

Guiding Principles of the AvH Foundation

Exzellenz verbindet – Excellency connects Be part and contribute to a worldwide network of excellence

Our work

We sponsor top-flight, foreign scientists and scholars who intend to come to Germany. The basis for this is research fellowships and research awards which allow spending extended periods of time collaborating with German colleagues in Germany.

Humboldt Research Fellowships and Humboldt Research Awards are highly-respected and sought-after all over the world. It is special to belong to the Humboldtians and that is why we look after every scholar individually and flexibly. We want them and their families to feel at home in Germany and to concentrate on their work. Academic success for the guests and the hosts as well as a fruitful stay on an interpersonal level is the major objectives of AvH. In addition to the scientific dimension, Humboldtians and their families will take long-lasting impressions home to their countries of origin and might become ambassadors for the science hub Germany.

Once an Humboldtian, always an Humboldtian

Even after the stay in Germany, we stay in close contact with our alumni. In order to do so, we offer numerous opportunities for sponsorship. For example, the Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship Programme is dedicated to allow junior German researchers to spend time in the laboratories of Humboldtians abroad resulting in a mutual benefit for the Humboldtians hosting them as well as for the German researcher visiting.

Our values

Academic excellence is our primary criterion for selecting scholars. There are no quotas, neither for individual countries nor for individual scientific disciplines. Our selection committees which is composed of academics from all scientific disciplines, decide independently and solely on the basis of the applicants' academic merit.

Our policy is to sponsor people and not projects. Even in the days of increasing teamwork, our thinking is that the ability and dedication of the individual is decisive for achieving academic success.

We project ourselves and the international Alumni as a worldwide family, upheld by bonds of trust, friendship, and solidarity for an entire lifetime.

We support innovation through academic independence. Humboldtians are free to choose both their hosts and their research topics without any stipulations from the Foundation.

Our perspectives

Today, more than ever, research is international and subject to fierce competition between different research locations. As a consequence, we are trying to constantly attract globally sought-after researchers in order to bond between foreign and German excellence thereby strengthening research in Germany as well as in the home countries of the awardees. To achieve this, we work together on international marketing of Germany as a research hub with diverse partners, and we continue to develop our cooperations with the European Union and its research and mobility programmes. On the basis of our traditional strengths combined with new ideas and initiatives we strive making Germany a top international address for the academic elite on the basis of mutual benefit.

In addition, we support international cultural dialogue as a long-term objective for peace and safety, and in order to reach this goal we build on the international networks of researchers as bridges between cultural and social differences in the world. With a programme tailored to the needs of individual researchers from developing countries, initiatives for Central and Eastern Europe, or European-Islamic Cultural Dialogue we take into consideration specific regional and political requirements.

In order to publicize and promote research in Germany as well as the political ideas of Humboldt, we utilize our greatest capital: the worldwide network of Humboldtians and its many representatives in important scientific as well as in leading and influential political decision making positions.

Our roots

Alexander von Humboldt was a discoverer and cosmopolitan, a universal genius and a fighter for the freedom of research, a humanist and a patron of excellent academic talent. Shortly after his death, some of Alexander von Humboldt's friends established a foundation and named it after him in 1860. The objective was to use science and international exchange in the spirit of Humboldt to overcome boundaries and promote peace. After a varied history and temporary closures, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation was re-established in 1953.

Mutual understanding coupled with academic freedom and excellence has remained our creed to this day. With Humboldt's achievements and visions as a model, we maintain an international network of academic cooperation and trust. The AvH network links together approximately 22,000 Humboldtians throughout the world to date, and we are proud to say that among them are 40 Nobel Prize Winners.

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