

How and when to submit an application?

The WCC Scholarships Programme is coordinated through a network of National Correspondents, normally working with the Council of Churches and a National Scholarships Committee. An important aspect of the programme is that initial endorsement and prioritization of applications takes place locally.

- Applications for a group training programme are made by the requesting body. The requesting body is also responsible for selecting the individual members of the group for the training.
- Applications for individual candidates are made by the requesting church or church-related organization.

Application forms for the WCC Scholarships Programme are available from the National Correspondent of each country, and downloadable from the Scholarships Programme website <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/education/scholarships-e.html> where further details, including the contact information of the National Correspondents, can also be found.

Procedures for dealing with applications vary from country to country and the process can take up to twelve months. Applications should therefore be submitted well in advance of the projected starting date.

The WCC Scholarships Working Group meets twice a year in April and November. In order for applications to be checked and any additional information obtained, applications must reach Geneva by **31 January** for the April meeting, and by **31 August** for the November meeting.



What happens next?

Completed application forms, a detailed budget and accompanying documentation should be returned to the National Correspondent for review at the national level. This is an essential step. Applications sent directly to Geneva will not be considered.

The National Correspondent forwards the applications of selected candidates to Geneva for consideration by the WCC Scholarships Working Group.

Carefully completed application forms, accompanied by all the required documentation, enable the Scholarships Programme to give a fair assessment of each application.

And finally...

The award of a scholarship is final only when a definite offer has been made in writing by the WCC Scholarships Programme, and when the requesting body and candidate have formally accepted the terms of the award.

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World Council of Churches Scholarships Programme

WCC Scholarships Programme for Graduate Study and Group Training

The WCC Scholarships Programme is a global ecumenical formation programme offering scholarships to individuals and groups to help the churches and church-related organizations to fulfil their mission.

The Scholarships Programme was set up in 1945 as part of Inter-Church Aid to provide theological training and ecumenical exchange for pastors from industrialized countries. From the 1950s onwards, scholarships were extended to include non-theological training for lay-people worldwide.

The aims of the Scholarships Programme are:

- to empower individuals and groups through education and training
- to build purposeful commitment to the worldwide ecumenical movement through study abroad in an intercultural context
- to enhance the work of the churches and communities on a local level

The strength of the Programme lies in its ecumenical and global outreach, responding to a wide regional diversity in its member churches and church-related organizations.

Scholarships are normally granted for individual graduate study courses lasting from 3 months to 2 years, and for group training courses lasting from 1 month to 1 year.

What areas of study and training are given priority?

For the period 2004-2006, the WCC Scholarships Programme has identified four thematic areas of priority for study and training:

1. **Interfaith Relations:** engaging in dialogue and co-operative work across the religious divide;
2. **Globalization:** addressing issues of economic and environmental concern, and promoting alternative just and sustainable communities;
3. **Overcoming Violence:** furthering initiatives in peace building, reconciliation and conflict transformation;
4. **HIV/AIDS:** raising awareness of HIV/AIDS issues and working towards care and prevention.

In addition to church-related initiatives, the Programme continues to award scholarships covering a range of subjects, mostly involving some specialization – e.g. education, agriculture, nutrition, administration & finance, health studies, languages, and many others.

Who can apply for a scholarship?

Individual candidates: women and men, lay and ordained, normally under the age of forty-five whose further education and training is required for future service in their church or church-related organization.

Groups: members of a group, who fulfil the same criteria as those applying individually for a scholarship, and who are multipliers operating in a context where the acquired knowledge and skills can be transmitted.

The policy of the WCC Scholarships Programme is to achieve gender balance in the award of scholarships. Churches and church-related organizations are advised to ensure that applications from women are encouraged and given equal opportunity.

Refugees are not able to fulfil the criteria for the Scholarships programme and are advised to contact the National Council of Churches or a Refugee Office in their country of asylum for advice on alternative sources of financial support.

What are the criteria for a successful application?

In reviewing applications, a balanced representation of church tradition, nationality and gender, and the local and regional priorities of the national Council of Churches are taken into consideration. Only a limited number of scholarships are awarded for study or training in the North. The Scholarships Programme favours practice-oriented, short-term intra-regional programmes in the South. Priority is given to churches and church-related organizations with limited access to further education and training opportunities.

Successful applications will show ample evidence that:

- the proposed study or training will strengthen the human resource capacity of the requesting church or church-related organization;
- the context of the proposed study or training will provide an opportunity for ecumenical learning;
- the applicant has completed secondary education, basic training and several years work experience in the proposed field of study or training;
- the applicant is committed to return to the home country after the training or period of study abroad to take up the task or employment for which the request was made.

Funding and budgeting

A WCC scholarship aims to provide a reasonable contribution towards the approved programme of study or training and basic living expenses. The requesting body is expected to make a significant contribution for travel to and from the country of study.

In order for the WCC to be able to award a scholarship, a detailed budget must be submitted together with the application.

The budget must include:

Income

- All expected sources of income other than the requested WCC scholarship (e.g. other funding agencies, support from the requesting organization, family, etc.)

Expenses

- Tuition or training fees
- Accommodation and meals
- Pocket money
- Travel (where this is not covered by the requesting body)

The budget must be substantiated by relevant documentation from the proposed institute or organization where the study or training will take place. Total funding for the proposed course of study must be assured before a scholarship is awarded.

After the budget has been formally agreed between the scholarship recipient and the WCC Scholarship Programme, no additional payments can be requested. The scholarship is paid up to one year at a time. Subsequent payments will depend on evidence of satisfactory progress in the course.

What are the restrictions?

- Only applications from churches and church-related organizations are accepted. Individuals or groups cannot apply for support for their personal programmes of study or training.
- Family scholarships are not available. No support can be provided for any children accompanying a parent.
- Applications for scholarships for courses of study which have already begun are not accepted.
- Scholarships for theological studies are granted only for courses of up to two years (e.g. up to the level of a Masters degree), and not for undergraduate or doctoral studies.
- Scholarships are not awarded for graduate study in the home country.
- Applicants living abroad can only be considered for scholarship if the application is made by a church or church-organization in the home country.