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LWF Scholarships for Theology and Diakonia/Development

General Information

Through the scholarships program the LWF works alongside its member churches in developing their capacity to serve effectively in their contexts. The scholarship program helps churches to acquire qualified personnel for spiritual care and diaconal work. The main criteria for a candidate's approval should fulfil the church's corresponding need to increase its human and institutional capacity, either in the areas of theology or diakonia/development.

Effective 1 July 2020, the LWF scholarship application process has been revised and it will be completed only through an online application system called "Zengine". To access the log-in page use the link sent in the Annual LWF Scholarship Information Letter and start by filling out the church endorsement form. The link for application will be directly e-mailed to each church after the church has completed the endorsement form.

To ensure that your experience with the new system is as smooth as possible, we have prepared "The Step-by-Step Guidance" to help you go through each phase of the application process. Please read the instructions carefully and use them as you navigate the system for the first time.

Eligibility

- **Church affiliation of the candidate:** Only applications from active members of LWF member churches are considered. All applications must be endorsed and submitted by the church. No applications submitted by individuals will be considered.
- **Nationality of the candidate:** Only candidates from developing countries are eligible for scholarships in fields of diakonia/development. The theological scholarships are, in principle, open to candidates from all regions and countries.
- **Age limits:** The following age limits are in place, depending on the pursued degree and with certain exceptions, particularly for female applicants*:

Degree	Maximum age at the time of application*
Bachelor degrees	35
Master degrees	40
Doctorate	45
Post-doctoral/research	50

*Special considerations:

- For candidates who are church employees at the time of application, these

age limits may be exceeded upon special request.

- *Relatively higher consideration is made for female candidates who exceed the age limits due to social and cultural factors which cause them to pursue studies later.*

Overview of the Application and Approval Process

- **July | Kick-off of the application phase.** The information about the new application phase including instructions for the revised online application system are sent to all LWF member churches and shared across LWF networks and channels.
- **July-September | Pre-screening processes in the churches.** Each church or national committee is supposed to do a pre-screening of all individual applications through its internal HICD committee or board. At the end of this process, each church prioritizes up to 5 candidates whose applications are being endorsed and forwarded to the LWF Communion Office through the “Zengine” online application system.
- **1 October | Deadline for applications.** A *maximum of 5 applications per church* may be submitted. All supporting documents must be uploaded and attached to the application.
- **October-November | Geneva screening process.** LWF reviews, pre-screens and short-lists applications.
- **December | Approval.** The candidates are presented to the LWF Scholarship Committee for approval. The Committee consists of LWF staff from different departments and staff from related agencies which support the scholarships program. The Committee takes a final decision on approval of candidates.
- **January (of following year) | Information.** LWF informs the churches and national committees of the decisions taken by the LWF Scholarship Committee. Each church is responsible for informing the individual candidates about the outcome of their application.
- **January-December (of following year) | Scholarship implementation.** Implementation of approved scholarships has to start within one year. For candidates who are already on training, the scholarship will be activated for the following semester. No financial assistance can be paid retroactively for previous academic years or semesters. Each church or national committee is responsible for effective reporting, communication and follow-up with its approved candidates and LWF Geneva.

Application Process

- **Church Endorsement:** Church Endorsement is filled out first by the head office of the endorsing church. The requesting church must demonstrate convincingly how a given application would meet a specific and crucial personnel need in its overall ministry and society.
- **Application** for LWF Single/ Group Scholarship is filled out by the candidate/s after completing the church endorsement (it is also possible for the church to complete the form on behalf of the candidate).

The candidate must demonstrate convincingly her/his commitment, ability and motivation to pursue the training and to support the church afterwards. All supporting documents must be uploaded and attached to the application. Applications are considered incomplete without attachments.

- The Church Endorsement and Application need to be completed through the online application system. The forms can be filled out in English, Spanish, French or German.
- The Step-by-Step Guidance on How to Complete the Application Process should be read carefully beforehand.

Scholarship Categories

- **Single program (single scholarship):** Only the proposed candidate is supported for study or training. The LWF will cover tuition and other study-related fees (such as fees for examination and library), a fixed book and medical allowance, as well as an adequate living allowance.
- **Single program with family policy:** The same conditions apply as for the single program. In case the candidate has children and further support is needed, an additional allowance for each child below the age of 12 might be considered upon request.
- **Group program (group scholarship):** A group consisting of 2 up to 10 persons pursues the same field and level of training together for similar or common area of engagement, and at relatively lower cost. (For instance, a group of five candidates from one church pursues a Bachelor's degree in Nursing in order to work in the church hospital afterwards.) A group scholarship is considered as one scholarship.

Scholarship Duration

- **Regular scholarships for study programs of at least 1 year:** The candidates are approved for at least 1 year of support to take up or complete their proposed study program. For candidates who have already started with their study program, this means that the study program has to last for at least 1.5 years at the time of application, hence 1 year at the time of approval.
- **Short-term scholarships for training of up to 1 year:** The candidates are approved for a short-term training which may last up to 1 year. This may include training courses, workshops, exchange programs or research projects which respond to the needs of the applying church. Application forms and selection criteria are the same as for regular scholarships.

Selection Criteria

- **Capacity needs of the church:** The proposed training field and degree has to respond well to the human and institutional capacity development needs of the church. The requesting church must demonstrate convincingly how a given application would meet a specific and crucial personnel need in its overall ministry in church and society.
- **Current and future position of the candidate:** All candidates are expected to have been in the service of the church and/or community as employees or volunteers. There has to be a clear commitment by the church to engage the candidate as employee or volunteer in an area related to the proposed training after completion of the candidate's studies/training.
- **Quality of the application:** The candidate must demonstrate convincingly his/her commitment, ability and motivation to pursue the training and to support the church afterwards (good educational and professional qualifications, recommendations and certificates, convincing character).

- **Study place.** The LWF encourages candidates to study in their home country or home region. In case a study or training program abroad is proposed, convincing reasons must be given in the application.
- **Gender and youth quota:** At least 40% of the approved candidates will be female; at least 20% will be youth below the age of 30 years. These quotas will not only apply to the overall approvals, but also to each church and region.
- **Regional balance:** The LWF seeks to ensure that candidates from different regions, countries and churches are being supported.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Questions by Member Churches or National Committees:

Q – How important are all the phases in the application process?

A – Very important. Make sure all online forms are properly completed and assist the applicants in filling out their part of the application form if needed. Before completing the application form, read the Step-by-Step Guidance on How to Complete the Application Process carefully. Particularly cross-check or assist the candidates in indicating the expected costs per year of the study/training program and make sure that all the needed supporting documents are uploaded and attached in the application. Make sure applications include verified copies of educational certificates and that age limits are met.

Q – Do we have to apply in English?

A – No. English is preferred but applications also may be made in French, German or Spanish.

Q – What can we do to improve our chances for approval?

A – Have your HICD committee or relevant deciding body screen all applications. Ensure that the applications you select to be endorsed explain convincingly how the study or training would meet your church's needs.

Q – How do we access the online program?

A – Access the "Zengine" login page at the link provided in the annual letter and start by filling out the church endorsement. The link for application will be sent to a candidate through an email after the church completes the endorsement form.

Q – What is our role during the scholarship period?

A – Before implementation of scholarships starts, a contract – the so-called Terms of Award – is signed between LWF, the individual candidate/group and the church. In this contract, the church commits to actively accompany the candidate throughout his/her/their study or training. You are therefore responsible for effective communication and follow-up with your approved candidates and the LWF Geneva. In the Terms of Award, you also commit yourself to report on the candidate's engagement in church and society two and four years after completion of his/her studies.

Questions by Individual Candidates:

Q – Should I apply directly to LWF?

A – No. Any application must be endorsed and submitted by a LWF member church. Your church chooses candidates for programs based on their human resources planning. Please contact your church if you are interested in applying for a scholarship.

Q – I want to complete the application form, but find it very complicated. Where do I get help?

A – Before you start completing the form, please read carefully the Step-by-Step Guidance on How to Complete the Application Process. Please approach your church which is

supposed to assist you in filling out in the form. You can always contact the LWF scholarship desk directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Q – Should I contact the LWF if my church has applied for training funding for me and I haven't heard back?

A – No. If you want to know the results of the application, please approach your church. Information about whether candidates' application have been approved or not is sent to all applying churches in January of the following year.

Q – If my scholarship application is approved, do I need to be in contact with LWF during the study/training period?

A – Yes. We are in contact with you during the whole scholarship period and support you throughout your studies. You are supposed to submit study and grade reports on a regular basis. Two years after you have completed the program you and your church are required to report on how your work contributes to the benefit of the church and/ or the community's well-being.