Interim financial aid for students in pandemic-related emergency situations totalling 100 million euros

provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research

and paid out via the 57 student service organisations (STW) organised in the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW)

www.ueberbrueckungshilfe-studierende.de

FAQs for students

In a nutshell

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is reactivating the interim financial aid for the winter semester, i.e. the months of November 2020 until end of March 2021, in order to help again those students who are demonstrably in an acute, pandemic-related (economic or financial) emergency and require immediate support. You can apply for interim financial aid if you are a German or international student enrolled at a public-funded and government-recognised higher education institution in Germany.

Those already receiving loans, grants or other support during the reference month may nevertheless obtain interim financial aid. Depending on proven need, you could receive between 100 euros and 500 euros as a non-repayable allowance.

Those with more than 500 € in their bank account at the time of submitting an application will not receive this interim financial aid and should please not file an application.

Applications can be submitted from November 2020 on, and must be renewed for each further month one at a time

Please submit your application online to the local student service organisation (Studierendenwerk or Studentenwerk – STW). The STW will decide based on the details you have provided in your application whether aid will be granted within the limits of the budgetary funds available. The order of processing of applications is generally guided by the time of receipt of the complete documents by the respective student service organisation. Incomplete applications are not processed.

You are not legally entitled to the award of interim financial aid.

Applications must be submitted online. Please use the most recent version of Internet-Browsers Chrome, Firefox or Operae, or the current standard browsers of mobile devices. If you use Edge as a browser, please update to Edge Chrome version 83.x. or higher. The system does not support versions of Internet Explorer.

Applications are submitted to the student service organisation (STW) operating for the higher education institution that you are studying at. In the case of an institution with several locations, the student service organisation where the head office of your higher education institution is located will be responsible for processing your
application. In the case of higher education institutions without relevant student service organisations, the German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW) will determine which student service organisation is responsible.

If you cannot find your higher education institution in the following list, please send an Email to ueberbrueckungshilfe-studierende@studentenwerke.de

1. What is the interim financial aid for students provided by the Federal Government?

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research refers to two types of interim financial aid for students:

- a temporary waiver of interest on the KfW Student Loan until the end of March 2021 and expanding the entitlement to the KfW Student Loan also to international students
- 100 million euros in allowances for students in an acute, pandemic-related emergency; in the following, the focus is on these allowances, which amount to a total of 100 million euros.

2. Which students can benefit from the interim financial aid? How can I qualify?

This aid shall benefit those students who are demonstrably in a pandemic-related emergency, who need immediate help and who can claim no other support. This applies equally to German and international students.

Students enrolled at a public-funded or government-recognised higher education institution in Germany are entitled to submit an application.

Students studying within an employment relationship or as part of service, for example at Universities of Applied Administrative Sciences (Verwaltungsfachhochschule) or Federal Army Universities (Bundeswehrhochschule), students in courses alongside career or dual system courses, non-enrolled and occasional students (Gasthörer) as well as students at higher education institutions not recognised by the government are not entitled to apply.

The interim financial aid complements the initiatives that the Federal Government has previously launched to assist students in the current exceptional situation brought about by the corona pandemic. BAföG or the KfW Student Loan can provide more long-term support.

During the month in which I apply for this interim financial aid, I must not reckon with any other pandemic-related support, for example via emergency funds, foundations or sponsoring associations, or through previously filed applications.

3. What do I receive, how much do I receive?

If you are demonstrably facing financial hardship brought about by the pandemic – for example because you have lost your part-time job and you have so far been unable to
find any other part-time employment – you can obtain an allowance of 100-500 € a month from the government via the student service organisation (STW) that is responsible for your higher education institution.

You can submit applications for the months of June, July and August 2020, although a new application is required for each month. The level of the allowance depends on pandemic-related, individual needs and is calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account balance</th>
<th>Interim financial aid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 100.00 €</td>
<td>500.00 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between 100.00 € and 199.99 €</td>
<td>400.00 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between 200.00 € and 299.99 €</td>
<td>300.00 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between 300.00 € and 399.99 €</td>
<td>200.00 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between 400.00 € and 499.99 €</td>
<td>100.00 €</td>
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The account balance on the day before the application is submitted counts. This means, for example, that if you submit your application on the 20th of June 2020, the account balance of the 19th of June 2020 is relevant.

You will be informed by E-Mail if and how much interim financial aid you may receive after verification of your online application.

4. Will I get nothing if I have 500 € or more than 500 € in my account?

Yes, that is what the criteria stipulate. This interim financial aid is meant for acute emergencies.

5. How high may my other monthly income be for me to still qualify for support?

Any other monthly income is not relevant as long as:

- a demonstrable pandemic-related emergency prevails at the time of submitting the application and
- you assure that you have not filed any further applications for allowances as comparable support during a pandemic-related emergency situation for the month that you are now applying for. Such applications could be other emergency funds, foundations or sponsoring associations, and
- you are not expecting income through previously filed applications this month.

6. How and where do I apply for this interim financial aid?
You apply online via the portal www.ueberbrueckungshilfe-studierende.de. Your application is forwarded directly to the student service organisation (STW) responsible for your support and will be processed there.

It is important that you state at which higher education institution you are studying. In the case of institutions with branches or locations in further cities, the system will assign a student service organisation according to the head office location of the institution. Please complete the online application mask. The student service organisation responsible for you will assess your application and notify you whether and when you will be receiving interim financial aid.

7. From when on can I submit my application?

You can submit your application from Friday, November 20, 2020.

8. By when must I submit my application?

You must submit your application within the month for which you need interim financial aid. For the month of November, this means that you must send your application on November 30, 2020 at the latest.

9. I have already received interim financial aid in the summer of 2020; can I use the access data again?

Yes, you are even obliged to do that, and you are required to upload the proof of enrolment for the current winter semester 2020/2021! You must use your existing access data fro the summer of 2020 to avoid that you start a new application – for example when using another e-mail address. This would eventually fail at the latest when you are asked for your telephone number for verification, since the portal will deny a new application if the telephone number already exists in an application.

10. What should I do if I cannot find my higher education institution in the portal?

Please write an Email to Deutsches Studentenwerk, and send it to ueberbrueckungshilfe-studierende@studentenwerke.de – you will then receive a reply from there.

11. What kind of proof do I have to provide? Which documents must I submit online?

For an application, you need:

- your institution’s certificate of enrolment for the summer semester 2020
- your identity card or equivalent proof of identity, such as a passport with a registration certificate
- details of a bank account in Germany
• a declaration that you have not applied for any further pandemic-related support for the month that you are herewith applying for (such as from emergency funds, foundations or sponsoring associations) or are not expecting further support through applications that you have already submitted
• an explanation of why you are in a pandemic-related emergency situation, if possible proven by corresponding documents: termination of your employment relationship by your former employer, a self-declaration regarding the loss of your previous gainful employment, or a self-declaration that owing to the pandemic, family support has been terminated
• account statements of all your accounts since February or March 2020, depending on when you last received income; you may not blacken anything on your account statements, otherwise the application is considered to be incomplete
• a self-declaration that you can be expected to successfully complete your studies

12. What is new, better, or more simple than in the first round of the interim financial aid?

There are several improvements for students:

- If you cannot prove the pandemic-related cancelation of an existing working contract or if you cannot documents this in written form, it is now sufficient to make a self-declaration that explains the reason and the circumstances of the notice of dismissal.
- If you cannot provide the required two written refusals from at least two job applications, is is now sufficient to make a self-declaration about the unsuccessful job applications and their refusal.
- This time, you have to upload only the bank account statements of the preceding month as well as the month of application until the day before sending the application. If you receive only monthly account statements from your bank, please verify if your bank can deliver a comprehensive overview of income ad expenditures for the (current) month of application from the date of the last account statement until the banking day before your application for interim financial aid.
- It is now sufficient to upload the bank account statements of those accounts to which you have short-term access.

13. My identity card expired, but I cannot get an extension due to the pandemic. What should I do?

You may still file an application, as long as the expiry date of your identity card was after December 31, 2019.

14. May I blacken out specific information on my identity card or passport?

Yes, you must only provide comprehensive documents regarding the pandemic-related emergency. Information in your identity card that do not directly serve the proof of identity and address, such as place of birth or religious affiliation, may be blackened.
15. Do I have to provide information about all my bank accounts? Even a PayPal account? What about a home loan savings contract (Bausparvertrag) or a rent deposit account (Mietkautionskonto)?

To prove that you are in a financial emergency, you need to provide the bank statements (without any gaps) of all of your bank accounts to which you have short-term access. Exceptions are savings agreements (for example home loans loan savings contracts – or Bausparvertrag) or other accounts to which you do not have short-term access such as rent deposit accounts (Mietkautionskonto), other blocked accounts (Sperrkonto) or trust accounts (Treuhandkonto). These are the only accounts to which you are not required to send in documents.

Similarly, you must provide information about online accounts such as PayPal or Comdirect as long as the balance is available at short-notice – or you must declare that you currently do not have any credits on those accounts.

16. My parents usually support me with cash; how should I declare this with my bank accounts?

Please upload a personal declaration to explain this with the following information:

- What kind of maintenance payments have been granted?
- When have these payments been granted?
- What was the amount?
- Why have these payments been terminated?

17. How do I ensure that I am really submitting the application for myself?

In the course of the online application, you will have to upload a photo of yourself several times, including once with your identity card or passport (together with the registration certificate), and there is a further authentication step with an automatically generated number code that will be sent to your Email address. This is meant to prevent abuse and cheating.

18. I forgot to upload something when I made my application. Can I still send this in?

No. Later uploads are not possible.

In the application process, please make sure that you have completely uploaded all the right documents before sending the application. Your documents are shown immediately after the upload, and you can is they are not the correct ones or not readable, delete and change them. You can also go back and verify if all documents are correct and complete before sending the application. If you do not have the documents ready at hand, please interrupt the work on your application and log in again later to upload the right documents. You should only send the application when it is completely finished!

The online application tool will automatically show you if and when your application is complete when uploading documents.

19. When do I learn whether and how much interim financial aid I will receive?
You can always log in to the portal www.ueberbrueckungshilfe-studierende.de and check the status of your application at the responsible student service organisation (Studenten- oder Studierendenwerk – STW in short). To do so, click "LOGIN" on the start page and enter the e-mail address that you have used in your application. We send you a six-digit “token” or code via e-mail; you can use this code to access the information of your application.

When your STW has finished processing your application, you receive a message to the e-mail address with which you are register on the portal.

If you log in to the application portal again, you find out if and in what amount you receive the interim financial aid. To do so, please click “LOGIN” again and use the six-digit token/code that we send you per e-mail.

Important: you receive the e-mail message directly from the application portal www.ueberbrueckungshilfe-studierende.de, NOT from the STW that has processed your application.

Please refrain from phone calls or inquiries at your student service organisation.

How quickly you receive a message from the system depends on how many applications the student service organisations receive. Staff will do their best to process the applications swiftly. Many student service organisations have set up their own teams specifically for this purpose.

If your application is approved, you can reckon with the money being transferred in a week’s time.

20. Can I submit an application more than once?
Yes. This interim financial aid is granted monthly. If your emergency situation lasts longer than a month, you can submit a new application in the following month, i.e. for the months of December 2020, January 2021, February 2021 and March 2021 respectively.

21. Do I have to provide everything again for each subsequent application?
No. All you have to provide with a subsequent application is:

- a declaration that you have not applied for any further pandemic-related support for the month that you are herewith applying for (such as from emergency funds, foundations or sponsoring associations) or are not expecting further support through applications that you have already submitted
- the latest bank account statement

22. Can I also claim support after an emergency?
No. The pandemic-related emergency must exist at the point of submitting the application. You can prove this difficult situation with account statements and further required information.
23. I am an international student. Can it have negative effects on my legal situation in Germany if I apply for interim financial aid?

No. Claims for interim financial aid have no influence on questions of residence permits. The positive verification of an application for interim financial aid relies on a sudden emergency through no fault of one’s own and so that the given situation must be considered a case of hardship for granting a temporary and limited emergency aid. Thus, this is an exemption from the standard requirement to provide proof of your own living costs according to Art. 5 Par. 1 Nr. 1 of the residence act (§ 5 Abs. 1 Nr. 1 Aufenthaltsgesetz).

24. Do I have to pay the money back?

No. The interim financial aid is a non-repayable allowance from the Federal Government.

25. What happens if my statements are incorrect or incomplete?

You cannot receive interim financial aid with incorrect or incomplete statements.

26. Can I also apply for interim financial aid if I have taken out a loan or am receiving a grant?

Generally yes, if you are demonstrably in a pandemic-related emergency despite the other loans or grants.

27. Can I also apply for this interim financial aid in addition to other emergency aid, immediate aid or other support aid?

Students submitting an application must declare that they do not expect further income for the month for which they apply for interim financial aid, and have not applied for or intend to apply for further pandemic-related support (such as from emergency funds, foundations or sponsoring associations). This excludes financial means that are not used to pay for daily living costs such as the support from a technical fund for your IT hardware, or financial aid for the self-employed. If you are in a proven pandemic-related emergency, you can receive interim financial aid irrespectively from such other support.

28. I am receiving some BAföG – does that mean that I do not qualify for the interim financial aid?

Yes, you do qualify! BAföG notifications are not tested. What counts is that you are nevertheless in a pandemic-related emergency, and that the account statements demonstrate that previous income of the same amount from jobs and/or family support has ceased owing to the pandemic.
29. This BMBF interim financial aid is an allowance. Will this allowance be deducted from my BAFöG support? Does this mean that I will be receiving less BAFöG?

No, the BMBF states that it is not income in the sense of the BAFöG, cf. BMBF online source:

“In some Federal States or student service organisations, emergency aid is available for trainees and students who have lost their (part-time) job owing to the pandemic. Recipients of payments in accordance with the BAFöG can also apply for such aid and will receive it, provided that they qualify. Such loans are referred to in § 21 Para. 4 No. 4 BAFöG and *are hence not to be treated as income in the sense of the BAFöG*. […] This regulation is to be applied correspondingly for emergency aid in the form of allowances.”


30. Can I submit an application if I have already exceeded the standard period of study?

Yes.

31. I am doing a correspondence or distance course. Am I entitled to apply?

Yes, as long as it is not a course alongside a career (berufsbegleitendes Studium).

32. I am doing a second-degree course. Am I entitled to apply?

Yes.

33. If I can find a job again after all when I have received this interim financial aid, must I pay the money back?

This interim financial aid is granted as a non-repayable allowance; it is meant to bridge the time up to when you have found new employment and are no longer in an emergency situation.

34. Is there an age limit?

No.

35. Why do I have to provide an e-mail address and mobile phone number when making an online application?

This is both for secure identification and protects you and other students from fraud.

Each time you log in, you receive a six-digit token or code that is valid for two hours and must be requested again for each login. Make sure you always use the same e-mail address with which you have made your application.
In order to finally send and finish your application, you receive a six-digit confirmation code per text message on your mobile phone when your online application is ready and all documents have been uploaded completely.

Thus, you always receive e-mail tokens when you complete your application after a break or if you want to check the status of your application, while you receive the six-digit text message code to your cell phone only once in order to send your application.

36. What about data protection? What happens to my data?
Data protection is ensured in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union.

37. Am I legally entitled to this interim financial aid?
No, the interim financial aid is an allowance that you do not have to pay back if you meet the eligibility criteria. Since the measure is a mass procedure, fulfilment of the criteria is automatically assessed by the system. Manual checks are only performed by the staff in the student service organisations with regard to the consistency of uploads and self-declarations.

As of Nov 19, 2020/sg.