



Extract from the MPG Support Guidelines for Junior Scientists - Doctoral Student Support -

Introduction

The Max-Planck-Gesellschaft provides support for graduate students who wish to study for a doctorate. This support may take the form either of a grant or of an employment contract, also referred to as a support contract. In order to make the details of these provisions transparent, the following pages contain an explanation of the relevant extracts from the Support Guidelines for Junior Scientists. Please note that these Guidelines are regularly updated in line with current developments in the law and/or funding policy amendments.

If you have any questions on individual aspects, please refer to the Personnel Department at your institute, where the staff will gladly provide information on the MPG Support Guidelines. For matters in principle, please contact the Personnel Department at Administrative Headquarters (tel.: 089-2108 1322 or career@gv.mpg.de).

TWO TYPES OF SUPPORT

The Max-Planck-Gesellschaft supports young scientists wishing to study for a doctorate, generally below the age of 30. It is also a precondition that a doctorate should be the next possible academic degree.

The type of support is dependent on how doctoral students are integrated into the work of the Max Planck institute. They will either be awarded a fixed-term employment contract (support contract), or a grant. This decision lies with the institute management in consideration of the funds approved by Administrative Headquarters. The two different types of support also entail differing stipulations regarding attendance at the institute, compliance with instructions, holidays and business travel, as well as detailed differences in insurance regulations and allowances.

1. Support via an employment contract

In accordance with the Support Guidelines for Junior Scientists of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, a **support contract** is awarded if, for the purposes of his or her doctorate,¹



the student is firmly integrated into the work of the institute, is required to perform (research) tasks as instructed and is expected as part of his or her doctoral project to carry out work for the institute. In return for this work, the doctoral student will receive remuneration. Doctoral students with a support contract are obliged to attend at the institute, and holidays and business travel require approval.

Where support is provided in the form of employment, the duration of employment and the amount of remuneration must be agreed in writing. The remuneration payable under a support contract is dependent on the Collective Wage Agreement for Government Service Workers (TVöD).

DURATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

In principle, students should aim to complete their doctorate within a period of not more than three years; employment contracts are therefore initially limited to this standard period of support. In justified cases (protracted experiments, requirement for extensive field studies, etc.), two extensions may be granted of six months each, up to a maximum of four years. This decision lies with the institute management. If the period of support is to be extended beyond four years, the Institute Administration Department must consult with Administrative Headquarters (Referat II c).

REMUNERATION

Doctoral students are expected to concentrate all their efforts on preparing their dissertation and the scientific work directly associated therewith. This generally equates to an average working week.

In return for their work, they receive remuneration. For this purpose, one-half of their working hours at the Max Planck institute is deemed to be eligible for remuneration, and a salary is accordingly paid at the rate of 50 percent of Pay Group 13 (maximum Stage 2) as per the Federal civil service pay scale (TVöD Bund). In addition, as provided for by the Collective Wage Agreement, an annual special payment is also made. This is disbursed together with the November salary.

In justified individual cases, a recruitment bonus may be paid. Grounds might include for example a doctoral project in a particularly competitive or difficult area of research, or higher living costs in metropolitan areas. The decision on whether to grant a recruitment bonus lies with the institute management. This bonus may be withdrawn at any time. The monthly remuneration together with the bonus must not exceed the full rate of pay (100 percent) in Pay Group 13 TVöD (at the appropriate Stage). Income tax is payable on both salary and special payments. Doctoral students are also liable for obligatory health, nursing care, pension and unemployment insurance. One-half of the contributions is paid by the Max Planck institute as employer. The other half is automatically deducted from the salary and remitted to the social security insurer.

In case of illness, the salary will continue to be paid for up to six weeks as provided for by law.



ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES

Ancillary activities that impinge in whole or in part on the working capacity of the doctoral student are as a matter of principle prohibited. It is, however, permissible to undertake teaching duties for up to ten hours per week (including preparation time) at a university, provided that this does not extend the time required to complete the student's doctorate. Any such ancillary activity must be approved in advance by the institute management.

VACATION

The holiday entitlement will be as specified by the Federal Holiday Benefits Act (BUrlG). As a minimum, it amounts to 24 weekdays or 20 working days.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

If it is necessary to travel in order to carry out a doctoral project, the costs can be reimbursed. Also if the doctoral studies necessitate a period of residence abroad, an allowance may be granted in addition to the student's salary.

TERMINATION

The first six months of employment are deemed to be a probationary period during which the employment may be terminated at two weeks' notice. Thereafter, the employment can only be terminated for particular cause.

2. Support via a grant

A grant is appropriate when the institute is keen to support particularly promising junior scientists in carrying out their scientific plans and obtaining their doctorate, thereby nurturing future loyalty to the institute. The same applies where the subject of the doctorate constitutes an important addition to the research work of the institute, but full integration into the institute is unnecessary.

Instead, it is the method of addressing the subject and the results that are of primary interest.

MPG grant recipients are able to carry out their research unconstrained by the need to follow instructions. They allocate their own time for themselves, and do not need to apply for vacation.

Belonging to an International Max Planck Research School (IMPRS) means accepting a binding commitment to participate in the curriculum (e.g. summer schools, presentations, retreats, regular courses, regular exchanges with supervisors and fellow students).



The grant is not a quid pro quo in return for scientific work, but is instead a “maintenance allowance”. It does not constitute any relationship of employment with the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft. Technical or safety instructions issued by the institute are accordingly not contractual instructions, but rather a means of support in fulfilling the purpose of the grant.

The grants are paid at rates which, in the view of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, are exempt from tax (see § 3, No. 44 of the Income Tax Act) and obligatory social security insurance does not apply. Social insurance, such as health insurance, is not part of the grant. You will find detailed information in the “Notice to Grantees”, a copy of which can be obtained or ordered from the Personnel Department at your institute.

PART-TIME GRANT

To improve the compatibility between career and family commitments, part-time grants can be awarded to allow for the care of children and close relatives. Part-time provision is available in any proportion between 50 and 100 percent. The grant will be extended to the equivalent of three years of full support in total.

AMOUNT AND DURATION OF GRANT

In accepting a grant, the recipient enters into a commitment to devote him or herself fully to the purpose for which it is given, that is to say, the doctorate. Other occupations must be approved in advance by the institute management. These must not exceed the scope of minimal employment. Exceptions can only be made where the occupation is conducive to the grantee’s doctoral studies. Working for the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, even on a minimal basis, is not permitted.

Grants should be awarded for a maximum of three years. In exceptional cases where justification exists, an extension of up to one year (2 x 6 months) may be allowed. The decision lies with the institute management. If the period of support is to be extended beyond four years, the institute must consult with Administrative Headquarters (Referat II c).

Recipients will be notified in writing of the duration and amount of their grant. The grant comprises a fixed basic sum of 1,365 euros plus potential family allowances.

CHILD ALLOWANCE

For children up to the age of 18, a child allowance is paid as a monthly lump sum. This amounts to 400 euros for the first child plus 100 euros for each additional child. The children of the recipient’s partner can be taken into consideration provided it can be demonstrated to the Max Planck institute that they were already living in the same household as the grantee prior to the grant (e.g. as evidenced by the residents’ registration office). If both partners are in receipt of an MPG grant, the child allowance is only available once. Benefits received from other sponsors (e.g. the DFG) must be taken



into account to ensure that there is no duplication of funding.

The child allowance replaces the former family and child care allowances, which are now defunct. Allowances for married persons no longer exist.

Child benefit is not included within the grant. Applications should be made to the Employment Office (Arbeitsamt) having jurisdiction over the grantee's place of residence.

FAMILY COMPONENT

Grant recipients with children can take advantage of an extension their grant and/or a child care allowance ("money in lieu of time"). This offer is intended to ease the work-life balance for junior scientists and facilitate rapid completion of their doctorate and/or project.

Grant extension

If grantees have at least one child under 12 to look after, they may have their grant extended at the full rate including all allowances for up to 12 months. Once again, the children of the grantee's partner can be taken into consideration provided it can be proved that they were living in the same household prior to the grant. For further children born during the term of the grant, female grantees may extend the term for an additional three months.

Child care costs

As an alternative to a grant extension, a child care subsidy can be applied for in the amount of the costs for a 12-month extension ("money in lieu of time"). For each month's extension that is not taken up, a maximum of the same month's basic grant is available instead. There is some flexibility in how the basic amount per month is converted into child care expenses. For example, it is possible to claim an extension of five months and a child care subsidy for seven months. However, this option to combine a grant extension with a child care subsidy presupposes that the grantee makes a binding declaration to the institute in advance as to how the combination is to be made up. In all cases, the cost of child care must be proven (by submitting invoices and receipts).

Eligible costs include, for example:

- Child care at a kindergarten, day nursery, crèche, etc.
- Child care provided by a child minder, babysitter or au-pair
- Costs of international schools at the grantee's location
- Supervision of children while doing their homework



Ineligible costs include:

- Costs for educational materials and extra tuition
- Costs for the teaching of special skills (e.g. music lessons, sports clubs)
- Meal allowance
- Child care by family members (e.g. grandparents, siblings)

If both partners are in receipt of an MPG grant, the family component option is only available once. Benefits received from other sponsors (e.g. the DFG) must be taken into account to ensure that there is no duplication of funding.

OFFSET OF SECONDARY INCOMES

The grant is intended to cover necessary living costs. If the grantee has a secondary income from third parties (not the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft) which exceeds the earnings limit for minimal employment, the grant will be reduced by the corresponding amount. Grantees are also obliged to inform the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft of all secondary income and grants from other providers.

HEALTH INSURANCE SUBSIDY

The option exists to claim a health insurance subsidy of up to 50 % of your health insurance premiums, subject to a maximum of 100 euros. To do so, you must submit a written application, with evidence confirming that you are either a member of the statutory health insurance scheme or are covered by a private health insurance policy which offers at least the same extent of cover as the statutory scheme ("basic" or "full rate"). An additional subsidy of 50 % or max. 100 euros may also be paid for each accompanying family member with no income of their own, if an existing private health insurance policy is being carried over.

MATERIAL COSTS SUBSIDY

Each grantee may receive a monthly material costs subsidy. This flat rate subsidy is intended to cover the purchase of specialist literature, special software and other items necessary for the research project and not provided by the institute. Short business journeys in the immediate environment of the institute are also covered by this allowance.

RECRUITMENT BONUS

In situations where MPG is competing with foreign research institutions, a recruitment bonus of up to 200 euros per month can be awarded for the recruitment of particularly well-qualified doctoral candidates. The amount of this bonus, which may be withdrawn at any time, is dependent on the particular recruitment situation and local circumstances. It amounts to a maximum of 200 euros per month.



TRAVEL EXPENSES

If the grantee needs to travel in order to conduct his or her research work, and an application is made for the institute to contribute to the costs, a decision must be made by the institute management.

INTERNATIONAL SUBSIDY

If a period of residence abroad is necessary in order to carry out the research project, an international subsidy will be granted in addition to the grant.

ILLNESS / ACCIDENT

If implementation of the scientific project is interrupted as a result of illness or accident, the grant will continue to be paid for six weeks. Beyond this period of time, in certain cases, payment of a part of the grant for a maximum period of six months may be approved internally by the institute.

PREGNANCY

If work on the scientific project is interrupted by the (female) grantee as a result of pregnancy, the grant will continue to be paid in accordance with §§ 3 and 6 of the Maternity Protection Act for the period in which the recipient is prohibited from working. State benefits received for the same cause will be offset.

VACATION (R&R)

Where a grant is awarded for at least one year, work on the recipient's doctorate may be interrupted for purposes of rest and recuperation. In this case, the grant will continue to be paid for up to 31 weekdays per year, or up to 34 weekdays from the age of 30 onwards. Weekdays are all days excluding Sundays and public holidays.

ENDING/WITHDRAWAL OF GRANT

The grant will cease on the date on which the grantee takes up paid employment, the nature and scope of which are not conducive to the purpose of the grant. This must be verified and a decision taken by the institute in each individual case.

The grant may be withdrawn before the end of the period for which it was awarded if the grantee fails to demonstrate the requisite and reasonable commitment to the purpose of the grant.



Summary of potential support

Doctoral students (with support contract)	Doctoral grants (grants to doctoral students)
<p>Duration of support: up to 3 years</p> <p>Possible extension: max. 2 x 6 months</p> <p>Employment subject to taxation and social security contributions</p> <p>Constitutes employment</p> <p>Remuneration: between 1654 and 1835 euro (Pay Group 13 TVöD, 50%)</p> <p>Full working hours (as for government service workers)</p> <p>Recruitment bonus max. up to 100 % E13 TVÖD (at the respective stage)</p> <p>Holiday entitlement as per the Federal Holiday With Pay Act: 24 weekdays or 20 working days</p>	<p>Duration of support: up to 3 years</p> <p>Possible extension: max. 2 x 6 months</p> <p>Exempt from taxation and social security contribution</p> <p>Does not constitute employment</p> <p>Basic grant: 1365 euros</p> <p>Recruitment bonus of up to 200 euro</p> <p>Child allowance: 400 euros for the 1st child plus 100 euros for each additional child</p> <p>Family component: 12 months extension for 1 or more children under 12 or a child care subsidy equal to 12 months basic grant</p> <p>Part-time grants available of between 50% and 100%</p> <p>Health insurance subsidy of 50% or max. 100 euros; also available for family members in justified cases</p> <p>Material cost subsidy 103 euros</p> <p>No vacation entitlement, but R&R allowance 31 weekdays, or 34 weekdays (from age 30) for residence of 1 year or more</p>