FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS

Legislative Basis:

Status: September 2005, last Update: Barbara Duppich
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................... 2
Federal Aid for Students ............................................................................................................. 3
1. Indirect Federal Aid for Students .......................................................................................... 5
  1.1 Family Allowance ............................................................................................................. 5
  1.2 Health and Accident Insurance ....................................................................................... 6
  1.3 Tax Benefits ..................................................................................................................... 7
  1.4 Subsidies for Student Residences and Student Restaurants ......................................... 7
  1.5 Subsidies for the Austrian Union of Students ............................................................... 8
2. Direct Federal Aid to Students ............................................................................................. 9
  2.1. Study Grants .................................................................................................................. 9
    Eligibility ........................................................................................................................... 9
    Preconditions .................................................................................................................... 10
    Amounts of Study Grants ................................................................................................. 12
    Determination of Study Grants ....................................................................................... 13
    Applications for Study Grants .......................................................................................... 14
    Time of Eligibility and Payment of Study Grants ........................................................... 14
    Return Payment of Study Grants .................................................................................... 15
  2.2. Financial Aid for Students ............................................................................................ 15
    Subsidized Loans ............................................................................................................. 15
  2.3. Transport Cost Allowance ............................................................................................ 16
  2.4. Insurance Cost Allowance ............................................................................................ 16
  2.5. Grants for Study Abroad ............................................................................................... 16
    Preconditions ................................................................................................................... 17
    Actual Amount of Supportive Measure ........................................................................... 17
    Eligibility ........................................................................................................................ 17
    Return Payment ............................................................................................................... 17
  2.6. Grant Upon Completion of Studies ............................................................................... 18
  2.7. Student Financial Aid .................................................................................................. 19
    Preconditions ................................................................................................................... 19
    Amount of Student Financial Aid .................................................................................... 19
    Eligibility ........................................................................................................................ 19
  2.8. Performance-related Grants ......................................................................................... 19
    Preconditions ................................................................................................................... 19
    Amount of Performance-related Grant .......................................................................... 20
    Eligibility ........................................................................................................................ 20
  2.9. Incentive Grants ............................................................................................................ 20
    Preconditions ................................................................................................................... 20
    Amount of Incentive Grants ............................................................................................ 20
    Eligibility ........................................................................................................................ 20
  2.10. Orphan’s Pensions ....................................................................................................... 21
Study Grant Authority ............................................................................................................ 22
Procedures and Legal Measures ........................................................................................... 23
INTRODUCTION

The legal parameters covering student support, as stipulated in the Student Support Act of 1992 and enacted in numerable ordinances relating to this act, are a very special legal matter. Three aspects justify a more extensive examination of this legal subject within the framework of the departmental training of expert legal staff:

1. The large group of students for whom a study grant, in addition to financial support payments, constitutes a considerable part of the financial resources required for their studies.

2. The function of the Student Support Act within the framework of the Austrian legal system, which is being increasingly harmonized with other social policy legislation (family allowances, social insurance), and which thus reaches beyond the immediate scope of financial aid for students. This is why the Student Support Act assumes a key role among pertinent social policy legislation for students.

3. The law on student support as a test case for public transfer payments -- a perspective which generates basic reflections on student aid.

The present paper on the legal parameters covering student support first addresses the federal programs which are in place for the financing of university studies. Subsequently, it outlines the concrete regulations of the Student Support Act of 1992.
Federal Aid for Students

Federal aid for students is an expense of the public sector that supports post-secondary education. It may be composed of social support payments to students, but does not include expenses for the operation of post-secondary institutions.

The amendments to the Student Support Act, Equalization Fund for Family Allowances Act and Student Residences Act of 1999 constitute a network and mutual consideration of transfer payments by the government, granted to students when they perform their studies within a determined period of time.

The system provides subsidy payments covering the expenses required for studies for the whole academic year – in conjunction with subsistence payments from parents. Similar preconditions have been in place so far in order to be entitled to receive study grants or family allowances, tax benefits and health insurance. Restrictions as to the amount paid have only been applied in the case of family allowances and study grants.

The changes in the law make it possible to also consider child tax credits in order to determine the study grants in addition to the family allowances. The 12-month period is in accordance with the other two types of promotional payments which are also paid out on a monthly basis.

By introducing an insurance cost subsidy, the government entirely covers the expenses of subsidized self-insurance within the sphere of health insurance of (older) students entitled to study grants. Within the system of financial aid to students, the introduction of a new subsidy – i.e. the grant on completion of studies – represents a first step towards increased awareness of needs of students working as employees in addition to their studies.

The amendment of the Student Residences Act, which came into force in 1999, introduced preferred allocation of student residences to students receiving study grants. Thus, it links these indirect subsidies with the Student Support Act.

The government decided to enact simultaneous social policy measures in order to compensate for the tuition fees introduced in the academic year of 2001/2002. These “compensatory” measures include:

- The compensation for the tuition fees to students receiving study grants, the extension of the scope of students entitled to receive study grants, and the introduction of financial aid for students in addition to the (partial) compensation for tuition fees.

- The tripling of the budgetary funds for performance-related grants and the change of preconditions for receiving performance-related grants.
- The introduction of subsidized loans as a supportive measure to pay tuition fees.

In the academic year 2004/2005, 47,300 have received financial aid for students. Among these 44,250 students have received a study grant. The budget available for financial aid to students was 183.7 million € in the year 2004.

The system is organized into two groups of federal subsidies of financial aid for students: transfer payments paid out directly to students in cash (direct federal aid for students), and expenses from which the students may benefit as transfer payments to the parents or as services in kind (indirect federal aid for students).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect federal aid for students</th>
<th>Direct federal aid for students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family allowance</td>
<td>STUDY GRANTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child tax credit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and accident insurance for students</td>
<td>FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidized loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax benefits</td>
<td>Transport cost allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies for student residences and student restaurants</td>
<td>INSURANCE COST SUBSIDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies for the Austrian Union of Students</td>
<td>GRANTS FOR STUDY ABROAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel cost allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidies for language courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grant upon completion of studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child care subsidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance-related grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incentive grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORPHAN’S PENSIONS FOR STUDENTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Student Support Act serves as a link for any kind of aid for students, as all social policy legislation for students repeatedly refers to the Student Support Act. In the course of the past few years a process of harmonization of other social policy legislation with the Student Support Act has set in (as in the case of the changes regarding family allowances in the so-called “budget austerity legislative package” of 1996).

1. Indirect Federal Aid for Students

Indirect federal aid for students, which represents an important component of social support during the course of studies, mainly consists of financial resources made available to students’ parents (and/or students via their parents). The legally determined obligation of the parents to care for their children until they have reached the capacity for self-preservation constitutes the basis of entitlement to this type of financial aid. Federal aid for students should provide support to parents in this effort. There are subsidies designed to be made available to students by way of subsidies or reductions of certain expenses.

The supportive character of these measures is indicated by the fact that indirect federal aid for children basically ends at the end of a child’s 18th year. In case of students this period may be extended to the age limit of 26 or 27 years.

1.1 Family Allowance

This type of financial aid has its legal base in the Equalization Fund for Family Allowances Act. The amount of paid family allowance depends on the age of the children (21.8 € per month more for children over 19). Since 2000, a difference has been made regarding the amount of payments related to the number of children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As of birth of child</th>
<th>As of the month in which the child completes the 3rd year</th>
<th>As of the month in which the child completes the 10th year</th>
<th>As of the month in which the child completes the 19th year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the 1st child</td>
<td>105,4 €</td>
<td>112,70 €</td>
<td>130,90 €</td>
<td>152,70 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the 2nd child an additional 12,80 € is added to the amount. For the 3rd child and the ones to follow an additional 25,50 € is added to the amount.
- For significantly disabled children the amount of family allowance per month is increased by 138,30 €.

- A family is entitled to receive an additional multiple child care subsidy of 36,4 € per month per each third child or child to follow, if the annual taxable family income does not exceed a certain amount.

In certain cases, direct payment to the student is possible. Eligibility depends on the proof of academic advancement in one’s area of studies in time.

The age limit is 26 (in exceptional cases 27, if the student has served in the army, performed alternative civil service, or given birth to a child).

The respective departments for family allowances at the financial authorities are responsible for the implementation of financial aid to students and their families.

For a detailed description of the eligibility and duration periods of supportive measures and their prolongation for important reasons in case of subsidized studies, and as a consequence of changing courses, please refer to the Student Support Act.

1.2 Health and Accident Insurance

Through the **General Social Security Law** - students are covered in the mandatory system of **accident insurance**. All accidents are covered which occur in connection with university studies as regards place, time and reason. Accident insurance is obligatory and does not require the student to pay separate fees. The equalization fund for family allowances completely covers the lump-sum expenses.

According to the rules of the General Social Security Law, students may choose to be covered under the **health insurance** policies as **relatives** of their parents or spouses. This type of **co-insurance** depends on the following preconditions: proof of academic advancement in the first period of post-secondary studies via eight hours per year; no special proof in the second period of studies, age limit of 27 years. Refer to the Student Support Act for a detailed description of courses qualifying for prolongation of the status of relatives beyond the age of 18.

**Self-insurance within (the system of mandatory) health insurance** is a way of providing students with favourable health insurance contracts, if none of the following opportunities of co-insurance via parents, spouses or partners, or gainful employment, are available. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture contributes half of the monthly health insurance fees. The preconditions for the subsidized self-insurance, in a modified way, orient themselves towards: income below 3,881.52 € per year, maximum of two changes of courses,
minimum time required for studies may not be exceeded by more than 6 semesters. There is no age limit.

1.3 Tax Benefits
Students eligible for family allowances are also entitled to receive financial aid in accordance with the regulations of the Family Allowance Tax Act amending the income tax law of 1988:

Parents living with their children enrolled in university studies are eligible for a child tax credit. Those who do not live with their children in one household are eligible to receive a child support tax credit. The tax credits uniformly amount to 50,90 € per child.

On the basis of the income tax law it is still possible to additionally file for a tax reduction due to extraordinary expenses for students studying outside their places of residence. Refer to the Financial Aid to Students Act for eligibility in terms of reasonable distances.

Only parents of students eligible for family allowances qualify for tax benefits. This ensures the eligibility for subsidies only for those students providing proof of academic progress in their field of study. Thus, reference is made to key regulations of the Student Support Act.

1.4 Subsidies for Student Residences and Student Restaurants
Federal subsidies for student residences, student homes, and kindergartens admitting students’ children, are part of the indirect measures of government aid for students.

It is the objective to support non-profit organizations, associations and foundations providing housing for students according to the regulations of the Student Residences Act with investment subsidies in the case of construction, maintenance, and repair, and general restoration of student residences. These measures are intended to support students from outside university towns to be able to live at a reasonable price in terms of socially justifiable expenses for housing and thus ensure access to university and other post-secondary education.

The Austrian company Österreichische Mensenbetriebsges.m.b.H. manages the major part of student restaurants, buffets and cafeterias. The company has been a 100% state-owned enterprise since 1997. According to the company contract the enterprise must provide meals to students at reasonable prices under the principle of covering costs. On the basis of recent market research and trend analyses over the course of the past few years, a systematic process of reorganization of the individual subsidiaries has begun in order to adjust to changing demands. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture grants financial subsidies for the establishment of new student restaurants, etc., and supports general restoration of existing
enterprises. No subsidies are granted for the operation of student restaurants, cafeterias and buffets.

1.5 Subsidies for the Austrian Union of Students

In addition to subsidies for office space in the above-mentioned sectors, there is an increase in the subsidies of students – i.e. students in need of financial support receive financial aid in cooperation with the Austrian Union of Students.

Financial aid granted by the Austrian Union of Students is typically given in the form of low-cost meals to students, through financial support in the case of housing and expenses for child care, as well as via subsidies in case of social distress or conflicts with parents about support payments (the Austrian Union of Students assumes costs for legal counselling or mediation). The Austrian Union of Students receives funds from the government for these areas.
2. Direct Federal Aid to Students

As a rule, direct federal aid to students is only granted on the basis of differentiated social criteria and only in cases of concurrent academic advancement. There are only a few cases of direct federal aid awarded to students purely on the basis of performance criteria.

The various types of federal aid to students, with the exception of orphan’s pensions to students, are regulated in the Student Support Act of 1992 (for a detailed description see items 2.1 to 2.9).

2.1. Study Grants

The Austrian system of study grants basically favours financial aid via lost subsidies. In general, there is no obligation to pay back the grants received, except in the case of missing proof of academic advancement after the first two semesters (as well as the illegal acceptance of grants). Other systems of financial aid to students in place in other countries include:

- financial support by (partially or totally) low-interest repayable loans,
- financial support in combination with exemption from payment of tuition fees,
- increased independence of family situation in the case of financial support,
- redistribution of funds via payment of all students into one fund for study grants,
- linking of direct and indirect aid for students,
- financing of financial aid for students by introducing a tax for post-graduates,
- Extension of financial aid to students by introducing financial aid for post-graduates with obligation to pay back subsidies.

Eligibility

One of the basic preconditions is to perform studies at an Austrian post-secondary institution. Studies abroad will only be financially supported under special conditions (see item 2.5.). The following groups of students are eligible:
- Regular students at universities,
- Regular students at the Academy of Fine Arts or any other Austrian university of the arts,
- Students having passed a secondary school-leaving exam who study at an Austrian Religious College,
- Students at "Fachhochschulen" (universities of applied sciences),
- Applicants admitted to the university entrance qualification exam (preparatory course) for two semesters maximum. This regulation only refers to the so called “Studienberechtigungsprüfung”.

In addition:

Regular students at:
- Teacher Training Colleges
- Colleges for Vocational Pedagogical Training
- Colleges for Social Work
- Colleges for Religious Training,
- Agrarian Teacher and Consultant Training Colleges
- Conservatories (in case of individual courses) and at comparable private schools with the exception of preparatory courses
- Medical-technical Academies and Academies for Midwifery
- Under certain circumstances at private universities and “Fachhochschulen” (universities of applied sciences) and universities in South Tyrol (Bolzano province)

The students in question must be Austrian citizens in principle. Foreign citizens may only be treated equally in the case of close relation to Austria (at least 5 years subject to Austrian income tax via at least one parent), citizens of EEC-countries are generally treated equally, as far as it may be concluded from the treaty; and refugees under the Geneva Convention.

**Preconditions**

**Social Need**

The social need is assessed on the basis of income and number of family members of the student, his/her parents and his/her spouse.

The student’s income regarding the amount in cash is only relevant for periods of time during which the student receives study grants.
Income

Income in the sense of the Student Support Act would be the annual gross income minus tax-free income, promotional costs and extraordinary expenses as well as similar expenses of relevance in terms of tax law. A certain amount of tax-free income and depreciation will be added. The term “income” as stipulated in the Student Support Act is in accordance with the income tax law of 1988.

It is required to submit proof of any income according to the most recent tax assessment, income from gainful employment by means of a pay slip of the most recent calendar year and income from agricultural and forestry activities as determined by the most recent assessed taxable property value (if there is no income tax assessment).

Academic Advancement

During the first two semesters of studies, admission as a regular student will suffice as proof of academic advancement. For the subsequent semesters, regulations require students to submit proof of academic advancement in a given field of study.

At universities and universities of the arts, the extent of proof of academic advancement after two semesters depends on a set percentage of the total number of mandatory credit hours (for courses and exams) per semester.

No further proof of academic progress is required for the remaining period of study. However, the pre-determined timeframe for completing one’s study programme may not be exceeded by more than one semester (“semester of tolerance”).

Completion of Studies

The student is not allowed to have completed an other study programme or a comparable post-secondary education in Austria or abroad.

Age

The student must start his/her studies before completing his/her 30th birthday. Gainful employment or raising of children may increase the age limit to a maximum of 35 years of age.
Since the passage of the amendment as stipulated in the Federal Gazette BGBl. I No. 142/2000, students are allowed to work and be gainfully employed during their time of studies. If their annual income exceeds the amount of 5,814,-- €, the amount exceeding the limit will have to be paid back.

**Change of Studies**

The student may not change his/her field of studies more than two times and not after the second semester of former studies. (Reason: Only swift and serious studies will be subsidized). A delayed change of one’s study programme will result in non-eligibility for grants. It is possible, however, to be included in the programme of subsidies again after a required elapse of time and convincing academic advancement. The regulations of change of studies are also valid for the receipt of family allowance.

**Amounts of Study Grants**

The maximum monthly amount of study grants is as follows:

- Generally, in the case of single students: 424 € (5,088 € /year)
- In the case of students whose parents have died: 606 € (7,272 €/year)
- In the case of married students: 606 € (7,272 €/year)
- In the case of students who have supported themselves for four years before starting their studies („self-supporters“) 606 € (7,272 €/year)
- In the case of students who must live in the university town because the daily travelling time from their home town to the university site would be unreasonable 606 € (7,272 €/year)
- In the case of students with children: 666 € (7,992 € /year)

As regards severely disabled students, the mentioned maximum amounts of study grants increase by another 160 € or 420 € per month - depending on the degree of disability.

Since the summer term of 1999 the study grants have been paid out twelve times a year.
Determination of Study Grants

In any particular case, the actual amount of study grants for two semesters results from the calculation that a reasonable amount of maintenance payments by the parents and the spouses, as well as the assumed amounts of income of the student and family allowances and the child tax credit (in case a student has not reached 26 years of age yet), are subtracted from the annual maximum study grants.

The amount of reasonable maintenance payments from parents is determined via the income of the number of family members (under consideration), for whom the parents or the spouses have to pay maintenance. The tax deductions provide the opportunity to compensate for social imbalance to a major extent (gainful employment) and to consider the different expenses according to age and education of the other children subject to maintenance.

An example for the calculation of study grants:

A student (21) from Amstetten – Upper Austria, studies at the Vienna Economic University and lives at a Viennese student dorm. The student earns a small income from a work contract.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum study grant</td>
<td>7,272 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minus Parental maintenance payments</td>
<td>- 2,301 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minus family allowance + child tax credit</td>
<td>- 2,355 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= annual study grant</td>
<td>2,616 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The monthly study grant amounts to 218.-- €. If the student were over 26, the study grant would amount to 414.-- € per month (due to non-eligibility of family allowance and child tax credit). Should a student earn an income of his or her own during the period of eligibility which exceeds 5,814.-- €, this would lead to a recalculation with a corresponding request for return payment of study grants.
Applications for Study Grants
Applications for study grants must be submitted in the legally determined, exact periods of time (winter term: September 20 to December 15, summer term: February 20 to May 15). The official forms of application provided by the study grant authority are to be filled in. All required documents of proof are to be included. In case an application is submitted after expiration of the application period, the study grant may be allocated as per the month following the application.

Time of Eligibility and Payment of Study Grants
The study grants are allocated for two semesters each. After expiration of this period a new application has to be made.

The study grant valid for two semesters will be paid out on a monthly basis.

The time of eligibility for study grants (= period of time for which the maximum amount of study grants is allocated) generally includes the legally determined times of study courses per study programme, plus one semester of tolerance.

Example: Medical studies $4(+1) + 3(+1) + 5(+1) = 15$ semesters

Time of eligibility

Electrical engineering: $4(+1) + 6(+1) = 12$ semesters

Time of eligibility

Due to important reasons (extraordinary stress during studies, illness, child care, pregnancy, etc.) for which the student is not responsible, it may be possible to request a prolongation of the period of eligibility for study grants.
**Return Payment of Study Grants**

Unless half of the hours per semester required as proof of academic advancement are submitted, the cash amount of study grants received has to be paid back. (Reason: In principle, eligibility for study grants depends on academic progress; it is obligatory to submit proof of such academic advancement at a later date). Unlike the systems of study grants in other countries, it is not required to pay back study grants received (with the exception of illegal acceptance or grants paid out after the completion of studies).

**2.2. Financial Aid for Students**

Starting with the academic year 2001/2002, obligatory tuition fees have been introduced at universities and universities of the arts. The “Fachhochschulen” (universities of applied sciences) have permission to do so as well. Simultaneously, a supportive measure in the framework of financial aid for students -- the so-called **study allowance** -- was introduced. It is designed to help finance the tuition fees via federal means in the case of **students in need of financial support**.

Students having paid the tuition fees are eligible for this supportive measure. The actual amount in cash depends on the degree of social need. The calculation of the actual amount is based on similar parameters as study grants. Students have to apply for this type of financial aid simultaneously with the study grants. It will be paid out twice annually, in the winter term and the summer term, respectively.

**Subsidized Loans**

Students who have paid the tuition fees and who have not received any state-funded compensation (as would be the case with students eligible for study grants), may receive subsidized bank loans. According to an agreement between the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and Austrian banks, the government pays approximately 2% of the interest. The loan would be granted **exclusively for the purpose of funding the tuition fees** and would have to be paid back after completion of one’s studies. **Subsidized interest** will be granted for a maximum of 14 semesters. No proof of social need and academic advancement is required.
2.3. Transport Cost Allowance
Transport cost allowance is designed to partly compensate students eligible for study grants for the eliminated supportive measures according to the Equalization Fund for Family Allowances Act (free transportation for pupils and students, grants for transportation to school).

The amount of the transport cost allowance is paid out by the authorities for study grants by law and depends on the actual transportation costs. There is no legal title to such an allowance (no notice).

2.4. Insurance Cost Allowance
Preconditions
Insurance cost allowance is granted to students receiving study grants who have the opportunity of self-insurance within the framework of health insurance, if there is no option for co-insurance with parents. In the case of this type of subsidized self-insurance, half of the insurance costs is financed by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture on the basis of a contract with the Association of Social Insurance Carriers. Students eligible for study grants receive the other half as well via an insurance cost subsidy. It amounts to 19.-- € per month (twelve times per year).

Eligibility
Since the summer term of 1999 the insurance cost allowance has been regularly paid out ex officio after the end of the semester by the authority for study grants.

2.5. Grants for Study Abroad
Grants for study abroad are awarded in two ways: first, through extension of eligibility for study grants for the period of study abroad, by no longer than four semesters; secondly, through additional supportive measures such as grants for study abroad, including travel cost allowance and subsidies for language courses.
Preconditions
- General preconditions for eligibility for study grants,
- One diploma exam, or one doctoral exam, or, unless such major exams are not required, four semesters of credit counting toward completion of one’s studies. For studies at universities of applied sciences (“Fachhochschulen”) and so called “bakkalaureate studies or bachelor programmes” that are not divided into sections of study (“Studienabschnitte”) only two semesters are required instead of the above mentioned four semesters.
- studies at the foreign university must be equivalent to studies at an Austrian post-secondary educational institution.
- minimum of three months (grant offered for a maximum of 20 months).
A study programme entirely conducted abroad can not be supported through these measures.

Actual Amount of Supportive Measure
The grant for study abroad amounts to a maximum of 582 € per month. The exact determination of the monthly amount depends on an ordinance by the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Culture and is based on the costs of living and studying in the respective country. Since those students who live with their parents receive a smaller amount of study grants, they will receive a higher amount of assistance payments for the studies abroad.

Examples:
- Approximately 73 € to 146 € monthly in east-European countries
- Approximately 116 € to 276 € in Germany, France, Italy or the Netherlands
- Up to Euro 429 € in Great Britain and 487 € in the U.S.A.
- in Japan 472 € to 582 €

Eligibility
The authority for study grants will decide on eligibility of grants and supportive measures.

Return Payment
Those students receiving assistance for study abroad will have to provide proof of academic advancement to the authority for study grants after completion of one’s study abroad, otherwise they will have to pay back the money granted.
Subsidies for Language Courses

As a preparatory measure for a student’s study abroad, the ministry offers subsidies for ad-hoc language courses. These subsidies may cover part of the costs for a language course, or result in the extension of the grant for one’s study abroad by an additional month. There is no legal title to such a supportive measure.

Travel Cost Allowance

Travel cost allowance may be granted for travelling to the respective university site abroad. There is no legal title to such a supportive measure.

2.6. Grant Upon Completion of Studies

The “grant upon completion of studies” is designed to offer those students who have been gainfully employed during their studies the opportunity to complete them without stress at their jobs, especially during the period of time needed for the completion of one’s final diploma papers. This supportive measure is granted for a maximum of eighteen months for the completion of studies.

Eligibility criteria are a minimum of half-time employment for at least 36 months in the previous four years, including officially recognised periods of child care. The diploma paper must be in progress and there must be only a few exams left. Gainful employment must be given up for the period of time during which the grant is paid out. The age limit is 41.

The grant amounts to either 550 €, 725 € or 1000 € depending on the number of working hours of a student’s recent gainful employment. Fully employed individuals receive higher grants, others the respective percentage, such as half-time, three-quarters etc.. An additional payment of 218 € will be granted if there are children to be cared for. Should the subsidies not be paid back within six months after the last payment of the grant upon completion of studies, the entire amount of money received will have to be reimbursed.

The European Social Fund finances 46 % of this supportive measure.

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, in cooperation with the Austrian Union of Students, grants child care subsidies for child care costs for those students about to complete their study programme, or students performing an internship in Austria or abroad. The supportive measure is granted for a maximum of six months and amounts to up to 150 €
per child. This supportive measure is co-financed by the European Social Fund with the objective of increasing the percentage of gainfully employed students and/or post-graduates with children.

2.7. Student Financial Aid

Preconditions
Student financial aid is designed to

- compensate for social need
- compensate for particularly difficult conditions of a student’s academic studies
- promote excellent academic performance
- support housing costs
- promote students at non-Austrian universities close to the Austrian border, and those enrolled in non-Austrian universities offering distance-learning study courses, and to promote study-related practical experience.

For example, special supplementary payments are offered for child care expenses during study-related practical training, or during the final period of one’s studies.

Student financial aid represents an non-bureaucratic tool designed to compensate for special needs deriving from strict interpretation of the law.

Amount of Student Financial Aid

The amount of these supportive measures ranges from 180.-- € to the maximum amount offered as study grants (for two semesters).

Eligibility

There is no legal title to such a supportive measure. Students may apply for it at the respective ministry. Eligibility is granted within the sphere of “public administration acting under private law”.

2.8. Performance-related Grants

Preconditions

Performance-related grants may only be awarded to students who
- have an excellent record of academic progress (universities, "Fachhochschulen"/ universities of applied sciences, and other educational institutions determine the concrete parameters of this offer),

- have not exceeded the eligibility period of the respective section of the study programme.

- have a grade average of no more than 2.0.

Important: There is no precondition of social need (income and property of parents are not considered).

**Amount of Performance-related Grant**
The amount of the performance-related grant may not fall below 726,72 € per academic year.

**Eligibility**
There is no legal title to performance-related grants. Students may apply for this supportive measure in their respective courses. The deans and/or heads of universities and universities of the arts will decide on a student’s eligibility.

**2.9. Incentive Grants**
**Preconditions**
Incentive grants may only be granted to students of universities, universities of the arts, and religious colleges

- in order to engage in scientific or artistic work, and submitting proof of above-average advancement in one’s studies,

- after presentation of the expert opinion of a university professor about the respective work,

- if the student is still within the timeframe of eligibility.

**Amount of Incentive Grants**
The actual amounts of incentive grants are between 700 € and 3,600 € for one academic year.

**Eligibility**
There is no legal title to eligibility for an incentive grant. The student may apply for it when officially offered by the university by submitting a description and financing plan for his/her academic work in progress. The respective dean will decide on eligibility.
2.10. Orphan’s Pensions
Orphan’s pensions will be granted after the death of one parent beyond the age of 18, but no longer than until age 27, provided that a student pursues his/her studies in a serious and goal-oriented manner (annual proof of successfully passed exams equalling 8 credit hours per semester, or one constituent exam of the overall diploma exam).
**Study Grant Authority**

The Study Grant Authority is responsible for any type of information, applications, appeals and interventions regarding questions pertaining to study grants, transport cost allowance, grants upon completion of studies, insurance cost subsidies and grants for study abroad.

The Study Grant Authority consists of study grant departments and is headed by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Such study grant departments have been established in Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Linz and Klagenfurt. Students at the city of Leoben are serviced by the Graz-based office.

For further information please consult the homepage of the Study Grant Authority [www.stipendium.at](http://www.stipendium.at).
Procedures and Legal Measures

The Study Grant Authority decides on study grants according to the “General Law on Administrative Procedures” (AVG) by means of a notice following an application or appeal. This procedure relies on data-processing techniques and a shortened procedure of assessment. Decisions are made on the basis of clearly identified certificates by authorities and statements by students and their parents. The required simplicity and swiftness of this procedure is determined by the shortened period of decision (3 months) -- and, thus, by the shortened period of appeal to a higher authority according to § 73 AVG.

The right of appeal against such a notice includes personal intervention, which will be decided on in the course of an assessment procedure by a senate of the Study Grant Authority (collegial body consisting of university professors, student representatives and officials of the Study Grant Authority, at a ratio of 1:2:1) by way of a notice. It is possible to obtain an intervention-related preliminary decision already from a case officer of the Study Grant Authority – similar to the preliminary decision on an appeal according to § 64a AVG. In this case, the above-mentioned predecision on an appeal is explicitly ruled out.

This notice by the Senate regarding the intervention may be answered within the framework of the universities by an appeal to the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (for other educational institutions the Municipal School Board and/or Provincial School Board, or the provincial governor are responsible).