

LWF Scholarships for Theology and Diakonia/Development

A call to serve and care for the neighbor

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) accompanies its member churches in their calling to live out the gospel in service and care for the neighbor. Every year, around 90 new scholarships are awarded in the fields of theology and diakonia. The aim is to equip individuals with knowledge, skills and confidence in order to strengthen the churches' capacities for holistic mission and prepare the next generation of leaders in the Lutheran communion. The scholarships are therefore a means of empowering churches for sustainable growth and development within the churches and in the wider community.

The main criteria for a candidate's approval is that the proposed application responds to the strategic priorities and human capacity needs of the church in the area of theology and diakonia. All applications must be endorsed by their churches.

The next call for applications opens on 1 August 2021. Each LWF member church is eligible to apply for 7 scholarships—5 regular and 2 short-term scholarships. Applications can be for individual or group scholarships and include studies in theology and/or diakonia. *The LWF Scholarship Implementing Guidelines* provide you with more detailed information, kindly read the guidelines before submitting any application.

The LWF scholarship application process will be completed online, through the LWF Scholarship portal. The link to the online portal will be sent to each member church by email. *"The Step-by-Step Guidance"* will help you go through each phase of the online application process.

Deadline for submission of applications is 15 October 2021.

Eligibility

Each LWF member church is eligible to apply for 7 scholarships—5 for regular studies and 2 for short-term programs. Applications can be for individual or group scholarships and include studies in theology and/or diakonia.

Only candidates who fulfill the following criteria are eligible to apply for an LWF scholarship:

- Church affiliation of the candidate: Only applications from active members of LWF member churches are considered. 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 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

Church endorsement

All applications must be endorsed by the church (head office) of the candidate. The official church endorsement letter must be uploaded onto the review form of the LWF Scholarship online portal (see the procedure below). In the letter, the requesting church must demonstrate convincingly how a given application responds to strategic priorities and human resource needs of the church in the area of theology and/or diakonia and how the particular scholarship will benefit the church and the local communities. There must be a clear commitment by the church to engage the candidate as an employee or a volunteer in an area related to the proposed training after completion of the candidate's studies/training. Therefore, a description of the planned future role beyond very general terms is required.

Application

Each candidate is responsible for filling out the online application form and submitting the application with the required documents (see the procedure below). The LWF will provide a "Step-by-Step Guidance" to help candidates go through each application phase.

Procedure of the LWF scholarships application and approval process

- August: Kick-off of the application phase. The information about the new application phase including updated application documents are sent to all LWF member churches and LWF national committees, and are shared across the LWF networks and channels. All church leaders are requested to share the information widely within their churches and wider communities, including the grassroots level. At this point the LWF Scholarship portal link is only shared with member churches (church leadership) and should not be shared widely.
- August-October: Pre-screening processes in the churches. Each church or LWF national committee is expected to do a pre-screening of all individual and group applications through its internal committee or board. At the end of this process, each church selects up to 7 candidates (5 for regular and 2 for short-term scholarships) and shares the LWF Scholarship portal link with them.
- August-October: Submission of applications. The candidates will fill out the LWF online application form and submit the application with the required documents.
- September-October: Request to endorsing churches to review the application. After LWF has received the submitted application, the request is sent to the endorsing church for review using the LWF Scholarship portal. The official church endorsement letter must be uploaded to the review form.
- 15 October: Deadline for applications.
- October-November: Geneva screening process. LWF Geneva 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 that support the scholarships program. The Committee takes the final decision on candidates to be approved.

- January (of the following year): Information. The LWF informs the churches and LWF 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 the following year): Scholarship implementation. Implementation of approved scholarships must start within one year. For candidates who are already in 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.

Scholarship Categories

Area of study:

1. Theology: Scholarship includes Diploma, Bachelor, Master and PhD programs in theology. The aim of theological scholarships is to strengthen churches' theological identity and self-understanding, and through trained and qualified personnel to equip churches to carry out their holistic mission. Scholarships in theology aim at preparing the next generation of leaders in the Lutheran communion.
2. Diakonia and development: Scholarship includes Diploma, Bachelor, Master, PhD programs in development-oriented fields of study, such as psychosocial support, counseling, social work, livelihood development, gender studies, food security, environmental management, climate justice, project management, peace and conflict studies, education and health care. Scholarships in diakonia and development aim at strengthening churches' diaconal work in diverse areas for the sustainable improvement of the livelihoods of local communities in developing countries.

Individual and group scholarships

- Individual scholarship: Only the proposed candidate is supported for a study or training program. The LWF will cover tuition and other fees indicated in the official fee structure of institution and study related costs (food, accommodation, transportation, internet access) according to the need of candidate. Proof of evidence is required for study related costs.
- 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 a relatively lower cost. (For instance, a group of 5 candidates from one church pursues a Bachelor's degree in psychosocial support in order to help communities where people have experienced devastating crises).

A group scholarship is considered as one scholarship. The LWF will cover tuition and other fees indicated in the official fee structure of the institution and study related costs (food, accommodation, transportation, internet access) according to the needs of the candidates. Proof of evidence is required for study related costs.

Regular and short-term scholarships

Depending on the duration of studies, individual and group scholarships fall into two categories:

- Regular scholarship: A candidate is approved for at least 1 year and a maximum of 4 years of support to take up or complete his/her proposed study program (Diploma, Bachelor, Master, PhD). For any candidate who has already started his/her study program, this means that the study program must last for at least 1.5 years at the time of application, hence 1 year at the time of approval. Although scholarships may be granted for up to 4 years, they will still be re-evaluated at the end of every study year.

- **Short-term scholarship:** A candidate is approved for short-term training which may last up to 1 year. Short-term scholarships provide church workers with specific skills and apply to the immediate daily work of the church/church related institutions. Short-term scholarships may include a training, online course, workshop, seminar, or research project related to leadership and organizational development, project management, gender awareness, food security, etc. Areas of study in short-term scholarships are more diverse while always corresponding to the needs of applying churches. Applications for short-term scholarships should be made at local institutions, training centers and online courses from recognized institutions.

Selection Criteria

- *Strategic priorities and human resource needs of the church:* A proposed study field and degree must respond to strategic priorities and human resource needs of the church in the area of theology and diakonia. The requesting church must demonstrate convincingly how a given application would meet a specific need and priorities and how the particular scholarship will benefit the church and the local communities beyond very general terms.
- *Current and future position of the candidate:* All candidates are expected to be serving the church and/or community as employees or volunteers. There must 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. All applications must be accompanied by a description of the planned future role.
- *Motivation and commitment of candidate:* The candidate must demonstrate convincingly his/her commitment, ability and motivation to pursue the training. It is also required that the candidate demonstrates how the knowledge and skills gained through the proposed studies will benefit the church and/or local communities. The candidate must show strong commitment to support the church after completion of studies and to contribute to the life of church and local communities.
- *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, valid reasons must be provided 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. For each applying church, these quotas must be met overall for all the proposed candidates, as well as for each of the proposed area of study (theology and diakonia).
- *Regional balance:* The LWF shall ensure that candidates from different regions, countries and churches are supported. Available budget shall be fairly distributed across applying churches.

Note to individuals

All applications for LWF scholarships must be endorsed and submitted by an LWF member church or national committee. No individual applications will be considered. If you are an individual interested in applying, please contact your church leadership.

Contact

Rev. Katariina Kiilunen
Program Executive for Capacity Building and Leadership Development

Ms Duangporn Saussay
Program Support Officer, Capacity Building and Leadership Development

Contact by email:

scholarships@lutheranworld.org

Documents & Links

- The LWF Scholarship Implementing Guidelines EN / ES / FR
- Step-by-Step Guidance on How to Complete the Application Form EN / ES / FR