

## Information about the zis-Scholarship

To all who have applied for a zis-scholarship or who plan to do so:

Below you will find a summary of fundamental guidelines for a zis-journey. This information is supposed to be of help for you, but it also contains rules that you have to comply with.

### I. Before the journey

Thorough preparation of each zis-project is a fundamental requirement.

#### **1. Application**

Scholarships are targeted at applicants of all nationalities, who are at departure between 16 and 20 years of age. Applications may be submitted in German or – if your mother tongue or everyday language is not German – also in English.

The application is to be submitted online via the web page [www.zis-reisen.de](http://www.zis-reisen.de). Closing date for applications is February 15<sup>th</sup>, unless mentioned differently on the webpage.

#### **2. Preselection and support**

The board of mentors short-lists applications in March. To be selected, your application has to adhere to formal criteria (closing date for applications, age, etc.), indicate strong motivation, and present a journey project with suitable content and clear organization, making its realization plausible.

Successful applications are distributed among the board of mentors who support the applicants in further preparing for their journey and who decide about the final approval in the course of supervision.

The ideal period for a zis project is between May and October, with 30<sup>th</sup> September the latest date of departure. Exceptions, which may be required because of project topic, are only possible in agreement with the mentor.

#### **3. Letter of award**

Provided your mentor is convinced that you are sufficiently prepared for the journey with regard to content, organisation and elimination of potential risks, the mentor will send you the zis scholarship contract. Typically, this confirmation happens no later than four weeks before departure. You return a scan or picture of the signed contract together with the project form to the zis office [info@zis-reisen.de](mailto:info@zis-reisen.de), with CC to the project mentor. In signing the scholarship contract, you agree to the conditions of the zis scholarship.

#### **4. Letter of recommendation and transfer of scholarship**

After the zis-office has received the contract, zis will send an official letter of recommendation which states the agreed research topic. Your bank details need to be communicated to the zis-office in due time to ensure a timely payment. Receipt of the scholarship is confirmed prior to departure, by emailing a signed receipt form.

## II. During the Journey

A zis-journey is made on the scholarship-holder's own responsibility. Your safety always comes first.

### **1. Responsible and safe travel**

A zis journey comes with responsibility – for yourself and for your host country. But not everything goes smoothly every day, and not every adventure is a personal gain. In case of doubt, your own safety and well-being always come first – regardless of budget restrictions and research assignments. This also means that you set limits for yourself and trust your gut feeling. Of course, you can contact the zis office or your mentor in a dangerous situation. You will find more points of contact on the emergency card that you will receive together with the scholarship contract. Please complete this emergency card with your personal details.

Your financial plan, which includes a reserve for emergency situations, also serves to ensure your safety on the road. In addition to the scholarship amount, you should leave an emergency reserve, to respond to critical situations if necessary. Decisions that are made in such a critical situation, such as adding an unplanned night in a hostel which exceeds the budget, will not violate the terms of the scholarship.

A letter of recommendation informing you about the purpose of the trip can also give you confidence in dealing with public authorities. zis reserves the right to cancel a scholarship commitment that has already been made before the start of the trip in the event of a dangerous situation. The Executive Board decides on this at the request of the mentor. The basis for this is also the travel warnings and information published on the Internet by the German Foreign Office. zis strongly encourages you to take out comprehensive health and travel accident insurance abroad. zis also advises against hitchhiking and will only award the scholarship if it is ensured that the project is possible without hitchhiking.

### **2. Travelling on your own from first to last day**

The journey, including the outward and the return trip, has to be made on your own. This means that you are not allowed to travel with or stay with friends or family members.

### **3. Behaviour during the journey**

During the journey, you should treat other people with respect, be helpful and react to hospitality in a responsible manner.

### **4. Handling of the scholarship**

By principle, the scholarship project must be carried out with the scholarship amount alone. The current scholarship amount is indicated in the scholarship contract. The limited means requires a responsible use of funds. This means neither to waste money (especially in poor countries), nor to exploit the hospitality of one's hosts nor to starve. Generally, the scholarship is meant to be spent for expenses which are directly linked to the purpose of the zis-journey. This includes presents for the hosts. Any scholarship surplus after the journey can be used freely at your discretion.

### **5. Duration, destination, outward and return journey**

The zis-journey needs to include an outward trip and a return trip. Origin and final destination of the journey need to be the scholarship-holder's current main place of residence. In the context of a long-term stay abroad this may also be the respective location abroad.

### **6. Luggage**

zis strongly advises to keep the luggage at a minimum and to refrain from taking along unnecessary valuables.

### **7. Constraints of transportation means**

Travelling by plane and with one's own or a rental car is not allowed.

### **8. Earning extra money during the journey**

As a basic principle all expenses of the journey are to be covered by the scholarship only. However, during the journey it is permissible to earn some extra money which can be spent during the journey. Various jobs are possible, for example working in a hostel for room and board, playing music on the streets, or other occasional jobs. In principle the work on the zis-project must not be compromised by earning money.

## **III. After the journey**

Diary, project documentation, and account of expenses are fundamental parts of the zis-project.

### **1. Project documentation**

#### **a) Study report**

The study report serves the independent and authentic reflection of the project topic, rather than being an academic contribution. It gives a structured report of the experiences during the journey and reviews them in retrospect. It should be personal and mainly rely on your personal observations that were made during the trip and that could only be made by you. It should comprise at least 8,000 words, this means about 20 pages in print. Long or directly cited interviews or quotes are part of an appendix, which does not count towards the word limit. Contents from sources other than your experience (for example newspapers, magazines, books, electronic sources) need to be referenced by citing the source, no matter whether exact words are used, or ideas are paraphrased or summarised. Generic references are not sufficient. It is not permitted to create contents entirely or partially through generative artificial intelligence (AI); any other support through AI or similar services has to be made transparent at submission. Plagiarism or the submission of (partially) AI generated reports will lead to reclamation of the scholarship money.

### ***b) Alternative documentation or work piece***

Instead of or in addition to the study report, you can also choose another form of documentation of the travel topic. This is scientifically informative or artistically inspiring and presents your research results in an interesting and comprehensible way. You have the option of producing a work piece. Both the work and the alternative documentation will be supplemented by a 5-page reflection (at least 2,000 words). The details will be agreed with the mentor in advance of the trip. Regarding the use of quotations and content from other sources (e.g. text, images, sound, etc.), as well as the use of AI, the same regulations apply as for the study report.

### ***c) Diary***

The diary is meant to express your personal and direct experiences of the journey. It is supposed to document the project in a way that allows the board of mentors is able to understand the course of the journey. Instead of writing down details of each day minute by minute, it should rather contain a vivid description of impressions and experiences. Regarding the use of quotations and content from other sources (e.g. text, images, sound, etc.), as well as the use of AI, the same regulations apply as for the study report.

### ***d) Account of expenses***

The list of expenses demonstrates your use of the scholarship funds. A daily and detailed list of the costs, which is transparent and clearly arranged, is required. Every expense and the total amount of expenses need to be transparent. If receipts are in a foreign currency, the total amount should be converted into Euro by specifying the exchange rate. Receipts for large expenses must be attached.

### ***e) Language and layout of the works***

All documentation (study report, diary and account of expenses) has to be submitted in German or, if your mother tongue or everyday language is not German, in English. They should contain a solid cover and should either be written by computer or in neat, readable handwriting. Attached and commented illustrations like printed photos, sketches, etc. are most welcome. Make sure that photos have a high resolution and sufficient print size. All documents should be proofread thoroughly before submission. The cover of each project must state the year of travel, your name, and the project topic.

The evaluation of a project concerns the printed or handwritten submission. However, please also submit study reports, diary, and a summary of the expenses in digital form. Larger files can be submitted via services such as WeTransfer. A handwritten diary should be submitted as a scan, which can be created with a smartphone.

Any submission requires a declaration about the use of AI tools, if applicable (see form). Submission of entirely or partially AI generated documents leads to a withdrawal of the scholarship.

### ***f) Copyright and personality rights***

By submitting your project, you confirm that your work is free of rights of third parties and that no personal rights are violated in the representation of persons (right to one's image).

If persons are clearly identifiable, you must have the consent of this person for publication in oral or written form. If your work contains pictures of minors, you must obtain the written consent of the parents or legal guardians. Exception: If persons are filmed or photographed at public events, they do not have to be asked for permission to publish. This also applies to people who are in the public eye about their careers and are filmed or photographed in this context.

Under no circumstances may personal or non-public data (such as names, addresses, e-mail addresses, photographs, not approved interviews or statements or other details of contacts' personal lives) during or after creation of the report be submitted to generative AI services. Exceptions can be made in consultation with the mentor for specifically protected AI applications.

### ***g) Right of use***

With the handing over of your project zis acquires ownership of the originals. You grant zis the irrevocable right, unlimited in time and place, to use the works within the scope of zis' public relations work, stating the author. This includes the right to process the work or to use it only in extracts as well as to publish and present it in all media formats. Zis uses contact details on file to contact the creator before images or parts of reports are used in this way. You cannot claim a usage fee for the use of the work. The copyright remains with you.

### ***h) Deadlines***

The documents have to be mailed to the zis office within three months after completion of the journey. The date of postmark is deemed to be date of delivery. In order to ensure equal opportunities, only in exceptional, specifically justified circumstances can the mentor grant an extension of the deadline.

## **2. Assessment**

### ***a) Procedure***

All projects are assessed by the members of the board of mentors. Each project is read by several members of the board of mentors and reviewed at the meeting of the board of mentors in March. The meetings are not held publicly. The scholarship-holder will be informed about the overall assessment of the journey by an official certificate consisting of a short summary of the research project and a personal letter from the mentor.

Excellent journeys will receive a reward: The prize will be an amount of money for an educational project. The prize winner can choose the type of project, for example a language course, an excursion, a stay abroad or a subsidy of another zis-journey. zis can also recommend candidates for an assessment by the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes.

### ***b) Assessment criteria***

In principle the assessment of the journey lies in the board of mentors' judgment. Although individual criteria are not decisive, but rather the appreciation of the overall project, the following questions are guidelines for assessment: How was the journey performed and how was the work on the research topic? How did the candidate handle the money?

How did the candidate get in touch with the country's population? How did he or she deal with circumstances, opportunities and encounters? Did the candidate concentrate on the research topic without travelling around single-mindedly? However, the most important criterion for assessment is the candidate himself: What did he or she learn from the journey?

### 3. Long-term contact to zis

If you would like to stay part of the zis community after your project, you can join 'zak': the 'zis Alumni Kernteam'. Alumni meet regularly and support with a number of tasks, such as the digitization of projects, advertisements for the scholarship, and in curating our social media. To join, simply contact [zak@zis-reisen.de](mailto:zak@zis-reisen.de).

Our Instagram handle is "zisreise". You can also sign up for our newsletter under [www.zis-reisen.de/newsletter](http://www.zis-reisen.de/newsletter).

Another possibility is to join the zis Freundeskreis (Circle of Friends), which is open to all former scholarship holders. As a member you will regularly receive the zis annual report and a review of the zis trips, as well as a personal invitation to the scholarship holders' meeting in Salem. For further information, write to [info@zis-reisen.de](mailto:info@zis-reisen.de)

Any other questions, or comments about this information sheet?

We are glad to hear about it at [info@zis-reisen.de](mailto:info@zis-reisen.de)

Last update: March 2025