

National scholarship programme for international students, researchers and academic staff

1. Basic definitions

For the purposes of this Programme:

- 1.1. “implementing agency” means the agency implementing the Programme (hereinafter referred to as *the Implementing Agency*);
- 1.2. “Commission” means the steering body of the Programme to be established by the Implementing Agency;
- 1.3. “programme guide” means a document approved by the Implementing Agency that lays down the conditions and procedures for the application, award and payment of scholarships and mobility grants under the Programme;
- 1.4. “exchange study” means a degree-level programme of study that lasts between one to ten months;
- 1.5. “degree study” means a degree-level programme of study that leads to the award of a diploma certifying that the holder has completed the study programme;
- 1.6. “treaty” means a bilateral or multilateral written agreement consisting of one or several documents which is concluded between the Republic of Estonia and a foreign state or an international organisation and which is regulated by international law (§ 3 2) of the Foreign Relations Act);
- 1.7. “inter-agency treaty” means a written agreement between a state agency or local government of the Republic of Estonia and an agency of a foreign state or an international organisation, which is concluded according to their competence and regulated by international law (§ 3 3) of the Foreign Relations Act).

2. Objectives and principles of the Programme

- 2.1. The objective of the Programme is to establish a common framework that sets out the principles for awarding scholarships and mobility grants under treaties or inter-agency treaties (hereinafter together referred to as *the Treaties*) and provides an additional opportunity to offer scholarships and mobility grants to students, researchers and academic staff from countries that have not signed a cooperation agreement on education and research with Estonia.
- 2.2. The scholarships and mobility grants to be awarded under the Programme are funded from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Research (hereinafter referred to as *the Ministry*) within the limits of state budget funds.
- 2.3. The Implementing Agency of the Programme shall make a proposal to the Ministry regarding the target countries of the Programme and the division of state budget funds, considering the terms and conditions of the Treaties listed in Annex 2 of this directive and, if necessary, the strategies for international marketing of higher education and research as well as any supra-ministerial international cooperation objectives in accordance with the input from the Ministry.
- 2.4. The Ministry shall sign a contract each year with the Implementing Agency, agreeing on the allocation of the funds related to the implementation of the Programme. The

conditions for selecting target countries and for applying as well as the criteria for selecting applicants shall be specified in the programme guide.

- 2.5. The Programme is of unlimited duration and it is applied for all students, researchers and academic staff who have enrolled or commenced work at an institution of higher education from 2015 onwards under the call for applications referred to in paragraph 3.4.2.

3. Types of and application for scholarships and mobility grants

- 3.1. The Implementing Agency shall allocate the amount of a scholarship or mobility grant to the relevant institution of higher education or the research and development (R&D) institution where the student, researcher or academic staff member commences his/her studies or work. The scholarships at the first level of higher education as well as scholarships for Master's or Doctoral study are intended to cover the accommodation and transport costs of international students. Mobility grants may be used for daily allowances, indemnification of accommodation and travel costs, and salaries.

3.2. Scholarships

- 3.2.1. Scholarships at the first level of higher education are intended to support the exchange study or degree study of international students at Estonian institutions of higher education in the areas related to Estonian language and culture.
- 3.2.2. Scholarships for Master's and Doctoral study are intended to support the exchange study or degree study of international students at Estonian institutions of higher education.
- 3.2.3. Scholarships of summer and winter schools are intended to support participation in summer courses of Estonian language and culture as well as in summer and winter schools related to English-language curricula of degree studies. These scholarships are accessible to students at the first level of higher education as well as to students participating in Master's and Doctoral studies at foreign institutions of higher education. The scholarship is used to reimburse up to 500 EUR of the course fee and accommodation costs of 25 EUR per day for a maximum of 28 days per secondment in a calendar year.
- 3.2.4. The scholarship rate at the first level of higher education and for Master's studies is 350 EUR per month.
- 3.2.5. The scholarship rate for Doctoral studies is equal to the doctoral allowance granted in Estonia and is paid in accordance with the Study Allowances and Study Loans Act. A student who has been awarded a scholarship for Doctoral studies under this Programme is not eligible for concurrent receipt of a doctoral allowance under the Study Allowances and Study Loans Act.
- 3.2.6. A scholarship for degree study is paid for 12 months each academic year over the nominal period of study, except the last academic year of the nominal period of study when the scholarship is paid for ten months. A scholarship for degree studies is paid on condition that the scholarship recipient is studying full time and completes cumulatively

at least 75% of the coursework required by the curriculum by the end of each academic year.

3.2.7. A scholarship for exchange study is paid over a specified period but for no more than ten months in a single academic year.

3.2.8. For the purposes of paying a scholarship, a calendar month is considered to constitute a full month. If the scholarship period does not cover the whole calendar month, the scholarship is paid in the amount proportional to the number of study days in that calendar month.

3.3. Mobility grants

3.3.1. Short-term mobility grants are intended to support visits of foreign researchers and academic staff to Estonian institutions of higher education and R&D institutions for the period from one to nine days. The grant rate is 45 EUR per day.

3.3.2. Long-term mobility grants are intended to support the visits of foreign researchers and academic staff to Estonian institutions of higher education and R&D institutions for a period from ten days to ten months. The grant rate is equal to the scholarship rate for Doctoral study specified in paragraph 3.2.5. Notwithstanding the duration of the visit, the grant is paid according to the same rate for visits lasting from ten days to a month.

3.4. Application

3.4.1. The specific conditions for applying for a scholarship or a mobility grant (including the list of documents and application deadlines) and selection criteria are established by the Implementing Agency in the programme guide subject to approval by the Ministry.

3.4.2. Applications are accepted once a year. The Implementing Agency shall publish a call for applications for scholarships and mobility grants in March each year at the latest, together with the application conditions.

3.4.3. The Implementing Agency shall establish a commission for the awarding of scholarships and mobility grants.

4. Implementation of the Programme

4.1. In implementing the Programme, the Implementing Agency acts according to this Programme and the terms and conditions of the contract referred to in paragraph 2.4.

4.2. The Implementing Agency shall monitor the implementation of the Programme and prepare, if necessary, analyses on the performance of the Programme, in order to make proposals to the Ministry for improving the Programme. The conditions of reporting on and analysing the Programme are specified in the contract referred to in paragraph 2.4.

4.3. Cooperation between the Ministry and the Implementing Agency in the implementation of the Programme is coordinated by the European Union and International Cooperation Department of the Ministry.

4.4. The Implementing Agency shall publish information on the Programme activities on its website and disseminate information on scholarships and mobility grants through the activities of the project “Study in Estonia”. The Implementing Agency shall provide information on mobility grants through the project “Research in Estonia” and the pan-European network of mobility centres EURAXESS.

5. Links to development plans

The Programme is based on the following development plans:

Estonian Higher Education Strategy for 2006-2015 (approved by a decision of 8 November 2006 of the *Riigikogu* (Parliament of Estonia));

Strategy for the Internationalisation of Estonian Higher Education over the years 2006–2015 (approved by Minister of Education and Research directive No. 16 of 9 January 2007);

National Reform Programme “Estonia 2020” (approved by the Government of the Republic on 28 April 2011);

The Estonian Research, Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020 "Knowledge-based Estonia", (approved by the *Riigikogu* (Parliament of Estonia) on 22 January 2014);

The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 (approved by the Government of the Republic on 13 February 2014).

The goal specified by **the Estonian Higher Education Strategy for 2006-2015** is to improve the quality and international credibility of Estonian higher education through internationalisation, which is achieved *inter alia* by the mobility and competence of students, academic staff and researchers.¹

According to the **Strategy for the Internationalisation of Estonian Higher Education over the years 2006–2015**, the high percentage of foreign students in our student body will become an indicator and guarantee of the quality and competitiveness of the education offered in Estonia. International students who have received an excellent education in Estonia are the most persuasive envoys of Estonian education in the world, and they will become promoters of international economic and cultural relations. Special attention is paid to the involvement of international students in full-time Doctoral and Master’s studies. The involvement of international academic staff creates opportunities to improve the quality of research and teaching, offer teaching in areas where our own competence is limited, implement fresh ideas and methods and expand the number of courses taught through the medium of foreign languages. International academic staff is also a considerable asset in developing international relations and motivating international students to come to study in Estonia.²

The National Reform Programme “Estonia 2020” highlights the importance of “internationalising at home”, which means attracting talented people to areas that are important for the Estonian economy or becoming more active in hiring foreign academic staff to work at Estonian institutions of higher education. Foreign students who leave the country after their studies are also important for Estonian society. They may become “ambassadors” for the Estonian state, culture and economy in their own country, and they may contribute to developments in Estonia through their contacts. In continuing with the current activities, the goal for 2015 – to admit 2,000 foreign students – is attainable.³

The Estonian Research, Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020 "Knowledge-

¹ Eesti kõrgharidusstrateegia 2006–2015.

² Eesti kõrghariduse rahvusvahelistumise strateegia aastateks 2006–2015.

³ Konkurentsivõime kava „Eesti 2020”.

based Estonia" mentions that although international cooperation in research has become the rule and the internationalisation of research has been actively initiated in recent years, not all the possibilities have yet been sufficiently well-utilised. The aim is to broaden international cooperation opportunities, through increasing researcher mobility, so that the research in Estonia would be of a high level and diverse as well as internationally competitive and visible.⁴

The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 highlights the importance of openness, tolerance and international cooperation in developing the lifelong learning system. Besides local cooperation, international experience and expertise in all levels of education is of critical importance for Estonia. The strengthening of international experiences and competences will be supported with the objective of increasing the quality and attractiveness of higher education. In assessing the work of the academic staff in universities, the international aspect will be taken into account. Internationalisation indicators are also considered in the evaluation and financing of higher education. Talented individuals will be invited to study in Estonia, based on the prospective needs of the labour market. Foreign students will be assured of gaining access to the opportunities for work experience in companies. Financing principles will be applied to support cooperation between Estonian institutions of higher education and international cooperation. Monitoring the effectiveness of these financing principles will also be carried out.⁵

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⁴ Eesti teadus- ja arendustegevuse ning innovatsiooni strateegia 2014–2020 „Teadmistepõhine Eesti” .

⁵ Eesti elukestva õppe strateegia 2020.

Annex 2

Treaties and inter-agency treaties in the field of education and research

Treaties that provide mobility opportunities for students, researchers and academics but do not specify quotas for scholarships and grants:

1. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the **United States of America** for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (exchange of researchers);
2. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Armenia** in the fields of education and research;
3. Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** on Cooperation in the Fields of Education and Research;
4. Co-operation Programme for the Years 2015-2018 between the Government of Estonia and the Government of **Flanders** in Implementation of the Co-operation Treaty between the Government of Estonia and the Government of Flanders;
5. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Federative Republic of **Brazil** on Cultural and Educational Co-operation;
6. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Bulgaria** on Co-operation in the Fields of Education, Science on Culture;
7. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of the **Philippines** on Cultural and Educational Co-operation;
8. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of **Georgia** on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science, Youth and Sports;
9. Agreement on Cultural, Educational and Scientific Co-operation between the Republic of Estonia and the Kingdom of **Spain** (exchange of researchers);
10. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Croatia** on Co-operation in the Fields of Science, Technology and Higher Education;
11. Exchange Programme between the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of the Republic of **India** and the Ministry of Education and Research, Government of the Republic of Estonia on Cooperation in the Field of Education;
12. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Indonesia** on Cultural Cooperation;
13. Agreement on Cultural, Educational, Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the **Italian** Republic;
14. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (exchange of researchers and academics);
15. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Korea** on Cultural, Educational and Scientific Co-operation;
16. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Cyprus** on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Education;
17. Agreement on Educational, Cultural and Sport Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the United **Mexican** States;
18. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Moldova** on Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports;

19. Agreement on Cultural Co-operation between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Federal Republic of **Germany**;
20. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Slovenia** in the Fields of Education, Culture and Research;
21. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of **Sri Lanka**;
22. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of the Kingdom of **Thailand** on Cultural and Educational Cooperation;
23. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Tunisia** on Cultural, Educational, Scientific and Sports Co-operation;
24. Cooperation Programme between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Ukraine**;
25. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Hungary** in the Fields of Culture and Education;
26. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the **Russian Federation** on Cooperation in the Field of Education.

Treaties that specify quotas for scholarships and mobility grants:

27. Cooperation Programme between the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of **China** for the Years 2008-2012 (quota: exchange study scholarships for up to 20 months and 1 summer school scholarship; agreement extends automatically);
28. Programme of Educational, Scientific, Cultural, Youth and Sports Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the State of **Israel** for the Years 2012-2015 (quota: exchange study scholarships or mobility grants for researchers for up to 10 months and 1 summer school scholarship);
29. Programme on Cooperation in the Fields of Education and Culture between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the **Hellenic** Republic for the Years 2005, 2006 and 2007 (quota: exchange study scholarships for up to 10 months, 2 summer school scholarships and 2 short-term research mobility grants; agreement extends automatically);
30. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of **Latvia** and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of **Lithuania** on Closer Co-operation in Higher Education, Research and Innovation (quota: exchange study scholarships for up to 50 months, 3 summer school scholarships and research mobility grants for up to 9 months);
31. Agreement between the Estonian Ministry of Culture and Education and the **Polish** Ministry of Education on Cooperation in the Field of Education for the Years 1995-1997 (quota: exchange study scholarships for up to 30 months, 3 summer school scholarships and research mobility grants for up to 9 months; agreement extends automatically);
32. Agreement on Co-operation between the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Estonia and the **Danish** Ministry of Education Concerning Education and Research (quota: exchange study scholarships and research mobility grants for up to 44 months);

33. Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the **Czech** Republic on Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Science and Youth for the years 2009-2012 (quota: exchange study scholarships for up to 30 months, 2 summer school scholarships and research mobility grants for up to 3 months; agreement extends automatically);
34. Cooperation Programme between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of **Turkey** in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science, Youth and Sports (quota: exchange study scholarships for up to one academic year and 2 summer school scholarships).

The full texts of the Treaties are available on the website of the Ministry of Education and Research.

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