

Bridging assistance 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 providing bridging assistance totalling 100 million euros to help those students who are demonstrably in an acute, pandemic-related (economic or financial) emergency and require immediate support. You can apply for bridging assistance 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 bridging assistance. Depending on proven need, you could receive between 100 euros and 500 euros as a non-repayable allowance.

Those with more than 500 euros in their bank account at the time of submitting an application will not receive this bridging assistance and should please not apply for one.

Applications can only be submitted one at a time for the months of June, July and August 2020. A further application for July and/or August may only be submitted if the pandemic-related financial emergency situation continues.

Please submit your application online to the local student service organisation (Studierendenwerk or Studentenwerk – STW). The STW will decide on the basis of 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 bridging assistance.

Applications must be submitted online. Please use the most recent version of Internet-Browsers Chrome, Firefox or Opera, 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 bridging assistance for students provided by the Federal Government?

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research refers to two types of bridging assistance 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 bridging assistance? How can I qualify?

This aid is meant to 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 (Bundwehrhochschule), 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 bridging assistance 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 bridging assistance, 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 between 100 and 500 euros 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:

Account balance	Bridging assistance
Less than 100.00 €	500.00 €
Between 100.00 € and 199.00 €	400.00 €
Between 200.00 € and 299.00 €	300.00 €
Between 300.00 € and 399.00 €	200.00 €
Between 400.00 € and 499.00 €	100.00 €

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 bridging assistance you may receive after verification of your online application.

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

Yes, that is what the criteria stipulate. This bridging assistance is meant for acute emergencies.

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

This 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 bridging assistance?

You apply online via the portal www.ueberbrueckungshilfe-studierende.de. Your application is forwarded directly to the student service organisation 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 bridging assistance.

7. From when on can I submit my application?

You can submit your application from Monday, the 15th June 2020 on – but note:

For technical reasons, the student service organisations will only be able to process the applications from the 29th June 2020 on, and the allowances will only be paid after this date.

Please refrain from enquiries at your student service organisation in the period between the June 15-June 29, 2020. Thank you!

8. By when must I submit my application?

You must submit your application within the month for which you need bridging assistance.

9. 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.

10. 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

11. 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.

12. 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 see if they are not the correct ones or not readably, 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.

13. When do I learn whether and how much bridging assistance 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 bridging assistance. 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.

14. Can I submit an application more than once?

Yes. This bridging assistance 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 June, July and August 2020 respectively.

15. 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 account statement

16. Can I also claim support after an emergency?

What counts is whether you were in a pandemic-related emergency at the **point of submitting the application**. You must supply proof of this difficult situation with account statements and further information.

17. Do I have to pay the money back?

No. The bridging assistance is a non-repayable allowance from the Federal Government.

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

Sorry, then you cannot receive bridging assistance.

19. Can I also apply for bridging assistance if I have taken out a loan or am receiving a grant?

Yes, provided that despite this you are demonstrably in a pandemic-related emergency situation.

20. Can I also apply for this bridging assistance in addition to other emergency aid, immediate aid or other support aid?

Students submitting an application have to declare that they do not expect further income for the month for which they apply for bridging assistance, and have not applied for or intend to apply for further pandemic-related support (such as from emergency funds, foundations or sponsoring associations).

21. I am receiving some BAföG – does that mean that I do not qualify for the bridging assistance?

No, it does not. 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.

22. This BMBF bridging assistance 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.**”

<https://www.bafög.de/keine-nachteile-beim-bafoeg-wegen-corona-756.php>

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

Yes.

24. 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).

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

Yes.

26. If I can find a job again after all when I have received this bridging assistance, must I pay the money back?

This bridging assistance 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.

27. Is there an age limit?

No.

28. 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.

29. 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.

30. Am I legally entitled to this bridging assistance?

No, the bridging assistance 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 the 23.6.2020/sg.