</p>	<p>Funding opportunities for postdocs</p>

Other forms of stays abroad

<p>Perhaps you would like to go abroad for the purpose of continuing education? Short courses (subject-related) and language courses can be financed with partial scholarships through the DAAD PROMOS program. The joint project training the mindSET run by TU Berlin and three other European partner</p>	<p>Short courses and continuing education</p>
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¹ GraFöG stands for *Graduiertenförderungsgesetz (graduate funding act)*.

<p>universities offers transferable skills training. According to the Educational Leave Act (Bildungsurlaubsgesetz) of Berlin, educational leave is one way to receive paid leave of absence for continuing education. In Berlin, employees are entitled to 10 days of educational leave within two consecutive years (proportionately less for part-time employees). Courses for working professionals at higher education institutions are generally recognized as continuing education.</p>	
<p>Through Erasmus+, employees of TU Berlin can receive funding for a short-term stay abroad to teach at a European partner higher education institution. Your contact point at TU Berlin for Erasmus+ teaching stays abroad is Student Mobility & International Students in the Department of International Affairs. For more information, please see the prospectus “Dozentenmobilität” (lecturer mobility).</p>	<p>Erasmus + Staff Mobility for Teaching (STA)</p>
<p>TU employees can also apply for an Erasmus+ grant to finance a stay at one of TU Berlin’s European partner higher education institutions for the purpose of continuing education and further training. Continuing education can take place in the form of job shadowing, study visits, central continuing education weeks (so-called International Staff Weeks), workshops or language courses. Contact point at TU Berlin is again Student Mobility & International Students.</p>	<p>Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Training (STT)</p>
<p>Doctoral researchers who are enrolled at TU Berlin can apply for an Erasmus+ grant for a study visit to a European partner university². The Erasmus+ mobility grant serves as a subsidy to help cover living expenses. The duration and amount of the payment varies from year to year and currently ranges from EUR 330 to EUR 450 per month. Information on the program, application deadlines and documents to be submitted can be found on the pages of Student Mobility & International Students.</p>	<p>Erasmus Student Mobility for Studies (SMS)</p>
<p>Likewise, doctoral researchers of all nationalities enrolled at TU Berlin can apply for an Erasmus+ grant to finance a traineeship in one of the EU Program countries. The traineeship grant rates are in accordance with the grant rates for student mobility. They vary depending on the country and currently range between EUR 435 and EUR 555. Please contact the TU Berlin Career Service for further information and to apply.</p>	<p>Erasmus Traineeships (SMP)</p>
<p>For selected cooperations, Erasmus+ KA 107 also funds stays outside Europe in EU Partner countries. For information on the program and which cooperations and Partner countries are included at TU Berlin, please contact International Projects.</p>	<p>Erasmus+ grants for stays outside Europe</p>
<p>TU Berlin has framework agreements with most of its strategic partner universities to facilitate joint doctoral degrees, also called “cotutelles”. If</p>	<p>Cotutelles and</p>

² The European Commission distinguishes between programme countries and partner countries. Programme countries are all EU Member States + Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Northern Macedonia and Turkey. The partner countries are, in short, countries outside Europe. You can find more information on the [DAAD website](#).

<p>important research is being done there in your field, inquire about support and exchange opportunities that may result in a joint degree. You can also come to an individual agreement on a joint doctorate with other universities abroad. However, as this is more complex, it is only done in exceptional cases which must serve the cooperation interest of TU Berlin or your academic chair. Please contact the Center for Junior Scholars and your respective Faculty Service Center for guidance. There are various funding formats on offer to finance stays abroad in the context of binational doctorates, e.g. by the DAAD (see above).</p>	<p>framework agreements with partner universities</p>
<p>Building international networks from home, also known as "internationalization@home" is another way to hone your intercultural skills and get to know other research cultures. You can seek contact with international researchers at TU Berlin or initiate cooperations at your academic chair. You can participate in TU Berlin's International Week, or invite international researchers to a conference or to hold a lecture or a seminar (possibly funded through Erasmus Staff Mobility, see above). Perhaps a collaboration with international research partners is an option that might result in joint publications or editorships.</p>	<p>Internationalization @home</p>
<p>For researchers with children or caregiving responsibilities, worldwide mobility is usually a greater challenge than for those without children or caregiving obligations. If you are planning a longer stay, you need to look into a number of issues: Which funding providers finance additional costs for accompanying family members? How do I find a temporary family home abroad? How do we get a place in kindergarten or school? Shorter stays are easier to realize. Perhaps multiple research visits during the summer break are more suitable than an entire year as a postdoc abroad? Whatever you decide: The earlier you plan ahead, the more likely your stay abroad will be a success. Researchers with family or caregiving responsibilities have a harder time meeting the international mobility requirements of a career in research. If you wish to reflect on such a decision, the Center for Junior Scholars is happy to advise you. The Family Services Office can provide you with information on regulations in Germany that affect your stay abroad, for example on questions such as: "Will the daycare voucher remain valid?", "Will I continue to receive child allowance?" or "Where can I get advice on the care for my relatives at home?".</p>	<p>Stay abroad with child</p>

Formal aspects

<p>You can refer to the checklist for international official travel prepared by the International Scientific Cooperation team when planning your trip.</p>	<p>Planning</p>
<p>For a shorter or longer stay abroad taken on behalf of your employer, you always need to submit an application for official travel (Dienstreiseantrag), unless the stay is made in the context of special leave. This applies to employees of TU Berlin as well as to scholarship holders, e.g. if you have been granted a travel expenses allowance through the conference travel fund of the</p>	<p>Official travel</p>

<p>Center for Junior Scholars (see application and information under “Externe Reisende” (external travelers)). Have your direct superior, or your supervisor if you are a scholarship holder, sign for the official trip and submit an application to the person that is responsible for you (varies depending on faculty). Your superior/supervisor can also limit the reimbursement amount if there are not enough funds or, for instance, you want to travel for longer.</p> <p>If your superior/supervisor agrees to cover all or part of the travel expenses, you can request in your application for official travel a partial advance payment of the requested travel expenses before your trip. You may be reimbursed up to 80% of the calculated costs in advance. In this case, your application for official travel remains with the Travel Expense Office.</p> <p>Otherwise, you should submit it to the Travel Expense Office together with the travel expense report.</p>	
<p>You need to submit your travel expense report to the Travel Expense Office within six months of completion of the trip. The Travel Expense Office also needs to have your application for official travel (Dienstreiseantrag) at that point. Please allow for a longer processing time for your reimbursement.</p> <p>Reimbursement will only be made for travel expenses incurred for public transport in 2nd class or economy class in the case of flights. When you make your booking, please take advantage of fare reductions as much as possible, in particular the discounts for corporate clients (Großkundenrabatt) and saver fares (Sparpreis) of the Deutsche Bahn. You are also entitled to reimbursement of additional expenses (such as conference fees, etc.) and accommodation costs as well as a per diem allowance. International per diem rates and the maximum reimbursement amount for accommodation costs are determined annually in a national administrative regulation (Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zur Festsetzung der Auslandstage- und -übernachtungsgelder - ARVVwV).</p>	<p>Reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses</p>
<p>A separation allowance can cover additional expenses if a Secondment results in additional costs for meals, accommodation and other living expenses due to the required change of location. A separation allowance is generally only granted if you apply for it. The international per diem rates and the international overnight allowance for days 1 to 14 are determined by the International Travel Act (Auslandsreiseverordnung - ARV) and the General Administrative Regulation on the Reassessment of International Per Diem Rates and Overnight Allowances (Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zur Festsetzung der Auslandstage- und -übernachtungsgelder - ARVVwV) for the respective country. The international per diem is reduced by 10 percent from the 15th day onwards.</p> <p>Please note that if you are planning a vacation in connection with your official trip, you can only extend your official trip by a vacation totaling five working days, otherwise you will lose your right to reimbursement of travel expenses to and from your destination.</p>	<p>Separation allowance during secondment</p>

<p>In principle, you can take your child with you on your official trips. You can claim additional expenses for an accompanying person if your child is under six months old and is being breastfed. Please check in advance with the Travel Expense Office to determine what documents you will need to provide and contact the Family Services Office regarding any questions or problems. If you are on parental leave and have to take a trip that cannot be postponed (Dienstreise während einer Freistellung - official travel during leave of absence), you can submit and settle an application as external traveler.</p>	<p>Official travel with child and during parental leave</p>
<p>As of 1 July 2019, all TU Berlin employees are required to electronically apply for a secondment or A1 certificate (Entsendebescheinigung) through their employer for each official stay abroad. This serves as proof that the employee is covered by the social security system in their country of residence and employment so that no local social security contributions are due when working abroad. The EU regulation only applies to secondments (Entsendung) within the EU/EEA; different rules apply to travel outside the EU/EEA and also to civil servants. For more information, please see the FAQ section at the bottom of the Human Resources page. The effort involved even for short official trips such as conference visits can seem daunting and, in general, the likelihood of controls in the academic sector is low. Nevertheless, we must advise you to comply with your obligation to apply for this certificate. Please inform yourself ahead of time about the exact procedure and the required lead times for the application for the A1 certificate on the Human Resources pages.</p>	<p>A1 certificate (Entsendebescheinigung)</p>
<p>A stay abroad can in principle be realized through a secondment. The Collective Bargaining Unity Act (Tarifrecht) provides in Section 4 (2) of the Collective Agreement for Berlin Universities (TV-L Berliner Hochschulen) that employees may be temporarily assigned to work for another employer to whom the Collective Labor Agreements for the Public Service (TVöD/TV-L) do not apply. Salaries will continue to be paid during secondment. TU Berlin decides on an individual basis whether a secondment is an option, taking into account official and public interests. A secondment is processed by Human Resources. The Staff Council must be involved in this process. When you are on secondment, you are eligible for a separation allowance. A separation allowance is only granted upon application and compensates for the costs incurred by double housekeeping.</p>	<p>Working at another location/ Secondment</p>
<p>Employees can apply for special leave without pay (Sonderurlaub) in accordance with Section 28 of the Collective Agreement for the Public Service Sector of the Federal States (TV-L) for the purpose of a stay abroad if they have alternative means to finance their living expenses, e.g. a scholarship. According to Section 28 of TV-L, granting special leave without compelling reason is optional and does not have to be granted by the employer if it conflicts with official obligations. Submit your application including statement of reasons and the approval of your superior to the Human Resources team that is responsible for you.</p>	<p>Special leave without pay</p>

Check whether you and, if applicable, your accompanying family have sufficient insurance coverage for your stay abroad. Whether you are adequately covered abroad by your existing insurance policies depends on your status at the University (employee or enrolled scholarship holder), the destination country, and whether you are an employee on secondment, on special leave, or on official travel. You can find detailed information on the subject of insurance on the [EURAXESS](#) website. The [DAAD](#) provides information on how leave of absence without pay affects your social security coverage (especially p. 27-31).

In principle, employees traveling on official business (official travel or secondment) continue to be covered by the German statutory social security system. Individuals who go abroad on a scholarship or whose employment is suspended most likely need to purchase supplemental insurance coverage. For example, [statutory accident insurance](#) covers employees on secondment in the context of professional activities abroad, but usually not enrolled doctoral researchers. [Health insurance coverage](#) is the same for everyone: If you have German statutory health insurance and are employed or enrolled in Germany, you have basic [health insurance coverage](#) anywhere in the EU and in countries that have social security agreements with the EU. Outside these countries you need to purchase international health insurance (not: travel health insurance). Please make sure to ask your health insurance provider in any case which costs they cover and whether you need additional international health insurance. This can also be useful for European countries, especially for longer stays, if the insurance coverage in the destination country does not meet German standards, e.g. accidents are not covered or treatment is more expensive than in Germany. One option is the combined international health, accident and personal liability [insurance](#) offered by the DAAD, for which you are eligible if you are planning a stay abroad through TU Berlin. But be sure to check other offers as well! Have you purchased additional [insurances](#) to cover yourself privately beyond the statutory insurance coverage? Private liability insurance or professional liability insurance (the latter is usually included in trade union memberships, for example) can be useful both at home and abroad. You should clarify in advance to [what extent these insurances also apply abroad](#).

Insurances

Further information, advice and contact

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<https://www.tu.berlin/en/research/advancement-of-junior-scholars/>

Editing and text: Dr. Andrea Adams

Design: Doreen Gropmann

Version: April 2021

Translation: Dani Wittmeier