

Cardinal Foley Scholarship Fund  
Supporting professional formation for the Church's ministry in  
communications

Taking into account the importance of communications for the pastoral service of the Church, there is a broad consensus among local Churches, the Dicastery for Communication and donor organisations, of the need for adequate professional formation for those who will be responsible for the future development of the Church's mission in the field of communication.

*"Catholic media work is not simply one more programme alongside all the rest of the Church's activities: social communications have a role to play in every aspect of the Church's mission. Thus, not only should there be a pastoral plan for communications, but communications should be an integral part of every pastoral plan, for it has something to contribute to virtually every other apostolate, ministry, and programme." (Aetatis Novae 1992, 17).*

Continuous development and progress, in both the technologies and the culture of communications, require that those holding positions of responsibility should not only be competent in the technical aspect of communication, but should also be reflective practitioners, capable of engaging with the philosophical, strategic and organisational questions posed by the changes that new technologies have brought about in the very dynamics and patterns of communication praxis.

Therefore, in 2012, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, donor organisations and CAMECO joined forces to establish a Scholarship Fund which would aim to support the formation of future leaders in the field of communications, and to strengthen local capacities to provide for future formation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This fund was launched in memory of Cardinal John Patrick Foley, former President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, honouring his enduring commitment to building the Church's competence in her communication involvement. Its goal/objective is to

\* qualify Africans and Asians who will have the capacity to provide proper formation for future Church communicators in local training institutes, communication (and theology) faculties and major seminaries. Unfortunately, at the moment, there is no support possible for candidates from Latin America. If you are a religious sister from Latin America, you can turn to our Special Communication Scholarship Programme for Religious Sisters. Applicants from Central and Eastern Europe should directly turn to Renovabis for support.

\* broaden the base of qualified priests, deacons, religious and lay people who are competent to further develop the communication ministry of the local Churches. We are especially interested in developing potential future national or regional communication coordinators.

The Scholarship Fund is coordinated and administered by the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO). The Board that will award the scholarships is composed of representatives of the Dicastery for Communication, missio Aachen, the Institute of Missiology, USCCB Catholic Communication Campaign, Renovabis, CAMECO and other donor organisations contributing to the fund in the future.

### **1. Who should be eligible for a scholarship?**

Priests, religious, permanent deacons and lay people, men and women, supported by their bishop and/or religious superior, and with a proven capacity (including practical experience) and interest in working in communications. The application needs to be presented by the respective Church authority. Applications sent by candidates themselves cannot be considered. The application should be done entirely in digital format. No handwritten application will be accepted. You have to use the application form you find on our website. The budget should be filled-in using the Excel sheet which also must be downloaded from our website.

### **2. What type of studies will be supported?**

Graduate and postgraduate programmes in (pastoral) communications – both in southern continents and in Europe/North America. However, applicants are encouraged to seek adequate and relevant study opportunities close to home, and half of the scholarships are foreseen for post-graduate courses at universities in Africa or Asia/Oceania.

Basic training (undergraduate studies) in communications cannot be supported and needs to be completed in the region of origin before submission of an application.

### **3. Criteria for selecting candidates**

- Proven capacity and interest of the candidate towards working in communications – including basic (academic) training in the region of origin, and experience in working in and through media.
- Committed support from the local bishop or from the superior of any order/congregation of which the candidate is a member – and a confirmation from the Bishops' Conference (and, if applicable, from the national communication coordinator) that the candidate's further training will be of benefit to the local Church.
- A clear perspective of the candidate's future task(s) and overall personnel development strategy in the framework of which the candidate will work.
- A mutual (local Church and candidate) commitment to involve the candidate in the communication ministry for at least three years.
- There is no age limit for applicants. However, preference will be given to candidates who are likely to be able to implement and further develop obtained skills and knowledge during long-term future work for the local church – in particular in leadership positions.
- We do not accept applications that have been written wholly or partially with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT or Gemini). Applicants may use AI only for grammar correction, and any such use must be clearly stated, as applications will be reviewed using AI-detection tools. Please, note that using AI to draft content often results in similar responses, which limits our ability to understand each applicant's unique perspective and may affect their chances of being selected.

The Screening Committee aims at a good balance of candidates, in terms of geographical origin, gender, and lay and priests/religious. It expects the selected candidates to achieve a high standard in their courses.

### **4. Accompaniment of scholarship holders**

We consider a close accompaniment of the candidates during their studies an integral part of this scholarship programme. This includes a virtual network among students, to facilitate contacts, common reflection, and exchange of

experiences and concerns. Later on, former scholarship holders should also keep in touch with one another, with the PCSC and donors, through the network.

### **5. Internship as part of the scholarship**

During the period of studies, the partners involved in the scholarship fund will promote where possible the candidate's pursuit of an internship related to their future task in Catholic communications – in Catholic media, AV production centres, a press office or a news service, etc.

### **6. Consultation about the formation plans**

A key concern of the fund is to support formation which responds to the specific needs of the local Church and the capacities and qualifications of the candidate. Therefore, as part of the application process, the fund may contact the candidate and their superior and enter into dialogue about the formation plans presented. This could include further consultation on suitable academic programmes and on complementary practical training (internship).

### **7. Funding**

The amount of the scholarship grant will be determined according to the study fees of the university chosen, to reasonable adequate living costs, and to a fixed sum for expenses directly connected with studies.

For those selected, the screening committee will approve support for the entire duration of the academic programme to be attended.

Travel expenses to and from the place of study, pocket money as well as exceptionally high study fees and living costs are not financed by the Foley Fund. When applying for the scholarship, the candidate must verify that these expenses are covered by her/his diocese or congregation, or through their own resources.

The bursaries are paid in yearly instalments. Before a next instalment can be transferred, the candidates must present a progress report of their studies, giving evidence of the grades achieved, as well as presenting a statement from their tutor or professor.

Due to financial restrictions, the Cardinal Foley Scholarship Fund can only support scholarships of amounts between 5.000 and 15.000 EUR. The scholarship holder must provide a detailed and reasonable budget. Therefore, please consider choosing an institution within your own country or continent to keep costs low and reasonable. Such programs are likely already available and may also offer greater cultural awareness and relevance to your context.

A scholarship can be cancelled before its date of expiration, if serious violations of the conditions under which the scholarship has been granted have occurred.

## **8. Timeline**

**Deadline for the presentation of applications: 27th February, 2026.** Written applications should be submitted to CAMECO, P.O. Box 102104, 52021 Aachen – Germany, exclusively in electronic form to [scholarship@cameco.org](mailto:scholarship@cameco.org).

The screening process in April might include further consultation and dialogue with the candidate and local stakeholders supporting their studies.

Candidates and their superiors will be informed about the final decision of the screening committee in May/June: this schedule should allow time for preparations (including language courses) to commence studies in the first term of the 2026/2027 academic year.