



Funding Guideline for the Awarding of Scholarships by the Blockchain Research Lab gGmbH

§1 Subject matter

The Blockchain Research Lab gGmbH (BRL) grants scholarships to promote scientific projects in blockchain technology in order to tap the intellectual potential of gifted (junior) scientists for the further scientific, economic and technological development in the interest of society. The aims are to further the scientific discourse about the technology, to improve the general understanding of blockchain and to identify and work out promising opportunities for its application.

§2 Basic principles of the awards procedure

(1) The scholarship can only be granted upon application. Anyone aged 18 or above who is interested in conducting research on blockchain technology for up to two years may apply.

(2) The BRL awards scholarships to Postdocs and PhD students, as well as to students in a Master's programme. In exceptional cases, a scholarship may also be granted if an applicant is able to demonstrate exceptional performance and results, as well as equivalent qualifications and experience in the area of blockchain technology. Furthermore, the applicant must be able to work in accordance with scientific standards and principles.

(3) Applicants may either respond to a call for applications or apply on their own initiative.

(4) Applicants must be fluent in English, both in writing and orally.

(5) The scholarships are granted in accordance with the following selection criteria and associated weights:

a) Quality of the scientific idea (40%):

- The application for the scholarship must include a two-page exposition of the planned research project in English. It should include the main research interest, the essential research questions to be addressed, the research strategy, the relevance of the project to society and the planned activities to disseminate the resulting insights. Besides the expected scientific insights, the structure and the viability of the project will also be assessed.

b) Notable achievements and commitment (30%):

- Prior scientific work, distinctions, awards, project experience, start-up experience (all of which in relation to blockchain technology), as well as commitment to social or academic causes

c) Performance at school, university or other education (30%):

- Grades of any completed degrees in higher, further or professional education
- Intermediate or average grades of any ongoing education
- Grades of the last school leaving certificate

(6) Applicants are welcome to, but need not, supply a letter of reference from a qualified person.

(7) Female applicants will be given preference over male applicants who meet the selection criteria equally well.



§3 Selection committee

(1) A selection committee decides on the allocation of the scholarships. The committee comprises at least the partners and the executive directors of the BRL. Each committee members has one vote. Decisions are taken by simple majority.

(2) The BRL may invite additional persons to advise the selection committee.

§4 Selection procedure

(1) The selection committee reviews the applications received in accordance with the criteria listed in §2, and on that basis decides which applicants to invite for an interview. The final award decision will only be made after a personal interview. Successful applicants will be informed of the amount and duration of the scholarship within three weeks of their interview.

(2) Applications that do not meet the formal selection criteria or are not received on time will not be considered.

(3) The selection committee will prepare a reserve list in case the number of applications exceeds the number of scholarships that are available for the advertised research project. The selection committee decides on the ranking of the applicants within the reserve list. The reserve list will be activated if an application that was selected for the scholarship is later withdrawn or if an already allocated scholarship cannot be granted for some other reason.

(4) In the case of a call for applications, the applicants will be informed in writing of their result and further procedures within six weeks of the application deadline.

(5) Applicants are entitled neither to receiving the scholarship nor to be given reasons in case their application is rejected, regardless of whether the requirements stipulated by these Funding Guidelines are met. The BRL takes its decisions dutifully, at its own discretion and on the basis of the means available to it.

§5 Scholarship amount and duration

(1) The BRL awards scholarships to Postdocs, PhD students and students who study for a Master's degree. Postdocs and PhD students are normally awarded full-time scholarships; part-time arrangements can be made in individual justified cases.

(2) The monthly amount of a full scholarship is €2,000 for a Postdoc and €1,800 for a PhD student. The amount of a part-time scholarship is agreed proportionally. The maximum amount is equal to the maximum tax-free grant income as determined by the German Income Tax Act (§ 3 Nr. 44 EStG).

(3) The scholarship for students in a Master's programme amounts to €400 per month. The maximum funding period equals the standard period of study for that particular Master's programme.

(4) The amount of funding for scholarship recipients who do not belong to any of the three categories mentioned in §5(1) above will be determined individually, taking into account the person's qualifications. A full-time scholarship can amount to €2.000 at most. The maximum amount is equal to the maximum tax-free grant income as determined by the German Income Tax Act (§ 3 Nr. 44 EStG).

(5) The scholarship is initially granted for six months. It may be extended upon application for up to 18 additional months according to §8. There is no legal entitlement to an extension of the funding. With regard to funding within a Master's programme paragraph 3 shall apply.

(6) The scholarship ends at the end of the last month of the funding period, unless the recipient declares before that time that he or she is no longer working on the research project, in which case the scholarship ends upon receipt of that declaration.

(7) A scholarship cannot be granted if the applicant already receives or has received other funding for the same purpose and period, or if he or she simultaneously pursues full-time employment.



(8) The scholarship is granted for the specific purpose of the agreed research project. The recipients are obliged to use the funding they receive solely for the research project and, thus, for tax-privileged purposes according to the German tax code (*Abgabenordnung*).

§6 Call for applications and announcement

(1) The BRL issues calls for applications for the scholarships in various media (e.g. the BRL homepage, social media, scholarship databases) with reference to this guideline.

(2) Such calls will include the following information:

- the expected number of available scholarships (subject to change);
- whether any scholarships are allocated to specific research topics and, if so, what these topics are;
- the regular funding period;
- which documents to include with the application;
- the form required of the application and to whom it should be addressed;
- the application deadline.

§7 Application procedure for first-time applicants

(1) In addition to the documents and information listed in §2(5), any application that is to be considered must contain the following documents:

- a CV in tabular form;
- a single-page motivation letter;
- any graduation certificates obtained so far;
- a statement (including information about the institution, the duration as well as the amount of the scholarship and the topic), regarding any scholarships already received from other institutions;
- the applicant's assurance that any changes to his or her situation that are relevant to the awarding or disbursement to the scholarship will be communicated immediately;

- the certificate of enrolment if the applicant is currently studying for a Master's degree.

Applications should be addressed to application@blockchainresearchlab.org.

(2) Unless stated otherwise in the call, applications must be submitted in English language. A certified translation into German or English is required for certificates that are not originally in one of those languages. The original certificate must also be included.

§8 Application procedure for continued funding

(1) The scholarships may be extended beyond the initial six months. For that purpose, the recipients must demonstrate that an extension is justified. An application for extension may be addressed to the BRL after the end of the fourth month of funding. The informal subsequent application must be accompanied by a report of five pages at most on the research work done so far and an outlook on the planning for the extended scholarship and the results expected by its end.

(2) The report must be presented to the selection committee by the fifth working day of the sixth month of the scholarship. The selection committee decides whether, in light of the results achieved so far and those expected for the future, an extension of the scholarship is warranted.

(3) The decision will be communicated to the applicant within seven working days of the presentation.

§9 Criteria of exclusion

(1) Projects that are incompatible with the aims of the BRL will not be funded.

(2) Furthermore, no scholarship will be granted in any of the following situations:

- the (potential) recipient experiences financial hardship, for whatever reason;
- the scholarship is intended to cover loans or guarantees;



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- the scholarship is to become part of mixed financing;
- the scholarship is to be used to cover funding gaps in existing research projects;
- institutional funding;
- the proposed research projects concern problems that have already been solved scientifically.

§10 Language

Any intermediate or final reports and any publications that arise from the research project must usually be written in English language.

§11 Reporting duties

Scholarship holders are obliged to report to the BRL on their progress at suitable intervals and to submit a final report at the end of the funding period. The extent, style and time intervals of the reports will be agreed individually for each project.

§12 Publication of research projects on the BRL homepage

(1) The BRL routinely publishes an overview of the existing research projects on its homepage. The following data will be displayed:

- the grant recipients' names
- their research topics
- anonymised analyses (e.g. figures)

Scholarship recipients who object to the publication of their personal data should notify the BRL of this in writing.

§13 Publication of research results

In accordance with its non-profit nature, the BRL strongly encourages the scholarship recipients to publish the results and insights gained from the research financed by the Lab and thus to make them accessible to society. Publications based on research funded by the BRL must acknowledge the financial support received, and a copy of each publication must be submitted to the BRL's archive.

§14 Cooperation duties

Applicants must perform the cooperation duties required for the selection process. In particular, they must provide the information required for the assessment of their suitability and performance. Furthermore, the applicants must immediately notify the BRL of any changes to their personal situation, to the extent that such changes are relevant to granting the scholarship.

Please note that the German language version of this document constitutes the sole legal basis for awarding the scholarships as the tax authorities will evaluate the non-profit nature of the Blockchain Research Lab and any tax implications of its activities only on the basis of that version.

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