

This translation is for information purposes only; the Slovak version of the Guidelines is binding.

Guidelines for Awarding and Disbursement of Scholarships and Travel Grants According to Standard Conditions and Conditions During Extraordinary Circumstances

Art. 1

Introductory provisions

1. These Guidelines apply to scholarships and travel grants disbursed by **SAIA, n. o.**, within the framework of the National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic, the Action Austria - Slovakia and the CEEPUS (hereinafter referred to as the "Scholarship Programme").
2. These Guidelines apply to mobilities which, under the terms of the relevant Scholarship Programme, should take place physically in the designated country of scholarship stay.
3. The scholarship shall be disbursed pursuant to the conditions set out within the specific Scholarship Programme provisions, and the conditions set out in these Guidelines shall apply only if they are not explicitly contradicted by the conditions of the specific Scholarship Programme, or if the conditions of the specific Scholarship Programme do not apply to the situations set out in these Guidelines.
4. Travel grants (including reimbursement of travel expenses) shall follow the terms and conditions of the relevant Scholarship Programme; these Guidelines determine the framework for conditions over and above the normal terms of the relevant Scholarship Programme, in particular during extraordinary circumstances.
5. For the purposes of this document, extraordinary circumstances are considered to be, in particular, situations which are the immediate consequence of force majeure and are therefore not caused by an arbitrary decision of the scholarship holder and, as a general rule, not caused by an arbitrary decision of the home or host institution.

Art. 2

Eligibility conditions for the disbursement of a physical mobility grant

1. Physical mobility is defined as a scholarship holder's stay physically carried out in the host institution country, irrespective of the form of contact¹ with the host institution in order to complete the programme of the stay².
2. Unless explicitly stated otherwise within the specific Scholarship Programme conditions, the term 'month of stay' (or alternatively 'mobility month') shall be understood as:
 - a. in case of the first month of the stay: time period beginning on the date of arrival to the scholarship stay and, in the following calendar month, ending on the day with the order

¹ The form of contact may be, for example, attendance in person (physical presence at the host institution during the implementation of the programme of the stay) or remote (e.g. remote consultation with the host institution's staff during field research away from the host institution's premises, or virtual participation in the case of institution's premises closure due to adverse pandemic situation, but provided that the scholarship holder remains in the host institution's country).

² The term 'programme of the stay' refers to the mobility programme submitted by the scholarship holder as part of the scholarship application and implemented with the support of the scholarship.

- number 1 value smaller than the order number of the arrival date, i.e. if the stay begins on the 1st day of a calendar month, the last day of that calendar month is the last day of the month of stay (e.g. 14 March - 13 April, or 1 March - 31 March);
- b. in case of subsequent months of stay: time period beginning on the day following the last day of the first month of the stay and, in the following calendar month, ending on the day with the order number 1 value smaller than the order number of the arrival date, i.e. if the stay begins on the 1st day of a calendar month, the last day of that calendar month is the last day of the month of stay (e.g. 14 April-13 May, or 1 April-30 April).
3. Unless explicitly stated otherwise in the conditions of the specific Scholarship Programme, the following shall apply to monthly scholarship disbursement if the scholarship holder has complied with the minimum length of stay set by the Scholarship Programme, but has not completed the full last month of the stay beyond the minimum scholarship stay length:
- a. if the stay has ended within $n + 4$ days [inclusive] since the beginning of the month (where n is the first day of the last month of the stay), the scholarship is not payable for the month started,
 - b. if the stay lasted longer than as referred to in the point a. but ended within $n + 9$ days [inclusive] (n being the first day of the last month of the stay), 50% of the monthly scholarship rate may be paid for the month in question,
 - c. if the stay lasted longer than as referred to in the point b., 100 % of the applicable monthly scholarship rate may be paid for the month in question.

Art. 3

Scholarship disbursement policy applying to virtual and blended mobility grants

1. If the scholarship stay has been approved as a physical mobility, but the scholarship holder is unable to carry out the approved stay in the host institution country due to extraordinary circumstances, SAIA may agree that the scholarship holder may carry out the mobility virtually (remotely), provided that they comply with following conditions:
 - a. the scholarship holder provides a sufficiently convincing justification as to why extraordinary circumstances prevent them from physical participation in a mobility,
 - b. the host institution confirms that the scholarship holder may attend the scholarship stay virtually (remotely) and that it is possible to fulfil the substance of the planned programme of the stay, even under such conditions.
2. The scholarship holder is obliged to inform SAIA (relevant Scholarship Programme administrator by e-mail) about extraordinary circumstances, as well as of any related change, immediately and with no undue delay, otherwise SAIA may not agree to the implementation of virtual mobility pursuant to this Article.
3. In case of virtual mobility, scholarship rates will be adjusted as follows:
 - a. In the case of outgoing scholarship holders from Slovakia carrying out a mobility at a foreign institution, scholarship rates may be disbursed according to the following relevant category:
 - i. undergraduate (1st cycle students) or graduate higher education students (2nd cycle students) - virtual mobility scholarship in the monthly amount (rate) of €250; if the original scholarship monthly rate for a physical mobility would be lower than

- the rate for a virtual mobility, the scholarship will be paid in the amount identical to the rate for a physical mobility,
- ii. PhD students (postgraduate students – 3rd cycle students), lecturers (in particular university teachers), R&D staff and other scholarship holders not specified in the previous paragraph - virtual mobility scholarship at a monthly rate of €300; if the original scholarship monthly rate for a physical mobility would be lower than the rate for a virtual mobility, the scholarship will be paid in the amount identical to the rate for a physical mobility,
 - b. In case of admitting foreign scholarship holders to a mobility at a Slovak institution, the scholarship holder may be disbursed a scholarship equal to 50% of the scholarship rate approved for the original physical mobility.
4. The purpose of awarding scholarships for virtual mobility is to motivate the exchange of international experience and to promote the internationalization of personal development despite the impact of extraordinary circumstances, to maintain contacts between Slovak and foreign institutions and to cover the living and other expenses of a scholarship holder associated with the virtual mobility (e.g. provision of technical equipment, energy consumption and telecommunications charges, purchase of literature, software, postal services, etc.); or if it is necessary to switch from a physical to a virtual mobility (in the case of blended mobility), the costs associated with this change (e.g. increased travel costs, the need to maintain accommodation in the country of scholarship stay, etc.).
 5. Unless explicitly stated otherwise within the specific Scholarship Programme, the term "month of stay" (or alternatively "mobility month") shall be understood as:
 - a. in case of the first month of the stay: time period beginning on the date of arrival to the scholarship stay and, in the following calendar month, ending on the day with the order number 1 value smaller than the order number of the arrival date, i.e. if the stay begins on the 1st day of a calendar month, the last day of that calendar month is the last day of the month of stay (e.g. 14 March - 13 April, or 1 March - 31 March);
 - b. in case of subsequent months of stay: time period beginning on the day following the last day of the first month of the stay and, in the following calendar month, ending on the day with the order number 1 value smaller than the order number of the arrival date, i.e. if the stay begins on the 1st day of a calendar month, the last day of that calendar month is the last day of the month of stay (e.g. 14 April-13 May, or 1 April-30 April).
 6. For the virtual mobility scholarship disbursement during the period of a virtual mobility, each started month of a virtual mobility shall be considered as a full month of mobility, except for the last month of the stay, where, if the scholarship holder has not completed it in full, the scholarship shall be calculated as follows:
 - a. if the stay has ended within $n + 4$ days [inclusive] since the beginning of the month (while n is the first day of the last month of the stay), 25% of the relevant monthly scholarship rate may be paid for that month
 - b. if the stay lasted longer than referred to in the point a. but ended within $n + 9$ days [inclusive] (while n is the first day of the last month of the stay), 50 % of the relevant monthly scholarship rate may be paid for that month,
 - c. if the stay lasted longer than referred to in the point b., 100% of the relevant monthly scholarship rate may be paid for that month.
 7. In case when, due to the objective situation, physical and virtual mobility (blended mobility) is combined, each month of a physical mobility, even if partially completed, is considered as

a month of physical mobility for the purpose of determining the applicable scholarship rate. Participating in virtual mobility in a given month does not affect the scholarship rate; in such case, the time spent on virtual mobility in a given month is also assessed as physical mobility.

8. When completing the programme of the stay solely through virtual mobility, the scholarship holder is not eligible for a travel grant or reimbursement of travel expenses, unless explicitly stated otherwise in this policy.
9. When completing the programme of the stay solely through virtual mobility:
 - a. the scholarship holder must submit all required documents confirming the successful completion of the virtual mobility, including the scope, form and duration of the mobility,
 - b. the host institution confirms the duration and form of the mobility and the fulfilment of the planned mobility programme of the stay.
10. If a scholarship is granted under this Article, SAIA may decide to disburse the scholarship after the mobility has been completed, provided that:
 - a. the scholarship holder submits all required documents confirming the successful completion of the virtual and/or blended mobility, including the scope, form and duration of the mobility,
 - b. the host institution confirms the duration and form of the mobility and the fulfilment of the planned mobility programme of the stay.

Art. 4

Special provisions for scholarship holders whose stays are affected by extraordinary circumstances

1. In justified cases, SAIA may assess and subsequently refinance the loss caused by the travel ticket cancellation (or equivalent), provided that the scholarship holder has taken steps to minimise the loss in an event of cancellation and that the situation was not caused by an arbitrary decision of the scholarship holder but was the immediate consequence of force majeure³. Ticket cancellation (or equivalent) loss reimbursement under the previous provision may also be applied in cases when the scholarship holder is unable to start the physical mobility due to force majeure.
2. If the scholarship holder unexpectedly terminates their stay prematurely due to extraordinary circumstances, SAIA may proceed as if the month commenced was a full month spent on the stay when recognising entitlement to a monthly scholarship disbursement.
3. Scholarship holders to whom the scholarship covering living expenses is paid directly by SAIA⁴, and who complete their stay in the country of the scholarship stay⁵, and who, for objective reasons, have no way of returning home because of measures taken in the world due to extraordinary circumstances⁶, are obliged to contact SAIA (relevant Scholarship Programme administrator) immediately and with no undue delay by e-mail if such a situation arises,

³ This includes, for example, flight cancellation by the airline without flight replacement and/or compensation, or the necessity to cancel the original flight ticket, as the continuing of the stay is impossible due to the COVID-19 related closure of the host institution.

⁴ It primarily concerns scholarship holders of the National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic.

⁵ This refers to scholarship holders whose approved scholarship support has been fully exhausted (their scholarship stay has formally ended).

⁶ For example, currently because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore mainly due to measures related to the closure of national borders and the constant changes in the availability of international transport.

explaining the situation and indicating all the steps that the scholarship holder has taken or plans to take in order to return home from their scholarship stay. Scholarship holders who, due to extraordinary circumstances, are stranded in the country of the scholarship stay without a real possibility of return to their home countries, may send a request (by email) to the Scholarship Programme administrator to extend the scholarship by 1 month (i.e. an increase in the total awarded scholarship amount compared to the original approved amount), describing in detail their situation and supporting it with credible documents confirming their claim; however, such an extension may only be made by a maximum of 2 times in total, within a particular scholarship stay, and only for the immediate consecutive months.

4. SAIA, with respect to the current objective situation, may divert from the regular conditions of the Scholarship Programme⁷ and accept scans of documents or other alternative means of proving compliance with the conditions of the Scholarship Programme⁸, in order to fulfil the conditions and prove the eligibility for the scholarship.

Art. 5

Final provisions

1. This Policy shall come into force as of 22 October 2021.
2. On effective date of these Guidelines, **Guidelines from 3 April 2020 for scholarship holders within the programmes administered by SAIA, n. o., whose scholarship stays are affected by spreading of COVID-19**, are repealed.

⁷ These are cases when the conditions of the Scholarship Programme require an original document to be submitted.

⁸ E.g. in justified cases, an email from the person who provided the invitation letter confirming the termination of the stay, or a document proving the impossibility of continuing of the stay (e.g. a print screen from the website confirming the closure of the institution for reasons related to Covid-19 etc.), may be accepted as a confirmation of the termination of the stay.