Call for proposals for the
"Athena Award for Teaching Excellence" 2026
(„Athene-Preis für Gute Lehre")
by the Carlo und Karin Giersch Foundation
(Carlo und Karin Giersch-Stiftung)
at the Technical University of Darmstadt

## Background

The Carlo und Karin Giersch Foundation (Carlo und Karin Giersch-Stiftung) at the Technical University of Darmstadt has awarded the "Athena Award for Teaching Excellence" ("Athene-Preis für Gute Lehre") since 2010. The prize is endowed with € 46,000 total per year and is awarded in all departments.

The "Principles for Studying and Teaching" at the Technical University of Darmstadt underline the significance of quality teaching for the excellent qualification of the graduates. In terms of teaching excellence, the high academic quality of our teaching content, student-centred teaching, the promotion of students' personal development, the cultivation of respectful interaction and a culture of openness as well as the improvement of feasibility of programme completion in the regular period of study are of particular importance in addition to the professional and teaching expertise of our teaching staff. The purpose of the award is to highlight the importance of academic teaching for TU Darmstadt and to create additional incentives to commit to teaching in line with these principles.

The prize can be awarded to individuals, groups of people, or organisational units of a department. Nominations for the award are possible for best practice models and can include concepts, measures, projects, courses, personal commitment, or other approaches in the area of studying and teaching which must always have a clear connection to specific courses. Nominations can be made at all qualification levels (from students to professors).

## Award criteria

The criteria for awarding the "Athena Award for Teaching Excellence" are:

- Quality of the idea and implementation in practice
- Relation to the Principles for Studying and Teaching
- Response and success
- Transferability
- Criteria for the respective special categories[1]

## Amount and division of the prize

The endowment of the "Athena Award for Teaching Excellence" at a total of €46,000 by the Carlo and Karin Giersch Foundation is divided as follows:

## Department prizes

A prize of € 2,000 (13 x € 2,000 = € 26,000) will be awarded in each department.

[1] You can find the criteria for the respective special categories at:
www.tu-darmstadt.de/athene-preis

## Main prize

A main prize of € 5,000 will be awarded from all the department prizes.

## Special prizes

Three special Athena prizes will be awarded in the following categories:

- "Digital teaching"
- "Interdisciplinary teaching"
- "Gender- and diversity-sensitive teaching"

The special prizes are endowed with € 5,000 each (3 x € 5,000 = € 15,000).
A double nomination is excluded.

All prizes go to the winning individual, organisational unit or group and can be spent freely.
The prize money can be split between a maximum of three people.

## Right of proposal

All members of TU Darmstadt are entitled to nominate candidates. Self-nominations are possible.

## Allocation

The awarding of the "Athena Award for Teaching Excellence" in the departments is the responsibility of the respective teaching and study committees under the direction of the Dean of Studies.

The central jury for the main prize (which is selected from the department prizes) and the three special prizes is formed by the Senate Committee for Teaching at TU Darmstadt under the leadership of the Vice President, Academic Affairs and Diversity.

## Award ceremony

The prize includes the payment of a sum of money and a certificate. The award will be presented by the President of TU Darmstadt together with the Carlo and Karin Giersch Foundation at TU Darmstadt on "Teaching Day" 2025.

## Awarding frequency

The prize is awarded annually.

**We kindly ask you to not publish any award information related to recipients until after the award ceremony**

## Timeline 2026

- February 2026: Call for proposals

  Application for department prizes
  Decision of the teaching and study committees of the departments on department prizes
  Please ask the Dean's office of the respective department for the dates of the deadlines.
- 16 July 2026: Deadline for nominating the prize winners from the departments and for submitting proposals for the special prizes
- September 2026: Meeting of the jury for the main prize and special prizes
- 18 November 2026: Award ceremony on "Teaching Day" 2026