

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

BECA COLOMBIA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR FOREIGNERS 2022-01

ICETEX

ICETEX, as an entity of the Colombian State that promotes higher education through the granting of educational credits and international cooperation scholarships to students with lower economic possibilities and good academic performance, is in charge of granting financial support to foreign citizens within the framework of the Beca Colombia Scholarship Program.

Reciprocity scholarships are offered for specialization, master's and doctorate studies in Colombian higher education institutions, according to the "Academic Offer Catalog 2022" that is published with the call for applications.

1. WHO IS THE PROGRAM AIMED AT?

This reciprocity program is aimed at foreign citizens of any nationality, interested in pursuing a postgraduate program with the benefit of a scholarship offered by ICETEX.

2. DEFINITIONS:

- **Candidates:** Foreign citizens who apply to the call of the Beca Colombia Scholarship Program and complete the application on the platform correctly.
- **Selected candidates:** Candidates who, after completing their online application and being evaluated, are selected by ICETEX for the granting of scholarships or non-refundable financial support through the Beca Colombia program.
- **Not selected candidates:** Candidates who, after completing their online application and being evaluated, are not chosen as scholarship holders because they do not meet any of the requirements, do not achieve the required score or do not obtain a vacancy in the academic program offered, in the case of academic programs that have limited quota and several foreigners have applied for the same one.
- **Scholarship holders:** Foreign citizens who have been selected by ICETEX and who accept the scholarship and its commitments.

3. DURATION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP OR NON-REFUNDABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Scholarships for postgraduate studies in Colombia will have a maximum duration, depending on the modality as follows:

MODALITY	DURATION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP
Specialization	12 months (2 academic semesters)*
Master	24 months (4 academic semesters)
Doctorate	48 months (8 academic semesters)*

- *If the specialization program has a duration of more than 2 semesters, the additional periods must be assumed by the scholarship holder, since the scholarship will not cover them.*
- *If the doctoral program has a duration of more than 8 semesters, the additional periods must be assumed by the scholarship holder, since the scholarship will not cover them.*

Since scholarships are awarded annually, in accordance with ICETEX's annual budget, scholarship holders who are pursuing academic programs for more than 12 months must request an extension from ICETEX each year in order to continue the corresponding academic program.

The extension will be subject to compliance with the requirements established by ICETEX, among them:

- a) Extension request letter
- b) Transcript of grades with cumulative average of the program (minimum 4.0/5.0)
- c) Experience report signed by the tutor or academic program director
- d) Certificate from the University stating current enrollment and duration of the academic program in progress
- e) Proof of studies in Colombian territory

No extensions will be approved to continue the scholarship period initially granted. In case the scholarship period ends without the foreigner having completed his thesis project or graduation process, all expenses incurred for his stay in Colombia until the end of the pending academic activities will be borne directly by the scholarship holder and ICETEX will not be obliged to make additional payments.

4. COVERAGE OR BENEFITS OF THE BECA COLOMBIA SCHOLARSHIP:

- a) **Tuition fees:** Full tuition coverage will be granted by the Colombian institution of higher education (only for academic programs found in the Academic Offer Catalog, published in the 2022 call for applications).
- b) **Health Policy/Medical Insurance:** Medical and hospital assistance in Colombia, including repatriation in case of disability or death. This assistance is only covered during the study period in Colombia and only for the scholarship holder; it cannot be extended to family members. Scholarship holders must assume the cost of prescription drugs and a local medical examination fee. These costs are not covered by the contingency budget.
- c) **Courtesy Visa:** ICETEX will send each scholarship holder a letter for online application for a courtesy visa type "V", which will be granted by the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the study period. This visa is only for the scholarship holder and if a visa is required for family members, the process must be carried out independently.
- d) **Monthly stipend/support:** ICETEX will support each foreign scholarship holder with a monthly support for a value corresponding to three current legal monthly minimum wages. In 2022, the adjustment will be made according to the increase in the minimum wage decreed by the Colombian Ministry of Labor. This amount will be granted only to those who reside in Colombian territory advancing their studies.
- e) **Installation expenses:** ICETEX will support each scholarship holder with a one-time amount for installation expenses in Colombia during the study period.

- f) **Expenses for books and materials:** For each academic year, ICETEX will support each scholarship holder with an amount for books and materials. Specialization scholarship holders will receive a single support, master's scholarship holders will receive up to two supports and doctoral scholarship holders will receive between three and four depending on the length of their doctorate.
- g) **Contingencies:** This amount will only be paid once during the entire study program and its approval by ICETEX is discretionary, in accordance with the force majeure situation presented by the scholarship holder and the documents evidencing the request.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE APPLICATION TO THE CALL

- a) Be a foreign citizen.
- b) Not having Colombian nationality.
- c) Not having any marital or civil relationship in Colombia.
- d) Not be residing or have initiated postgraduate studies in Colombia.
- e) Not have been a beneficiary of the BECA COLOMBIA SCHOLARSHIP program or of any ICETEX scholarship program for foreigners.
- f) Not be older than 50 years old.
- g) Have a cumulative GPA of 4.0 out of 5.0 in undergraduate to apply for the call. According to the grading scale of each country, the grade must be equivalent to at least 4.0 for the Colombian scale. *It is not valid to present a postgraduate grade point average.
- h) Hold a professional, undergraduate or bachelor's degree in any area of knowledge.
- i) Have a minimum Spanish language proficiency of B2. If Spanish is not the scholarship holder's native language, a DELE or SIELE exam certificate with a B2 level must be presented.
- j) Have definitive admission to at least one or up to three postgraduate programs listed in the Academic Offer Catalog 2022 attached to this call.
- k) Be in good physical and mental health, certified by a doctor.

6. OBSERVATIONS:

- The Academic Offer Catalog 2022-01 is a consolidated listing of programs offered by Colombian universities or educational institutions involved in the reciprocity program for foreigners in Colombia. In this catalog you will find the quotas for each program offered. If several foreign candidates who meet the requirements apply to the same program, the candidate with the highest evaluation will obtain the quota.
- The selected foreign candidate will not be able to change the program or the university, and only the final letter of admission presented within the documentation initially received by ICETEX will be taken into account. The candidate may apply to up to three postgraduate programs listed in the catalog and the motivation letter must state the priority of each one. The above is done in order to have a better chance of obtaining a vacancy in the call for applications.
- The candidate must incur the admission costs established by the Colombian institutions of higher education to which he/she wishes to apply.

- Each candidate must personally apply for admission to the postgraduate programs directly with the institutions of higher education or universities.
- All documents must be attached to the application platform, no physical documents will be received for any reason or outside the call period (until December 20, 2021).

7. DOCUMENTS REQUESTED:

Nr	Document	Detail	Quantity
1.	Letter of pre-admission or definitive admission from the university	The letter of pre-admission or definitive admission to the academic program must be issued by the Colombian university to which the foreign candidate applied, and must indicate the duration of the studies, with start and end dates of the academic program; it must indicate the modality of the studies to be carried out. The candidate may submit from one to three letters and must establish the order of priority of each academic program in the essay. All admission letters must be for programs beginning in the first semester of 2022. Admission letters will not be accepted for programs beginning in the second semester of 2022, or in subsequent years.	1 letter minimum, 3 letters maximum
2.	Letter of Academic Recommendation	This letter must be issued by a professor of the university where you attended your undergraduate studies. This letter must be dated 2021. Letters from previous years will not be accepted.	1 letter minimum, 2 letters maximum
3.	DELE or SIELE exam	Present the certificate of the Spanish language proficiency exam (DELE or SIELE), which must have a minimum level of B2 or another certificate that certifies the level of Spanish language (spoken and written). NOTE: This document is only required for citizens coming from NON-Spanish speaking countries. If the candidate comes from a NON Spanish-speaking country, but has a university degree from an institution in a Spanish-speaking country, it will not be necessary to present a DELE.	1
4.	Undergraduate transcript	Document that certifies the undergraduate studies in which a minimum average of 4 out of 5 or its equivalent in the Colombian grading scale must be accredited. It is necessary that the university where you studied certifies the grading scale with the minimum passing grade, in order to be able to establish a comparison with the Colombian grading system. This document may be evaluated in Spanish or English, if your original language is neither of these two, you must attach an official translation into Spanish or English.	1
5.	Essay	Academic essay of a maximum of two pages arguing the importance of studying in Colombia and the impact it will have on your personal and professional development, and its applicability upon your return to your country of origin. If the candidate applies to several programs, the essay must establish the order of priority, from 1 to 3.	1
6.	Copy of valid passport	Copy of the first page of the valid passport (valid for at least one year). This copy must be of the page on which the applicant's information and photo appear.	1
7.	Copy of university degrees or diplomas	The copy of the diploma must be certified by the university of origin or may be notarized. IMPORTANT: DO NOT attach any copy of trainings, short courses or workshops.	1
8.	Resume or CV	Resume containing undergraduate studies, postgraduate studies and professional experiences. Any format can be used, but no longer than two pages.	1
9.	Health certificate	The health certificate must indicate your physical and mental health. It cannot be older than thirty days from the date of application. It must be signed and stamped by the doctor issuing the certificate.	1
10	Certificate of professional experience	Certificates of professional experience of at least one year are required. These must contain the positions held, the duration and the functions performed. (It is valid to attach certificates of internships, practices or labor contracts).	1 minimum

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8. STAGES OF THE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2022-01

Stage	Date
Closing of the call 2022-01	December 20, 2021
Evaluation and selection of candidates	December 23 to January 9, 2022
Notification via e-mail to candidates regarding selection and non-selection	January 10, 2022 at the latest
Acceptance of scholarship by selected candidates	January 11 to 15, 2022
Beginning of studies in Colombia	Between the second and third week of January and the end of February 2021. (According to the academic calendars of the Colombian universities).

NOTE: All applications must be submitted no later than December 20, 2021 on the ICETEX platform. Documents not received within the dates agreed and stipulated in the call for applications will not be evaluated.

9. APPLICATION:

Foreign candidates may submit their application online at the following link:

<https://internacionalizacion.icetex.gov.co>

The applicant must guarantee the legitimacy, validity and veracity of the documentation provided for the award of the scholarship. Nevertheless, ICETEX reserves the right to verify the authenticity of the documents and information provided in the application.

If the documents provided by the applicant are found to be false or altered, the application will be immediately rejected.

The Scholarship Committee, based on the information provided by the applicants and the application requirements, will award the scholarships, subject to the availability of funds.

10. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS:

- Academic excellence (30%)
- Coherence between the academic and professional trajectory and the studies to be pursued (20%)
- Regional location of the chosen university (cities other than Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla (15%)
- Professional experience (15%)
- Study project (10%)
- Origin from a country that has not benefited from this program in the last 2 years (10%)

11. SCHOLARSHIP ACCEPTANCE PROCESS:

- Scholarship Acceptance:** Foreign candidates who are selected and notified will have a deadline specified in the notification mail for accepting the scholarship. The reply must be sent to the e-mail address from which you received your selection notification. Not responding within this period implies the withdrawal of the scholarship without any subsequent complaints or claims and the quota may be awarded to another candidate.
- Letter of Commitment:** The selected candidates must return the "*Carta de Compromisos*" by e-mail, read and signed by each scholarship holder. This letter will stipulate the academic and legal commitments and obligations to be fulfilled by the scholarship holder during the scholarship period in order to preserve the scholarship benefit.
- Courtesy Visa Letter:** Selected candidates will receive a letter from ICETEX addressed to the Coordinator of the Internal Work Group, Visas and Immigration of the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or to the Colombian Consul in their country of origin, with the scholarship holder's pertinent information to obtain their courtesy visa. Each scholarship holder must apply for his or her courtesy visa online at the Ministry's website. For this visa the scholarship holder will not make any payment and must follow the instructions in the visa application manual sent when notification of selection is received.
- Letter of Instructions:** Selected candidates will receive a document with step-by-step instructions to be followed before and during their stay in Colombia. These instructions must be obeyed in order to avoid inconveniences and to facilitate the scholarship holder's travel and initiation of studies.

12. SUSTAINMENT DEPOSITS OR DISBURSEMENTS:

For the payment of the money corresponding to the assigned categories, to be paid on a **quarterly** basis, the scholarship holder must open a **savings account** in Colombia, in any bank in the city where he/she is going to study and for this purpose, he/she must present the foreigner's identification card (*cédula de extranjería*). Bank accounts may not be created with a passport, and the scholarship deposit will not be made until the scholarship holder has a bank certificate showing the foreigner's identification card as proof of identity. Once the foreign scholarship holder is in possession of this document, he/she must submit to the ICETEX International Relations Office, via e-mail, the certification issued by the financial institution **stating the account number and identification number (foreigner's identification card)**.

The scholarship holder must have financial support for at least three months of living expenses (approximately US\$700 per month), since the first support payment for living expenses, settling in and book expenses will only be made when the scholarship holder has complied with the requirements of sending the foreigner's identification card, certificate of bank account in Colombia, address and cell phone number in Colombia. This transfer will be processed upon receipt of the documents and the scholarship holder will receive payment within a maximum of two weeks thereafter.

Support payment will depend on the start date of the scholarship holder's academic program, not on the time the scholarship holder has spent in Colombia. In other words, if the scholarship holder enters the country one month before the start of the program, the payment will be made based on the official start date of the academic program, which will be verified by the university where the scholarship holder will begin studies.

The support payment for the following months will be made the first 10 days of the month that corresponds to the beginning of each trimester (which is equivalent to every three months). In other words, the support payment will be made quarterly in advance, for example, the support for the months of April, May and June will be paid on the first 10 days of April and so on.

Please note that the stipend will be paid to the scholarship holder while he/she is in Colombia and not while outside of Colombia.

13. SCHOLARSHIP HOLDER COMMITMENTS:

In order to obtain the best results in academic activities and to achieve an enriching experience, and to maintain his/her well-being and safety, the scholarship holder must fully comply with the following:

Legal Obligations:

- a) Comply with and abide by Colombian laws.
- b) Respect the rules of conduct and social customs.
- c) Complete the procedures for the type V visa and foreigner's identification card within the required deadlines, making sure not to let these documents expire, as this could result in fines and penalties. If the scholarship holder fails to comply with the above, he/she must assume the additional costs of the procedures.

Academic Obligations:

- a) Carry out the academic program within the same period for which the scholarship was approved, i.e., it is not possible to change programs or universities. Likewise, the student must successfully complete the academic program within the estimated time frame. Students may not defer courses or academic credits.
- b) Dedicate your time to the completion of the academic program, since you are not allowed to establish any employment contracts while you are an ICETEX scholarship holder. The courtesy visa endorsed by ICETEX does not allow you to work.
- c) Maintain a minimum GPA of 4.0 out of 5.0.
- d) Submit an experience report every trimester for which you will be informed about the submission dates and methodology; note that if the reports are not submitted on the stipulated dates, ICETEX will not make the disbursement for the following trimester until the scholarship holder submits the documents.
- e) Comply with the internal regulations of the institution where you are studying.
- f) Update contact and address information with ICETEX permanently.
- g) Attend all meetings called by ICETEX.
- h) Conclude the final thesis and its presentation within the scholarship period.
- i) Ensure that the thesis is focused on priority topics that will have an impact on Colombia.
- j) Submit a copy of the degree diploma to ICETEX.
- k) The following text is suggested to be included in your thesis paper, giving credit to the benefit received through the Beca Colombia Scholarship: *“Esta tesis corresponde al programa académico financiado con una beca otorgada por el Gobierno de Colombia a través del ICETEX”*.

Special Obligations:

The scholarship holder agrees NOT to participate in illicit activities related to money laundering and financing of terrorism and crimes arising from these. Furthermore, to communicate to ICETEX or a competent authority any information he/she may know regarding these crimes.

IMPORTANT:

If the scholarship holder does not comply with one or more of the scholarship requirements, the scholarship will be suspended as well as the courtesy visa type "V".

14. SUSPENSION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP:

ICETEX may temporarily or permanently suspend scholarship disbursements, if the scholarship holder incurs in any of the following cases:

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION:

Temporary suspension of the scholarship involves the suspension of disbursements in the following cases:

- Due to illness, mental or physical incapacity, which temporarily prevents the scholarship holder from continuing his/her educational activities in Colombia, duly justified, for a maximum period of one academic semester.
- Failure to send the quarterly experience reports certifying the fulfillment of academic obligations, grades, and attendance, which is signed by the coordinator or tutor of the study program being carried out.

Once the event has occurred, the scholarship holder must inform ICETEX within a period no longer than that required for the next disbursement, otherwise the scholarship will be definitively suspended. Once the cause for the temporary suspension of the scholarship has been overcome, the scholarship holder must inform ICETEX in order to continue receiving the support benefit.

PERMANENT SUSPENSION:

ICETEX may definitively suspend disbursements or not renew the scholarship, if one of the following cases is incurred:

- Abandonment of studies as established in the Application Guidelines/Regulations of the BECA COLOMBIA SCHOLARSHIP Program.
- Expulsion from the educational institution, considering that the student did not comply with the rules of the institution.
- Failure to demonstrate the required grade point average for the immediately preceding academic period.
- For presenting false information or adulterated documents.
- Failure to submit the academic documents required in the Letter of Commitment within the established deadlines.
- Illness, death, mental or physical incapacity that prevents the scholarship holder from continuing his/her academic activities.
- For noncompliance with Colombian immigration regulations

- Upon duly justified explicit request of the scholarship holder.

15. MONITORING AND CONTROL:

The follow-up and control of foreign scholarship holders will be in charge of ICETEX International Relations Office, which will monitor the experience of scholarship holders and make timely transfers or payments for these commitments.

16. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For additional information, please contact the ICETEX International Relations Office via email: becacolombia@icetex.gov.co

Bogotá, October 28, 2021.

**OFICINA DE RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES
INSTITUTO COLOMBIANO DE CRÉDITO EDUCATIVO
Y ESTUDIOS TÉCNICOS EN EL EXTERIOR - ICETEX**