

## Questions from the Q&A session for the call for applications for the 2025 Shaping Futures Academy intake

17 October 2024, 14.00-15.00 CET

### 1. Theme: Questions related to “Language Proficiency”

- How do you show English Language Requirement (B2 Level) proficiency?  
A language proficiency certificate is **not required** as part of the application. However, we expect applicants to be proficient in English as it is the language of instruction throughout the programme.

### 2. Theme: Questions related to “Eligibility”

- I am currently unemployed. Can I still apply?  
No. The Shaping Futures Academy aims to create a network of participants and their respective institutions/organisations. In order for your application to be considered, we require a filled-out employer statement of support. Unfortunately, **applicants who are currently unemployed cannot be considered**, even if you meet the 3-year work requirement.
- What are the main criteria for selecting the participants?  
Process: The applicants must fulfill the Conditions for Participation (found in on our website) and hands in duly **completed application forms** (both applicant forms + a copy of a diploma/degree). AI-generated responses are generally discouraged as they don't give us insights into the applicant's personality.  
Professionally: Applicants need to work in the field of sustainable development or governance (or can motivate how they see their work benefiting from their participation in the Academy themed around the said topics).
- Can a self-employed person apply?  
Yes. If you are self-employed, you are welcome to **complete the employer form yourself** explaining how your business will benefit from participating in the Shaping Futures Academy, or how you plan to use the knowledge gained from the Academy to benefit your enterprise.
- I am the national citizen of a non-participating country, but I live in one of the participating countries. Can I apply?  
Yes. In order to be considered for the Shaping Futures Academy 2025, applicants must be a **national or permanent resident** of one of the

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participating countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, Togo and Zambia; EU, plus EEA and UK).

- Although I'm 24 years old now, I'll turn 25 before the program begins. Can I still apply?  
Unfortunately, you have to be at least 25 years old **at the time of application**.

### 3. Theme: Questions related to "Letter of Reference"

- As a PhD student, can my supervisor or a member of the academic committee fill the Employer's statement of support?  
You are welcome to approach your supervisor to fill out the employer's statement of support. The only requirement from our side is that, if you are selected, the person who authorizes your absence during Academy sessions is aware of your application.
- What can you do if your employer declines to give his/her support?  
Only **duly completed applications** are considered. This means the employer's statement of support **must be included** for the submission to be deemed completed. In this situation, we advise you to **advocate the benefits** of the Academy to your employer, which will positively impact your personal growth and the institution you work for (new knowledge and being part of a transnational network). Unfortunately, the express support of your employer is crucial since you will need to take time off from work and reduce your workload for specific periods during the Academy modules. Also, on your return, the employer ought to support you in integrating your new learning into your work environment.
- In situations where an applicant holds two jobs, is it acceptable to submit two employer statements?  
No, please submit only one employer statement. Choose the employer, who would benefit most from your participation in the Shaping Futures Academy in terms of institutional development. However, if you are selected, both employers must be **informed** about your participation in the Academy and are willing to grant you time off and reduce your workload for the different modules.

### 4. Theme: Questions related to "Degree Certificates"

- My diploma is not written in English. Do I have to translate it?  
We accept diplomas in **English, French, or German** languages. If your diploma is in a different language, please provide a translation to either English or French.
- Must the application forms bear the official stamps? I am applying online.

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If your company or institution has an official stamp, it is recommended to print, stamp, and scan your application form. However, if your employer does not have a stand, **digital signatures (without stamp) are sufficient.**

## 5. Theme: Questions related to the “Application Process”

- How long is the selection process and time frame?  
Successful applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection process in **January 2025**. After the closing date in November, the selection committee will consider all **duly completed** applications and make their selection.
- I applied last year but was not selected, despite my strong candidacy. Will you provide feedback to individual applicants?  
No. Unfortunately, due to the high number of qualified applicants, it is **not possible to provide feedback** to individual applicants.
- How many candidates do you want to join next year's cohort? Are there quotas for countries?  
The Academy consists of **25 participants**. We aim to achieve regional balance in our network, divided into four regions: Northern Africa, West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa, and Europe. Slots in the Academy are allocated to partner countries to ensure adequate regional representation.
- Can I submit other documents besides the main 3 documents for this application?  
No. Other documents (e.g. recommendation letters or certificates) will **not have any positive impact** on your application.
- Can one reapply in future years if they do not secure a position in the current application period?  
Yes, if you did not get accepted you are welcome to apply again in the following year.

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- Can I use chatbots to enhance, improve, and fix my grammar errors in my application?

We **strongly discourage** applicants from submitting AI-generated responses, which tend to be generic and give us no insights into who you are as a person. The purpose of inviting applicants to provide self-generated responses acts as a first introduction to who you are as a person, and we also have to consider group dynamics for each cohort given the length of the Academy. Chatbot usage should be kept to a minimum, for instance, to correct your grammar or spelling mistakes and enhance your self-generated answers, not to answer the questions.

- Do early applicants get priority selection?

No. An early submission does **not influence** the chance of selection.

## 6. Theme: Questions related to the “Components of the Programme”

- Could you confirm the exact dates for the in-person sessions in Germany & Ghana?

The exact schedule of the Shaping Futures Academy 2025 can be found on our website, as well as in our brochure (online).

- Is the online session full-time or part-time?

The Academy's online modules are scheduled as **part-time exchanges**. **This translates to three-hour daily sessions (varies between synchronous to asynchronous calls)**. Please note that sessions take place during working hours to accommodate the different time zones participants live in.

- Are bundles offered for the digital modules for connectivity?

Yes. The cost for connectivity may be reimbursed. This is calculated on an individual basis and will be paid upon request.

## 7. Theme: Questions related to the “Programme Details”

- What kind of profile of applicant are you looking for?  
Kindly refer to the Conditions for Participation for the qualifying criteria. In terms of:  
Character: Applicants that demonstrate a learner’s mindset in their motivation.  
Someone who is willing to share their knowledge and be respectful while others share theirs.  
Profession: someone who works on the topic of sustainable development and governance or can motivate how they can benefit from participating in a programme themed around the two topics. We are looking for candidates who embrace a holistic perspective and system thinking perspective looking beyond their disciplinary borders.
  
- Is the daily allowance provided only during the face-to-face sessions, or does it cover the entire duration of the program?  
Participants qualify for a stipend during in-person phases of the Academy. Costs for increased internet access or data bundles may be reimbursed and are calculated on an individual basis. We don’t offer any financial incentive for the in-between phases.
  
- Could you provide information about the lodging arrangements for those attending in person (singles and couples)?  
As it stands, we only offer accommodation to participants of the Academy; in Europe, it is a one-person studio apartment, and in Ghana, we offer an equivalent. Please refer to the Conditions for Participation document, which is available on our website.

## 8. Theme: Questions related to “Miscellaneous”

- How will diploma equivalence be assessed? I hold a degree from a French business school, recognized as a master’s degree.

It does not matter in which country you obtained your degree. All master degrees will be considered equally. To be considered for the programme, applicants need to have obtained a degree equivalent to a bachelor degree.

- Can you defer if you are successful for 2025?

No. It is not possible to defer your participation once selected. We strongly urge everyone to only apply if you are absolutely certain that it is possible for you to actively participate.

- How can you stand out with your application?

Answer the questions to the best of your ability giving insights as to who you are as a person. We are interested to learn more about you as a person, your ambitions and professional background.

THE END