



# INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP FORUM (ISF)

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## TRANSCRIPT OF THE LECTURE ON:

### WINNING THE HELMUT-SCHMIDT SCHOLARSHIP (MASTER'S SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE - PPGG)

Sunday, 23rd May, 2021; 5PM WAT

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B.Sc.: Bachelor's degree (First Class Honors) in Sociology and Political Studies from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Professional Interests: International development, public policy and economic development.

Awards: DAAD Helmut Schmidt Programme towards completing an MA. in Development and Governance at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany.

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## Lecture Agenda

1. [Why Study in Germany?](#)
2. [Objectives and Benefits of the DAAD Helmut Schmidt Programme](#)
3. [List of Master's Courses and Universities under the Helmut Schmidt Programme](#)
4. [Method of Application: Application documents - Brief explanation on each component](#)
5. [How to Write a Winning Motivation Letter for the Programme](#)
6. [Other Salient Points for Applicants Aiming to Win the Scholarship](#)
7. [Questions & Answers](#)

## Why Germany?

There is a plethora of reasons why I would recommend Germany to you. Over the years, Germany has consistently ranked amongst the world's top and most popular destinations for international students.

1. Germany boasts of some of the top ranked universities in the world. You get to experience quality teaching and research, and German university degrees are highly respected by employers worldwide.

2. The quality of living in Germany is one of the highest in the world according to the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI). This is due to its fast-growing economy, technological advancement, quality health system, top-notch infrastructural facilities, etc.
3. Compared to some other European countries, Germany is not very expensive. Should you win the DAAD scholarship, your stipend is enough to cover your living expenses and generate some decent savings at the end if you're frugal. Besides, you can even work to make additional income, which brings me to the next point.
4. International students are allowed to work part-time for up to 20 hours a week or 120 full days of a year. These applies to DAAD scholarship holders as well. It is estimated that more than 60% of current international students work part-time while studying in Germany.
5. Holding a residence permit as an international student in Germany entitles you to visa free travels to any country within the Schengen Zone. There are about 26 of them including Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, France and Sweden.
6. After studying in Germany, you'll have the chance to stay on and seek work after you graduate. The law allows international students to stay for an additional 18 months after graduation to seek work, and you may even end up staying longer, if that is what you wish.
7. Free tuition in public universities

## Objectives of the DAAD Helmut Schmidt Programme

The Helmut-Schmidt-Programme is designed to academically qualify future leaders in the fields of social & political science, law, economics, public policy and administration according to the principles of Good Governance and to prepare them for their future professional activities in a practice-oriented manner. The programme offers highly qualified graduates with a first university degree the chance to obtain a master's degree in disciplines that are of special relevance for the social, political and economic development of their home country. With the knowledge and experience acquired in Germany the scholarship holders should later contribute to the establishment of democratically oriented economic and social systems aimed at overcoming social tensions.

The scholarships are granted for selected master's courses at German institutions of higher education in different cities in Germany. The selected master's courses have a subject-specific focus on public policy, good governance, international relations, public management, public administration, civil society, geogovernance, peace and conflict studies, development and socioeconomic policies. The courses have an international orientation and are taught in English and/or German.

## Benefits of the DAAD Helmut Schmidt Programme

1. Scholarship stipend of €861 per month.
2. Health insurance, accident and liability insurance in Germany are also covered by the scholarship.
3. Appropriate travel allowances for travel between Germany and the developing countries in question, and Germany.
4. A study and research grant of €460 per year.
5. Rent subsidies, and allowances for spouses and children, where applicable. It means if you're married, your spouse and children can join you and they will be given decent allowances every month for the duration of your programme.
6. Preceding German language course in Germany (or digitally in the country of origin, depending on the latest pandemic regulations) usually lasting 6 months. (Participation is mandatory and also applies to scholarship holders in master's courses taught in English).
7. Scholarship holders of the Helmut-Schmidt Programme benefit from accompanying support services provided by the programme coordinators at the respective study locations. They benefit from events and seminars organised specifically for them, as well as close exchange with other international scholarship holders.

8. It also provides for participation in interdisciplinary networking events.

9. After graduation, scholars are included in the DAAD's alumni work and have opportunity to become involved in expert networks such as the African Good Governance Network (AGGN) and more.

In fact, you are given support beyond the normal scholarship. These diverse range of offers alongside the master's courses is what makes the Helmut Schmidt Programme unique.

## List of Master's Courses and Universities under the Helmut Schmidt Programme

The following are the list of master's courses sponsored under the programme, duration of courses and the respective universities. Note that you are to select up to two courses only, in order of priority: 1st choice and 2nd choice. You can select only one. But you'll be disqualified if you apply to more than two.

1. Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg:

Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems (teaching language: English, duration: 2 Years)

2. University of Duisburg-Essen: Master of Development and Governance (teaching language: English, duration: 1 Year)

3. Willy Brandt School of Public Policy at the University of Erfurt:

Master of Public Policy (MPP) (teaching language: English, duration: 2 Years)

4. University of Magdeburg:

Peace and Conflict Studies (teaching language: English, duration: 2 Years)

5. Hochschule Osnabrück: Management in Non-profit Organizations (teaching language: German, duration: 2 Years). You'll need advanced proficiency in the German language to apply for this course. Thus, proof of German proficiency is required.

6. University of Passau:

Development Studies (teaching language: English, duration: 2 Years)

7. University of Passau:

Master of Governance and Public Policy (teaching language: German and English, duration: 2 Years). Though it's taught in both English and German, DAAD scholarship holders will be taught in only English.

8. University of Potsdam:

Master of Public Management (MPM) (teaching language: English, duration: 1 Year)

Here is the link to the list of eligible countries:

<https://eu.docworkspace.com/d/sAGABg4St3MUlpMD0jamnFA>

## Method of Application

### General Requirements

1. Higher education degree obtained with above average results (top third of graduates)
2. Language certificates (requirements vary depending on the respective course of study)
3. Political and/or social involvement is considered an advantage
4. Evidence of internships and/or professional experience is also taken into account positively.

5. A conclusive account of the applicant's academic and personal motivation for the study endeavour in Germany and for choosing and prioritising the courses of study

6. An account of the applicant's perspectives upon returning to their home country or region.

#### NOTES:

1. Applicants who obtained their most recent higher education degree more than six years before submitting the application are **NOT ELIGIBLE**.

2. Applicants who have resided in a country that is not included in the DAC list of developing and emerging countries for more than 15 months at the time of the application deadline are **NOT ELIGIBLE**.

3. If you already hold a master's degree in a similar discipline, you will only be considered in well-justified cases, if you can explain conclusively why you would want to obtain another master's degree. There are a few scholars in my cohort who already had already obtained a master's degree but were selected.

4. It must be emphasized that despite the general selection criteria outlined above, all courses of study in the respective universities have their own application requirements. They also have slightly different methods of application. For instance, while some may require you to compile all your application documents into a single PDF file and send to a designated e-mail address, some may rather ask you to register and log onto a portal where you have to provide your bio-data, education details etc.

5. Another example is about work experience. For some of the schools, you could be accepted with no work experience while some may require you to have gathered at least 1 year or 2 years work experience after your first degree.

6. The scholarship is offered for both young graduates without professional experience and for mid-career professionals, but it depends on the school in question. In my cohort there are many scholars who got the scholarship with no professional work experience.

It is therefore important to check the admission requirements for each course of study carefully, before submitting your application to up to only two schools. You can find direct links for each university course and the e-mails of the course coordinators in the call for applications document. You can reach out to the co-ordinators if you're not clear on any issue and they are always willing to help.

#### Application Documents

1. DAAD Application form for Research Grants and Study Scholarships. This is a green form which is written in both German and English. Please indicate clearly that you are applying for the DAAD Helmut Schmidt Programme. The form can only be edited electronically. However, it should be dated and signed by hand.

2. Hand-signed and dated motivation letter. It should be a single letter for both universities containing a precise description of the applicants' academic/professional and personal reasons for choosing to participate in the Helmut Schmidt Programme as well as an explanation of your choice of universities/courses of study and prioritisation. The letter of motivation should not be more than two pages long.

3. Hand-signed and dated full curriculum vitae including information about the precise field of your studies and, if applicable, description of job experience and political/social involvement. It is recommended to use the Europass CV template.

4. Copy of acquired Academic Degrees (certified translation, if necessary, please attach an explanation of the grading system)

5. Copy of the transcript of records (certified translation if necessary)

6. Recent language certificates (German and/or English)



7. Letter(s) of recommendation, signed and recently dated by your university lecturer/professor or current employer, supplemented by an official letterhead, and stamp (not in a sealed envelope)
8. Work confirmation of your employers or working time certificates for any listed internships, volunteer work and work experience (if applicable). These must also be signed, dated and bear a letterhead and stamp.

## Writing a Winning Motivation Letter

**Note :** If you choose up to two courses/universities, you are to send the same motivation letter to these universities/courses. You stand the risk of disqualification if you present different letters.

The letter of motivation is a very crucial document in your application. Take your time and start early. Never try to write it down in one evening. Avoid all kind of platitudes, flowery phrases and flattery. Be direct and deal with your points in a reflective and factual manner. Start with a local problem that plagues your community, state or country. Read about the SDGs and Development Plans of your countries. If you state a global social problem, back it with facts and figures. Do not merely say Ghana or Nigeria is riddled with poverty or inequality or corruption and you want to solve it. You are not super man or woman. Most of the assessors are on global boards and organisations dealing with these problems, and they have advanced various efforts at addressing these problems. Recognise the efforts that have been made so far. What are the gaps? What hasn't been done yet? How are you going to utilise your new knowledge, skills and experience to contribute to solving these issues? Do not repeat your CV, but you can make one or two references to back your points if needed.

Ultimately, the letter of motivation should answer the following questions:

1. What is your professional goal? In which sector would you like to work after obtaining your Master's degree? In which way do you intend to contribute to the social, political or technical development of your home country?
2. Why are you applying for the chosen Master's programme(s)? Which of the courses offered in these programmes are particularly beneficial in pursuing your professional goals?
3. Why do you think you are the right person for this programme? Emphasize your strong points, but be realistic. What knowledge and skills gathered in your previous education, professional experiences, and social/political involvement will be useful?
4. Why do you want to study in Germany?
5. What do you know about the German university system and the specifics of studying in Germany?
6. Is there anything in Germany (society, political system, economy...) which you think could serve as a model for your own country?
7. Are there any German organizations, institutions or companies you would like to visit or learn more about? Why?

Make sure your letter of motivation is well composed. First reflect on all the above questions, take notes, do more research. Then write an outline. Not all of the above questions have to be answered but try and cover as much. Be enthusiastic and write your essay based on the outline developed.

Proofread your essay and delete all dispensable and redundant parts. Also pay attention to grammar and spelling. Make sure you are in the limit of two pages. You can send your essay to an experienced scholar for review and scrutiny.

## Final Thoughts and Other Salient Points

1. The application opens on 1st June and closes on 31st July. That is a space of two months. Do not be in a rush to submit your applications. Take your time. Gather all your application documents. Follow the rules to the letter. The

documents which need to be hand signed and dated should be done without fail. Let a scholar review all your documents before you hit the submit button.

2. If you have taken some MOOCs in relation to your intended program, do well to leverage on it in your application form, citing the knowledge gained and how useful it's going to be in improving your understanding of the intended course.

3. Emphasize your intention of returning to your home country after your program of study. You're not required to return, but please let them know the knowledge gained is for the benefit of your home country upon return.

4. Do not play the 'poverty pity-party game'. The Helmut Schmidt Programme doesn't require you to demonstrate your economic barriers to education or social advancement. You need to communicate in clear terms the value you're bringing to the table, and the strong desire to impact your immediate community.

I wish prospective applicants all the best in the application process. May GOD come through for us all.

**Thank you all for your attention.**



## Questions & Answers

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- Q:** Please what does top third mean (the requirements)?
- A:** If your graduating class is divided into 3 according to grades, your grade or position should be in the first group. Or you can say top 30% of your class. This normally translates to either a first class or second class upper.
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- Q:** What is the most preferred English Language test for the application? Or is an English language proficiency certificate enough?
- A:** I think you should reach out to the respective universities to check their specific requirements. In my experience however, if your undergraduate course of study was taught in English, you are required to present either the English Language Proficiency letter from your university or your WAEC certificate.
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- Q:** About sending same motivation letter to all schools applied for. In the case I mention the school I am applying to in the motivation letter, can't I edit the name of the school if I am applying to another?
- A:** No please. The same letter needs to be presented to all two schools. You are to mention their names in the order you ranked them and justify your reasons for choosing them. You realise that University of Passau has two courses. Master of Development Studies and Master of Governance and Public Policy. In case you want to apply to these courses, it means you have to send just one application to University of Passau, but the courses need to be ranked in order of priority
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- Q:** Would a medium of instruction in English suffice for IELTS or TOEFL?
- A:** This is normally dependent on the university. Kindly visit the portal/website of your intended university/course to verify. As far as I know, once your undergraduate programme was conducted in English, a letter indicating medium of instruction in English or WAEC certificate will suffice.
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- Q:** Please can you share with us the specific link to this scholarship?
- A:** Unfortunately, I do not have the link to this year's application. Kindly search on Google " DAAD Helmut Schmidt Programme 2022" and I'm sure you'll find the results.
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- Q:** How can one get the DAAD scholarship form?
- A:** You can find it on the websites of the participating courses/universities.
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- Q:** Can I travel with my wife and kids for studies? If yes, will they be receiving stipends too?
- A:** Yes please. And they will be receiving stipends for the entire duration of your programme.
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- Q:** Will a science student be considered for the scholarship?
- A:** This programme is expressly intended for students with social science backgrounds
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- Q:** I have been trying to apply to Hannover University but, I was told that I need to apply through "Uni-assist" site.
- A:** I believe this is under DAAD EPOS programme. The EPOS programme has different application route from the Helmut Schmidt Programme. Thank you.
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Please, is that the only way I can apply to the school or there's another way?

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**Q:** Please what about the visa processing? How much is required for the applicants to have in his or her bank account during visa processing? Thanks

**A:** This is under DAAD EPOS.

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