

SECAI Scholarships for Master and Diplom Students in AI

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1 Objective

The School of Embedded Composite AI (SECAI) offers scholarships to support M.Sc. students and advanced students in a German Diplom program whose studies are related to the topical focus of SECAI. The scholarships are intended to support particularly qualified applicants, and to a lesser extent also to promote internationalization and diversity of AI-related teaching programmes at TU Dresden and Leipzig University.

2 Eligibility

Candidates are eligible to apply to this programme if they will meet all of the following criteria for the whole duration of the scholarship:

- the content of their studies, chosen specialization, or topic of the project work planned under the scholarship is closely related to the research areas of SECAI;
- they are students in an M.Sc. program, or students in a Diplom program where they have successfully completed the first two years of Diplom studies (Grundstudium);
- they are students of TU Dresden or Leipzig University, or they are visiting a research group at TU Dresden or Leipzig University;
- they do not receive other scholarships or educational funding from public or private organizations.

It is possible to apply if some of the above criteria are not met (yet), but are expected to be met at the time when the scholarship would start. It is a prerequisite for receiving a scholarship that candidates continue to satisfy the above eligibility criteria.

3 Duration & Extent of Funding

The maximal duration for which a scholarship can initially be awarded is subject to the following upper limits:

- for scholarships related to concrete study projects (including the completion of a thesis): the regular time required for such a project according to study regulations;

- for scholarships granted to visiting students: the duration of the stay at TU Dresden or Leipzig University;
- for any other scholarships of students at TU Dresden or Leipzig University: the remaining duration of the recipient's M.Sc. or Diplom studies according to the model study plan ("Regelstudienzeit").

Shorter scholarship durations can be determined by the Selection Committee based on available budget and the specific study situation and progress of the candidate. If the prerequisites for receiving a scholarship are no longer satisfied (see Eligibility), then the scholarship will end immediately.

The time of a scholarship can be extended upon request. The Selection Committee decides on such requests.

The monthly grant consists of a scholarship rate of EUR 934 for M.Sc. students. Any extra income must be declared, and the scholarship may be reduced by the amount of gross income exceeding EUR 520. For incomplete months, a daily rate of 31 EUR is applied. Short-term visits of at most 22 days by foreign students are funded at a daily rate of 42 EUR.

Foreign students who stay for more than six months may be entitled to a monthly family allowance as follows:

- 276 EUR for their accompanying spouse who is not supported by other programs, private or public;
- 219 EUR for the first and second accompanying child, 225 EUR for the third accompanying child, 250 EUR for each further accompanying child, where only children are considered for which the applicant has no legal claim to public benefits (Kindergeld).

The daily allowance for incomplete months is 1/30th of the monthly allowance.

The scholarship does not include any other kind of funding. In particular, recipients still have to cover insurance costs and study fees.

4 Selection Procedure

A Selection Committee consisting of SECAI Fellows reviews and decides on the applications. The scholarships are awarded in a competitive process, based on the reviewed application documents and an interview. The Selection Committee can reject applications without an interview. For ranking applications in specific calls, the Selection Committee may decide to use an internal scoring system for applicants.

Interviews are conducted by at least two reviewers appointed by the Selection Committee, of which at least one must be a member of that committee. Interviews can be personal meetings or video calls, where the latter should be preferred for remote candidates.

The Selection Committee strives to ensure that the selection process is free of discrimination. For example, applicants with disabilities or chronic diseases must not be disadvantaged. Other personal circumstances should also be taken into account, including, e.g., family care duties, past or current experiences as a refugee, and other special burdens. The selection in general, and interview dates and modalities in particular shall take such special situations into account. Applicants may therefore indicate such personal circumstances in their application on a voluntary basis.

Further aspects of the selection process will follow DAAD guidelines (“Merkblatt für die Gutachtertätigkeit in den DAAD-Auswahlkommissionen”, 07/2020). In particular, the selection process is confidential; protocols of all selection meetings will be kept; conflicts of interests will be avoided. All applicants are eventually notified about the decision of the Selection Committee, but do not receive detailed explanations for the decision. A fundamental legal right to claim funding within this program does not exist.

5 Selection Criteria

SECAI scholarships are primarily merit-based and will be reserved for excellent candidates. In addition, the selection committee will give due consideration to aspects of equal opportunities and life circumstances, on which applicants can provide information in their application. The selection criteria are:

Professional qualification

- University education, grades, and study time
- Professional fit for the intended work or study project
- Special academic achievements (awards, publications, past scholarships, etc.)
- Knowledge of the language of instruction or working language
- Ability to discuss professional topics during interview
- If applicable: relevant internships, work experience

Quality of the thesis project (if applicable)

- Quality of the thesis project, in particular taking SECAI topics into account
- Endorsement by prospective host or supervisor

Potential of the applicant

- Motivation: academic and personal reasons for the scholarship
- Prospects: potential for further academic, professional, and personal development, especially in relation to SECAI
- Contribution: degree to which supporting the candidate can advance SECAI goals (either professional or structural)

Extra-curricular qualifications

- Extracurricular knowledge and skills (suitably documented)
- Social, political, cultural, or family-related commitment
- Activities related to student life and university organization

Further selection criteria can be specified for concrete calls. For example, calls may be addressed to students of specific programs, to women in STEM-related subjects, or to international students.

6 Applications, Deadlines, Documents

Calls for scholarship applications will be published on the SECAI website and other public channels. Such calls may further restrict the eligible types of applications and set a specific deadline for applying.

Independent of such calls, current students of TU Dresden and Leipzig University, and visiting students who are endorsed by a host professor at TU Dresden or Leipzig University can apply at any time.

Applications should include all documents that are relevant to the selection criteria outlined above. This will always include a cover letter that clearly specifies what the candidate is applying for, motivates the application, and mentions personal circumstances that might be of importance to the evaluation. Moreover, a CV and official certificates about prior university education should always be provided.

Visiting students must further provide a written endorsement of the application by their host, and a description of the project work planned during the stay.