



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

Fundamental Academic Values Award 2026

Award for Early Career Scientists conducting research on the fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) announces a call for submissions for the “Fundamental Academic Values Award”. The award is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR). By awarding three prizes for research publications, the DAAD aims to contribute to the advocacy of fundamental academic values, to promote important research in this area and to further stimulate the discussion about these values.

Background

Fundamental academic values have accompanied the Bologna Process since its very beginning and are playing an increasingly important role in higher education policy debates. Hence, the [Rome Ministerial Communiqué](#), published in November 2020, puts particular emphasis on the protection of “fundamental values of higher education and democracy and the rule of law”. In the [Communiqué of the 2024 Bologna Ministerial Conference in Tirana](#), the ministers reaffirmed the relevance of the shared fundamental values as a necessary prerequisite for the development of science and research. The reference to fundamental values is also in line with the European Commission’s strong commitment to this topic and supported by the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027.

The fundamental values of the EHEA are:

- Academic freedom
- Academic integrity
- Institutional autonomy
- Participation of students and staff in higher education governance
- Public responsibility *for* higher education
- Public responsibility *of* higher education

Against this background, the DAAD decided to launch the “Fundamental Academic Values Award” for the third time, honouring the contribution of young scientists to the research of fundamental values in science and academia. A first call of applications was published in 2022 and a second one in 2024. In both application processes, three candidates have been awarded.

Within the framework of the DAAD project “[Bologna Hub](#)”, we cordially invite you to submit your application for this year’s “Fundamental Academic Values Award”.

Criteria for participation

The call for submissions addresses early career scientists who have made an outstanding scientific contribution towards the preservation and advocacy of fundamental academic values in the EHEA.

Admissible candidates are graduates who hold a Master's or Doctoral degree, with completion dating back to 2021 or later¹. The call is open to researchers of all academic fields and all nationalities.

Applications must be based on an academic **publication** showing a clear connection to fundamental values in higher education, meaning that work on fundamental rights in other fields cannot be considered. Likewise, there must be a clear link to the EHEA and / or the findings must prove a clearly visible added value to the academic debate of fundamental academic values in the EHEA. Contributions may either focus on one or more specific values or explore the relationship between them.

Any type of publication is formally permissible (e.g. articles in journals, conference proceedings, book chapters, anthology articles, entire theses / books, etc.). The selection committee may take the publication type and its scientific reputation (e.g. peer-reviewed journals) into account in the evaluation.

The relevant publication should have been published in 2021 or later.

Should one or more of the following conditions apply, candidates are advised to proceed accordingly:

- *The candidate has more than one relevant publication on the topic*
The selection process must be based on one specific publication. If a candidate has more than one relevant contribution, she / he is requested to submit the one which shall be considered for the award. Submitting multiple publications is not admissible.
- *The publication in question has not been published yet*
In principle, only those publications can be included in the selection process that have been published at the time of the application. Should the contribution in question still be in the final process of publication (e.g. approval of peer-review granted, but awaiting publication), the candidate must provide additional and transparent information on the status. The selection committee will assess this on a case-by-case basis.
- *The publication in question has multiple authors / The candidate is not stated as the first author*
Publications with multiple authors are eligible. However, applications must be submitted by individuals. It is not strictly required that the applicant be listed as the first author; what matters is that they made the principal contribution to the publication. Applicants should therefore provide a clear description of their individual role and contribution, supported by appropriate evidence. Each case will be assessed individually by the selection committee.

¹ In exceptional circumstances that have affected the academic career (e.g. maternity / parental leave, illness / special needs, displacement by conflict, etc.), an extension of this rule may be applied upon presentation of relevant evidence.

Documents needed for submission:

- A freely worded **letter of motivation** (max. word limit 800 words, written in **English**) that explains and includes concrete examples of the candidate's academic interest in the research field of fundamental academic values in the EHEA.
- An **abstract** of the submitted publication (max. 400 words, written in **English**) with an indication of keywords. The abstract must enable the allocation to a specific subject area and be suitable as preliminary information for potential reviewers.
- The **original publication** that is relevant for the call for submission. It must state the author(s), the publisher, the year of publication, exact page numbers and include a table of contents (if applicable).
- If the publication is written in a language other than English, a **longer summary** must be included (up to 2,000 words). The same requirement applies to publications that extend beyond 20 pages (e.g. published thesis / book, longer paper or book chapter). For publications with less than 20 pages, no such additional summary is required, unless it is published in a language other than English (see above).
The longer summary of approx. 2,000 words is not to be confused with the 400-word abstract of the submitted publication. The former will only be necessary in those cases mentioned above, while the latter is mandatory for all candidates.
- A **CV** of the candidate without chronological gaps and in tabular form (please specify the month and duration of study, research and / or work periods (e.g. MM/YYYY - MM/YYYY)).
- A **list of publications** with complete bibliographical information (including the first and last page number). Please include electronic links if available.
- If available: **evidence of voluntary activities or social engagement** (e.g. involvement in academic self-governance, higher education policy issues, civil society matters, education and training, etc.). However, this may only serve as a secondary criterion for the overall assessment.

All documents and information submitted will be treated confidentially.

Deadline for submission: 22 June 2026 (12:00 am midnight, CEST)

Until **22 June 2026, 12:00 am, midnight CEST** the candidate must **register via the [online tool](#) and upload the above-mentioned documents as pdf files.**

Due to the applicable regulations of handling sensitive personal data, this method is obligatory. Applications and documents that are submitted on other ways will be deemed void.

Selection process and committee

An international jury of academics with expertise in the field of fundamental academic values will select three award recipients and rank these in view of the selection of the first, second, and third prize. Selection criteria are the quality and relevance of the research publication as well as the academic achievements of the candidate (in consideration of her / his career status).

The award's objective is to encourage the candidates to continue their academic commitment in the research field of fundamental academic values in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Award

The award is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR). The three awardees will receive a prize money of **EUR 7,000, 6,000 and 5,000**, respectively. Additionally, they will be invited to present their research during a public conference at the end of 2026 or beginning of 2027. The exact date will be announced in due time. Travel and accommodation costs for this purpose will be covered by the DAAD.

Award Announcement

Applicants will be informed about the selection results in **October 2026**. The name of the awardees and a summary of their respective publication will be published on our websites eu.daad.de and www.daad.de as well as in additional public relation activities.

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