

Advertisement of 2 Scholarships for Doctoral Studies (October 2024 – September 2028) in the Doctoral Program: “Languages and Cultures of the Silk Road”

The Graduate School Scholarship Program (GSSP) of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is offering two doctoral scholarships to carry out a doctorate within the framework of “Languages and Cultures of the Silk Road” program at Freie Universität Berlin.

Applicants must have an outstanding Master's degree (MA, MSt or MSc) in the subject Iranian studies, Near Eastern Archaeology, Prehistoric Archaeology, or East Asian Art and Archaeology, or be close to graduation. Doctoral researchers are expected to participate in Digital Humanities training offered as part of BerGSAS curriculum.

The doctoral program <https://www.berliner-antike-kolleg.org/bergsas/programme/silk-road/index.html> covers Asia since prehistoric times and Central Asia. It concentrates mainly on the range of attested languages and literatures of Buddhist, Manichaeen, Zoroastrian, and Christian communities. The Turfan Collection in Berlin provides a unique opportunity to study original materials. A wealth of recently excavated archaeological sites and find materials in Central and Eastern Asia allow new approaches to a number of old questions concerning the complex cultural history along the Silk Roads. Applicants are free to choose their topic, and it is important to remember that artifacts and texts that have already been published often have a lot more to reveal than has already been discovered. The following is an indication of the kind of topics possible and is not intended to exhaust or limit the possibilities.

PhD proposals in the field of Iranian studies: The focus is of Iranian languages and literatures until Late Antiquity and about the main religious streams current in the Iranian area, including Zoroastrianism, its origins, evolution and spread in Central Asia. Welcome are linguistic topics, e.g., studies of the verbal system and a detailed analysis of its use in Middle Persian or Parthian texts, the transition between Middle Persian and New Persian, Studies of the Sogdian Buddhist and Christian text tradition, problems of dialectological variation relating to religious communities, scribal conventions. Also welcome are studies on Avestan linguistics. Literary studies could be e.g., the composition of Manichaeen Parthian hymn-cycles or the analysis of the constitution of the Middle Persian Zoroastrian literature and its relationship to the Manichaeen one, etc. The composition of the Avestan corpus in Central Asia or Eastern Iran and the reasons and processes leading to its spreading in Western Iran are also of central interest. Religious subjects, especially concerning the multifarious relationships between the Manichaeen and the Zoroastrian doctrines and with other communities would provide many interesting research topics as do also other problems of Zoroastrianism and its relationship to other Iranian religions (like the Bactrian religious system). Pre-knowledge of the textual body to be studied and a good working knowledge of relevant research languages are indispensable.

PhD proposals in the field of archaeology and art history: Technical and statistical analyses of excavated finds, detailed in-depth studies of particular object groups or materials, archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological studies related to environmental and climate change and societal transformations are welcome. In processing the source material, a holistic view of the entire living environment from which the material originates and an understanding of a broad transregional interconnectedness of phenomena is expected. We encourage discussions on current issues of the interdependence of archaeology, art, cultural history and colonial history, decolonization, indigenous concerns and viewpoints, restitution.

Who can apply?

The call is only open to applicants who do not have German citizenship and who have not yet obtained a PhD. Applicants must not have been resident in Germany for more than since 1 December 2022. The Master's degree must not have been obtained before 1 March 2018.

Funding

The scholarships are available from 1 October 2024 (Winter semester 2024/25) for four years, subject to a satisfactory annual review. In accordance with DAAD guidelines, doctoral scholarship holders receive a stipend of 1,200 EUR a month, a travel allowance, a health, accident and liability insurance policy, allowances for study & research (family allowances, depending on the individual situation and upon request); support for a pre-sessional German language course. Plus, material resources of 1,000 EUR per year, managed through the academic supervisor's institute.

Application process

Applications must be submitted via the BerGSAS portal by **1 November 2023, 00:00 CET**, quoting the reference **2024-BerGSAS-GSSP**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. The application procedure takes place in two stages.

1	Please register at the application portal: https://application.berliner-antike-kolleg.org/bergsas After you have created your personal account, you can begin to fill in the application form and upload your documents. It is possible to save the application form temporarily and continue at a later date. Applications must be submitted by 1 November 2023, 00:00 CET. BerGSAS will invite shortlisted candidates to an online interview within two months of the application deadline.
2	BerGSAS will nominate the candidates selected. The DAAD will make the final decision and will inform you about. Please note that admission to doctoral studies and the receipt of a scholarship is subject to assessment by the host university (Freie Universität Berlin) and by the DAAD.

Application documents

Your application documents	If registered here https://application.berliner-antike-kolleg.org/bergsas , you will find at the bottom of the form the list documents required. This includes among other things copies of various documents (which do not have to be officially certified). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate of a language examination in English e.g., IELTS Academic or TOEFL, C1 level.• Certificates of your academic degrees (B.A. and M.A.) with Transcript of records, or advanced qualifications indicating grades and explaining the grading system of your home university
2 Letters of reference	Two letters of reference from university professors, one of which must be from a professor at your home university. These letters are confidential documents and should be sent as a PDF file by the university professors directly to: regina.attula@berliner-antike-kolleg.org Please note, it is mandatory that the university professors use the DAAD template for their letter of recommendation , which can be downloaded here: https://www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/stipendien/formulare/recommendation.pdf https://www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/stipendien/formulare/recommendation.doc

Application deadline

The deadline for your application is 1 November, 2023 at 00:00 CET. The selection committee will not consider incomplete or late applications. For further inquiries please contact the coordinator of the doctoral program: Dr. Regina Attula, regina.attula@berliner-antike-kolleg.org

