

# Start

Studying in Germany

## Diverse and cosmopolitan

There's a lot to discover in Germany

## My life, my campus

Useful tips from other international students

## Successful studies

Finding the university that suits you best

Study in  
Germany



Land of Ideas

[www.study-in.de](http://www.study-in.de)

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# Editorial

**When you start university**, the world is your oyster. There are so many opportunities, so many possible paths and so many places where you can achieve your goals. Read in this magazine about why Germany might be of interest to you. Many young people from all over the world live and study here – perhaps you'll soon be one of them.

Find out which universities and degree courses exist in Germany and what sort of qualifications you can acquire. You'll be given tips about how to apply, about planning your time in Germany and about lots of practical aspects of everyday life. What is more, you will find answers to the question of how important it is to have a knowledge of German, and how best you can learn the language. Above all, however, we hope you will enjoy perusing the magazine and reading about the experiences of other international students in Germany.

Let Alexander from Canada, Ornella from Argentina, Emilija from Serbia and Jiang from China accompany you – it would be great if you were to find that Germany is also the place for you.

## Alexander Moriarty

is 24 years old. He will tell you about how important it is to know German if you want to study here. A Canadian, he is doing a master's in Autonomous Systems at Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences – a course that is run in English.

## Emilija Gagrcin

from Serbia started learning German at an early age and spent a year in the Black Forest as an exchange student. Now 21, she is doing a degree in Media and Communication Studies in Berlin. She will tell you how to get off to a good start here.

## Ornella Amichetti

is doing a degree in cultural studies in Frankfurt an der Oder. At the same time, the 26-year-old from Argentina is working at the uni-assist service centre – making her the perfect person to explain how you can successfully apply for a place at university.

## Jiang Zhen

will give you tips about how to plan your time in Germany. He explains how to find a university that suits you. 25-year-old Jiang from China is taking a master's degree in Energy Conversion and Management at Offenburg University of Applied Sciences.

Are you thinking about studying in Germany? Jiang, Ornella, Emilija and Alexander have already made the decision – in the magazine they will tell you all about their lives in Germany and offer a whole host of useful tips.



# What makes Germany tick

There are countless different sides to Germany, and obviously the best way to get to know the country is to visit it and talk to the people who live there. Until you get the chance to come in person, however, our aim is to give you an idea of what makes Germany tick – you'll see, there's a lot to discover.



Dagmar Schwellen/laif, Daniel Ziegler/DAAD, picture-alliance/dpa MAFIAFOOD/Colourbox, Lucas Vallettillos/VWPics/Redux/laif, Tim Wegner

There are many ways to enter Germany – for instance via one of its nearly 40 airports. You can also travel from Germany to other countries whenever you like, as there are no checks at the borders between 22 EU states.

## Delicacies from around the world

On one street corner you'll catch the scent of a kebab, a block further along the aroma of curry will be wafting through the air, while the smell of fresh bread will greet you at the baker's. You'll be able to try dishes from around the world in Germany: Italian ice-cream, Arab falafel and Argentinian empanadas. More and more restaurants offer halal or kosher food. And you must try Germany's own tasty cuisine – its sausages, spätzle noodles and cakes, to name but a few of the delicacies.



## Wealth of cultural treasures



Hardly any other country boasts as many museums and galleries, with more than 6,500 collections open to the public in Germany. Berlin has a whole island devoted to exhibitions, with no fewer than six institutions to be found on "Museum Island". The "Neues Museum" is home to Nefretete – the bust of the legendary Egyptian queen is probably one of the things most often photographed by Berlin's hordes of international visitors. It is not only Germany's major cities that offer great

art and ancient treasures, however, as fascinating museums can also be found in many smaller towns. A theatre or cinema is never far away, no matter where in Germany you happen to be. 39 sites of UNESCO World Heritage are likewise to be found dotted around the country – ranging from mediaeval town centres and magnificent parks to disused mines. Recently, UNESCO added Corvey Abbey in North Rhine-Westphalia to its list of World Heritage sites.



## Did you know that ...

... Germany is also a nation of cyclists? People here use bicycles for around ten per cent of their journeys. In many cities you will find dedicated cycle tracks.



## Always active – a land of sport



Whether you want to play in a team or on your own, inside or outside – in Germany you are bound to find a sport you really enjoy. Universities offer a particularly wide range of sporting activities, including everything from aerobics to zumba courses. The advantage of university sports is that courses are cheap, as is membership in a sports club, where you will not only get to know lots of new sports but also many different people. Of course, it costs nothing at all to play sport outside, and more and more young people meet up to play football or table tennis in the park or to practise balancing on a slackline.

## Four seasons

**Spring, summer, autumn and winter** – the four seasons mean that the climate and the vegetation change noticeably every few months on the European continent. Watch nature awake in spring after its long winter sleep: flowers and trees blossom, meadows are transformed into a lush green. Temperatures climb to 30 degrees Celsius and more in the summer, while autumn yields a landscape that is colourful and picturesque. Winter is not excessively cold, but you will almost always find snow in the mountains.

Germany likes to show its colourful side, for example at the “Holi Festival of Colours”, while a broad range of music, theatre and literature events ensures that life is never dull.



Daniel Ziegler/DAAD, Charlie Yacoub/Getty Images, picture-alliance/dpa  
picture-alliance/dpa [2], Thomas Ebert/DAAD



## Eight hours of sunshine a day

**Summer days are long** in Germany – it gets light at around 5 am and doesn't get dark again till around 10 pm. Some regions are particularly spoilt for sunshine: one of the sunniest cities is Freiburg im Breisgau in southern Germany, which boasts an average eight hours of sunshine a day in the summer.

## In the heart of Europe

**Mountains, lakes and the North and Baltic Sea coasts:** Germany has a whole host of wonderful destinations for an excursion. During the summer months, walking, climbing or biking are excellent ways to explore, while skis, sledges and snowboards are a good choice in the wintertime. Intercity coaches, rental cars and Deutsche Bahn's trains allow you to discover the entire country inexpensively and safely. It is also easy to spend a weekend enjoying some of Europe's beautiful cities or landscapes, as **Germany is right in the heart of Europe and borders nine other countries.**



## Unspoilt nature: mudflats and forests



If you are a nature-lover and want to enjoy some unspoilt wilderness, Germany is just the place for you. **There are more than 100 nature reserves here**, accounting for a quarter of the entire country. They are home to some unique species – ever heard of a lugworm? It lives in the mudflats of the North Sea, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This area also provides a habitat for many other animals, and offers the richest diversity of birdlife in Europe. You will find another natural treasure pretty much on your doorstep, as Germany's expansive forests are the perfect place to relax and unwind.



# How to find the right university

Jiang Zhen (25) from China is taking a master's degree in Energy Conversion and Management at Offenburg University of Applied Sciences.

”

**I'd never been to Germany before**

when I started my master's. I was really fascinated by the country, as the world's biggest advances in renewable energies are being achieved here. It didn't take me long to decide that I wanted to do my master's in the country which produces these innovations. What is more, there are no university fees and things like rent, food and leisure activities don't cost all that much. That said, I didn't know right away where exactly in Germany I wanted to study.

**My first source of information** was the Internet.

I know from friends that it is easy to find key information about the country, its people and its universities on websites like [www.study-in.de](http://www.study-in.de). I myself found information about the German university system on a Chinese platform. The website also gave me the chance to chat with people already in Germany who are studying the subject that interested me. They advised me to choose a university of applied sciences where courses are more practical than at conventional universities and where students have the opportunity to forge links with industry at an early stage – for instance during the compulsory internship. Many of the lecturers at Offenburg work in international companies and know what





► everyday work life feels like. This practical relevance is very important to me as I would like to work in Germany once I graduate. The course contents were also a strong argument in favour of Offenburg, however, as my course covers all the different facets of energy. You can find out all the details on the university websites, many of which are in several languages.

**Offenburg is in the south of Germany.** Being a small city, it's very peaceful here. There are not as many students at my university as there would be at a larger institution, and learning conditions are excellent. That was also something that I took into account in my choice of university.

**“Practical relevance is very important to me.”**

**Most of my course lectures** at university are in English. I understand German pretty well now, but I preferred English, especially at first. **At the beginning, you will also find the international offices at universities very helpful** – that was how I found my accommodation and my tutor, who helps me for example when it comes to things like my visa or banking issues. I found the Baden dialect that people speak here a bit confusing at first, but I quickly got used to it. **“**

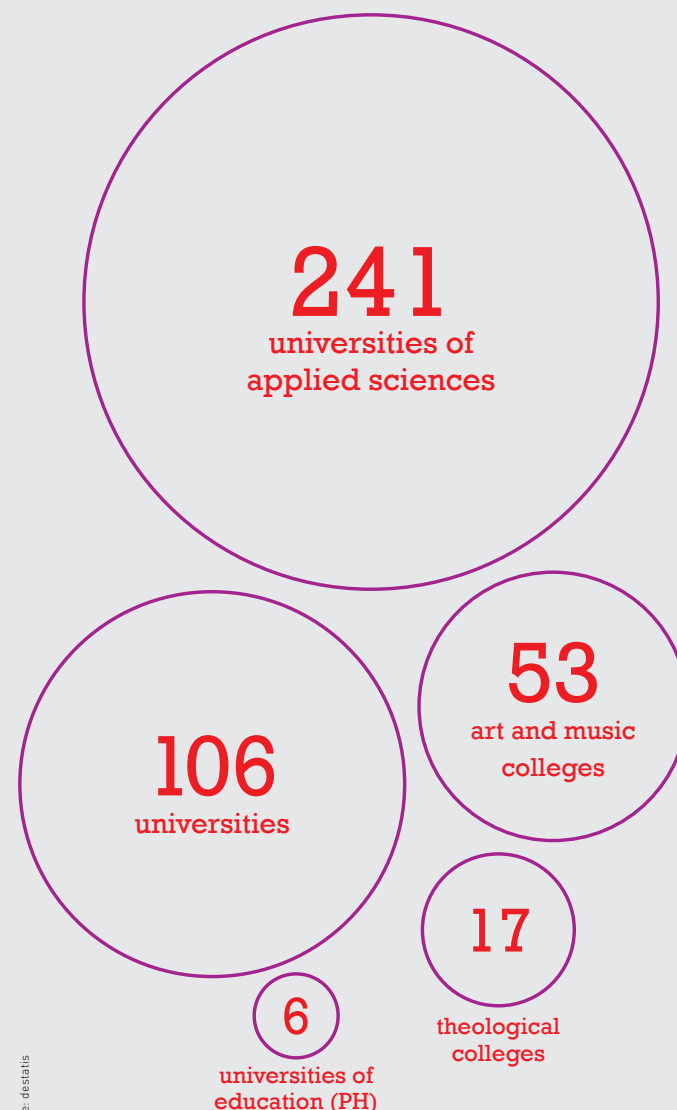


“Later I’d like to work in Germany”: Jiang Zhen is already forging contacts for his future career while at university.

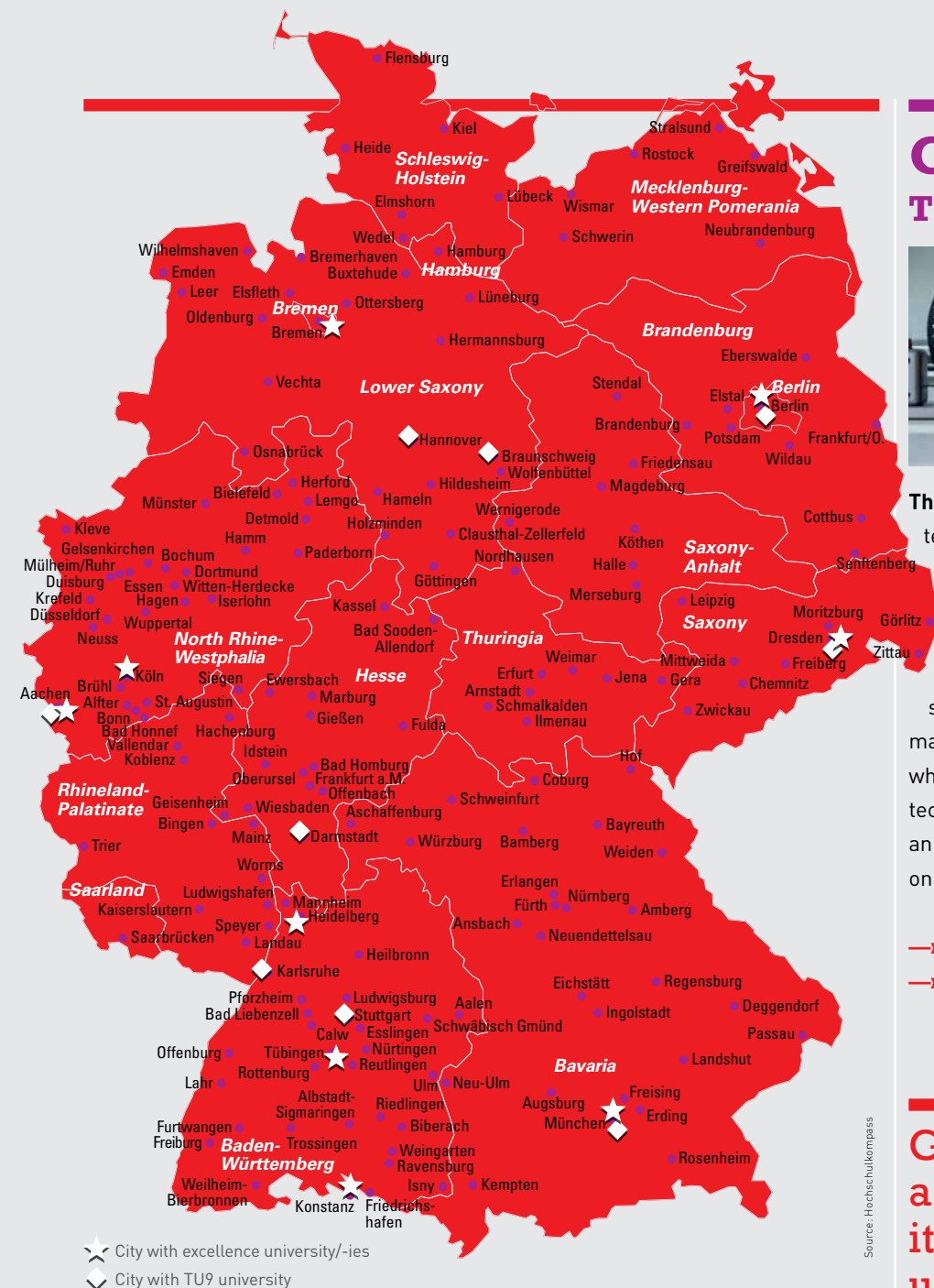
## For thinkers, tinkerers, artists

### What types of university are there?

Whether you’d rather immerse yourself in research or want to gain practical experience as quickly as possible, you are bound to find a university in Germany that suits your needs. There is a wide range of higher education institutions here, with everything from more conventional academic universities to art and music colleges or media academies. One special feature of the German education system are the “Fachhochschulen”, or universities of applied sciences, where students immediately put what they have learnt into practice, as degree courses include at least one or two practical semesters.



Source: destatis



Source: Hochschulekompass

## All places of higher education institutions at a glance

**More than 400 institutions** of higher education are to be found in Germany, with cities such as the media metropolis of Cologne, the port city of Hamburg and of course Berlin boasting several each. In Germany’s capital alone, you can choose between some 40 state and private universities. Other cities also have universities of international renown: Heidelberg is regarded as the best place for budding medics, while the technical universities in Karlsruhe and Aachen are among the best-known hotbeds of engineering talent. Perhaps your choice of location will be influenced by the business environment: corporations like car-manufacturer Daimler near Stuttgart and BMW in Munich attract students to the south, while Frankfurt am Main is a famous banking and finance centre.

## Outstanding The TU9 initiative



**These universities** are a magnet for technology enthusiasts: nine major institutes of technology have joined forces in the “TU9” initiative. The participating institutions offer courses in engineering and the sciences, as well as in medicine and management. If you want to find out whether you will meet the grade in a technical degree course, why not take an online test? The test can be found on the TU9 website.

→ [www.tu9.de/en](http://www.tu9.de/en)

→ [www.self-assessment.tu9.de](http://www.self-assessment.tu9.de)

**Germany invests a great deal in its schools and universities, not to mention in new ideas: in 2012, government expenditure on education, research and science exceeded 247 billion euros – around 9.3 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP).**



## Lively metropolises, picturesque small towns

Germany's university towns score high for diversity



Every city has its own particular face – such as Frankfurt am Main, Tübingen and Munich.

The university's surroundings play a key part in choosing the right place to study. Do you prefer the vibrancy of big-city life with cinemas, theatres and trendy districts, or do you feel more comfortable in a smaller town? Universities in large cities tend to offer a wider range of subjects, while arguments in favour of those in smaller towns include the short distances from A to B.

A major city or small town – it's no easy decision. The most important thing, however, is to choose a subject that reflects your interests and abilities. The websites of the universities and towns contain precise information about the orientation of the various degree courses and higher education institutions. All the same, there are certain advantages and disadvantages of both small and large university towns that need to be considered – these may help point you in the right direction, so we have compiled a few additional tips.

Academic excellence is not confined solely to the big university cities in Germany, though they do offer more opportunities for finding an interesting internship or an attractive part-time job, as there are more businesses and institutions located in or around major cities. On the other hand, life in urban centres such as Munich, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main is comparatively expensive also for university students, while living expenses in a smaller town are often lower. Furthermore, you will probably find it easier to meet other students living nearby if you're in a small town. If the university you've chosen is also small, the seminars and lectures are unlikely to be as full as they sometimes are at bigger universities, and tutors and professors usually have more personal contact with their students.

## Did you know that ...

... there are more than 300,000 international students at German universities?

Ingolf Pompe/Getty Images/LOOK, Heinz Wöhner/Getty Images/LOOK, Raimund Koch/Getty Images, Norbert Hüttermann/DAAO

## A safe place to be

A country with no crime does not exist. Like anywhere else, you should of course give a wide berth to certain places if that is what local people advise you to do. These places might include the area around the central station or parks that are best avoided after dark. Essentially, however, Germany is one of the world's safest countries, and women also have no need to fear.

### CHECKBOX

## What type are you?

### ☐ The analytical type

Do you like to get to the bottom of things? Analytical types are gifted observers and study everything with great thoroughness – these are the sort of people who are needed in science. The foundation for their career might begin with a degree course at a university known for its excellent research.

### ☐ The practical type

Do you like tinkering with things and constantly refining your ideas? Practical types put ideas into practice immediately and like to carry on testing everything until it works. Perhaps you would be best off studying at a university of applied sciences, where theoretical learning is quickly followed up with practical application.

### ☐ The creative type

Is painting your passion? Are you a talented singer or want to pursue a career on the stage? Perhaps the teachers at one of Germany's many outstanding music and art colleges can accompany you on your way.

## So much choice – the right subject for everyone



You may already be familiar with bachelor's and master's degrees from your home country – qualifications you can also acquire in Germany. A handful of courses lead to a different degree, such as the German "Diplom", "Magister" or state examination. The service section at the back of this brochure contains further information about the different qualifications.

Are you still somewhat unsure what you want to study? You will find many tips for choosing the right subject online. The website [www.study-in.de/en](http://www.study-in.de/en) provides an overview of all degree courses plus a great deal of additional information. Some websites offer free self-assessment tests, giving you the chance to evaluate your abilities and find the right course for you. If you still have only a vague idea that you might do something "in the area of technology and energy" or "language and culture", the "SIT" test from "ZEIT Online" and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) might help. You answer 72 short questions and your personal profile will be revealed.

→ [www.study-in.de](http://www.study-in.de)

→ [studiengaenge.zeit.de/sit](http://studiengaenge.zeit.de/sit) (only in German)

→ [www.che.de/en](http://www.che.de/en)



# How to apply successfully

Ornella Amichetti (26) from Argentina is doing a bachelor's degree in cultural studies in Frankfurt an der Oder and works at uni-assist.

**”** I take the train several times a week from Berlin to Frankfurt an der Oder, where I am in my third semester of a degree in cultural studies at the university. The journey takes a good hour, during which time I normally read a bit or do some preparation. I live in Berlin because it's just such a great city. I'm in love with Berlin – and besides, I've got a job there.

**At uni-assist,** I answer questions mailed or phoned in by young people from all over the world wanting to study in Germany. Often they want to know about certification. Many applicants do not realise that you cannot simply submit copies of your school-leaving certificates. My parents had to send me the certified documents from Argentina because I was already in Germany at the time. Before starting university, I spent eight months doing an internship in online marketing. I had already completed a vocational degree course in advertising back home in Argentina and worked for the international student organisation AIESEC. I am now benefiting from this experience in my job at uni-assist.

**Many applicants** I talk to also want to know how long the application process will take, and ideally would like to hear the very next day that their application had been successful. I felt pretty much the same, but **would advise you to allow plenty of time!** Submit your application well in advance of deadlines, as you will then have time to add any documents you may have forgotten before. Another tip – don't give up! I also had to apply to several universities through uni-assist before I finally got a place. **“**



# Your path to a place at university

## CHECKBOX

## Make your choice and apply

### ☐ Where do you want to study?

Don't wait too long before you start looking for interesting degree courses, as you need to apply four to five months before the start of the semester.

### ☐ Where do you have to apply?

That depends on the degree course you are interested in. You apply either to the Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung, uni-assist or to the university itself.

### ☐ Which documents do you need?

The most important document is your school-leaving certificate. Some universities require you to have completed internships and to have a knowledge of German or English. If so, you will also need to provide written proof of this.

**How you need to apply** will depend on the subject you want to study and where you are from. **There are three paths in Germany that can lead to a place at university.** Do you want to study a subject with a nationwide numerus clausus (NC)? And did you take the Abitur exam (the German university entrance qualification) at a school in Germany or at a German school abroad, or are you from an EU member state, Liechtenstein, Iceland or Norway? In that case, send your application to the Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung, the Trust for Admission to Higher Education.

You should choose the second path if you wish to apply for a subject with a nationwide NC, did not take the Abitur in Germany and come from a country other than those listed above. In this case, you need to find out whether your preferred university is a member of uni-assist. If so, apply to uni-assist, and otherwise apply directly to the university. If you intend to study a subject with a local NC or no NC at all, the third path is the right one for you. In this case, you also need to check whether you should apply to the university itself or via uni-assist.

→ [www.hochschulstart.de](http://www.hochschulstart.de)

## Help with your application

**If your application path takes you via uni-assist**, the experts there will check whether your school-leaving certificate meets the requirements for university admission in Germany and whether you have all the documents you need. Once your application is complete, uni-assist will forward it to the university in question. You will have to pay for the services offered by uni-assist. The advantage of this path is that you do not have to contact every single university yourself. **The preliminary screening of applications by uni-assist can be used for more than 100 German universities**, so you only have to have your documents certified once. What is more, you can apply as many times as you like through uni-assist.

→ [www.uni-assist.de](http://www.uni-assist.de)



## Numerus clausus (NC)

**In some subjects** there are more applicants than places available. Admission is restricted by the numerus clausus. There are two types: subjects like medicine have a nationwide NC, while subjects with a local NC have a limited number of places at individual universities.

## Did you know that ...

... you can choose between more than 9,000 different bachelor's and master's degree courses at German universities?

## More popular

437,455  
first semester students

75,598  
of them from  
abroad

Source: destatis

**In the winter semester of 2013/2014, one in six students starting university here came from abroad, making Germany the most popular country after the USA and Great Britain.**



## Be flexible

**The most favoured universities** in Germany are inundated by a huge number of applications every semester, so do not apply only to one university. It also makes sense to be flexible when it comes to the degree course you choose, especially if you are applying for a subject with a numerus clausus (NC) such as medicine. If you look, you are certain to find other – perhaps similar – degree courses that also suit you. In any case, it is best to submit several applications to several universities.



# How to get off to a good start

Emilija Gagrcin (21) from Serbia is doing a bachelor's degree in Media and Communication Studies in Berlin.

“When you arrive, there are lots of things to sort out, such as finding an apartment or room. I myself live in a hall of residence now – I found a place there through the “Studentenwerk”, the student service organisation. Living in halls of residence is a very good way to meet people. I share the kitchen with seven other students, and there are 15 of us on my corridor, almost all of whom I see every day. There are many sports and project groups – I’m in the gardening club. Our hall of residence isn’t in the city centre, but that means we have some garden space in which we can grow tomatoes and flowers.

I was supported financially by my granny, when I first came to Germany. That’s why it was important to me to get a job quickly and earn some money. It’s not difficult to find work in Berlin, as there are plenty of opportunities. Initially I worked as a waitress, until my application to work as a student assistant was successful. I earn almost 500 euros a month at the university. In addition, I qualified for a scholarship which gives me roughly 300 euros a month on top for one year. I live frugally and my room in the hall of residence is relatively cheap, so I can make ends meet. ▶

Stephan Pramme – Taken in the Philological Library of Freie Universität Berlin







"I recommend that you just keep asking questions!" At the start of her course, Emilija often needed – and found – advice and help.

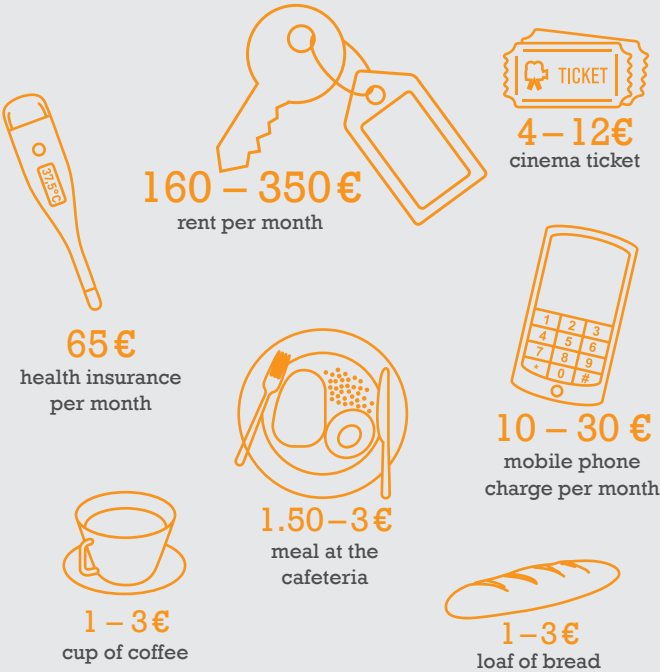
► **There are advice centres at university** where you can find out about accommodation, finances, studies and much more besides. The people there are always friendly and can usually help you out. Of course, the International Office will be your first port of call, and the foreign department of the students' union (AStA) has good insider tips to offer. I was active in the AStA myself for a year and a half, and met lots of people. When it's a question of the contents of your degree course, the student bodies at the institutes are the right place to go. At the beginning I took advantage of much of the advice on offer and found solutions to all my problems. I recommend that you just keep asking questions!

**"Be open to any help that is offered."**

**Take the time** to gather information and think carefully before making any decisions. You should never sign or decide to do anything if you do not understand exactly what it means. This applies for instance to tenancy agreements, employment contracts or insurance policies. If you are uncertain, it's best to consult one of the advice centres at university. You should always be open to any help. " "

# How much is it?

There are some expenses – such as for rent, food and health insurance – that you simply cannot avoid, though in some cases there are discounts for students. On average, students in Germany spend 794 euros per month.



## Regional mobility



**To study at a state university in Germany**, you normally do not have to pay tuition fees. They are charged for only a handful of master's degree courses. The amount varies – you can find out more from the universities in question. When you matriculate, however, all universities levy a "semester contribution" to cover their administrative costs – anything from 100 to 350 euros. At many universities in Germany, this contribution automatically includes a season ticket for buses, trams and regional trains for the duration of the semester. In some cases, you can travel throughout the entire region.

Stephan Pramme, Daniel Ziegler/DAAD, Georg Knoll/laif  
Ausserhofer/Himeel/DAAD, Fotostudio Bastian



# Did you know that ...

... Germany ranks in the top ten for education in the OECD's Better Life Index?

## "A bit of help makes for an easier start"

**Prize-winning project: at TU Freiberg, local people volunteer to proofread work by international students and help with formulating sentences.**

### How do you support young people from abroad who come to study in Freiberg?

The Bergakademie Freiberg is a small and compact campus-based university, which is a major advantage for our work. We even take our applicants by the hand and accompany them right from the outset. Bilingual orientation days before the semester gets underway are just as much part of our service offering as German courses and a "welcome point", where staff are on hand virtually around the clock to help new students in the first few weeks of the semester. On request, one of our students will even provide assistance with finding accommodation. These may be small things in themselves, but they make for a much easier start to everyday student life.

**Your initiative "Sprache ist Brücke" – language is a bridge – was awarded a prize by Germany's Federal Foreign Office. The initiative brings students and local people together – how does this work?**

For example by putting international students in touch with volunteer tutors who are willing to proofread assignments or can provide language assistance when it comes to writing a final dissertation. We also find language mentors who meet with the students and even invite them into their

homes. Furthermore, we set up "language tandems" comprising international students and local Freiberg people who wish to improve their language skills. Over the years, this has given rise to a lively intercultural exchange.



**"When students feel content and happy, they will also produce good work."**

**Katja Polanski**, director of the International Office at TU Bergakademie Freiberg

### How can you tell that your efforts pay off?

Students in Freiberg are very well integrated into the local community. They go into kindergartens and schools and present their countries to the children there. The international evenings staged at the university are also very popular – the visitors cook together and everyone finds out about the culture of the different countries. Our success can also be measured in concrete terms, however. Today, more international students successfully complete their studies than was the case just ten years ago. This is proof to us that students who feel content and happy will also produce good work.



Only spending a few months in Germany? In many cities there are letting agencies known as “Mitwohonzentralen” which will find you an apartment or room for a short-term let. The fees depend on the size of the flat and the length of the lease.

## Your own four walls



**No other type of accommodation** is as popular – nearly 40% of all foreign students in Germany choose to live in halls. It's also the cheapest option: depending on the city where you are based, a room will cost you between 160 and 300 euros per month. It isn't only the low rent that counts, however, as cooking in the communal kitchen is a good way to meet people. In many halls, tutors make sure that you settle in quickly. Ask at your university's student service organisation to find out which halls have tutors.

→ [www.study-in.de/wohnheimfinder](http://www.study-in.de/wohnheimfinder)

## Almost like family life: sharing a flat



**Many students think** that living in a shared flat is the ideal choice, as it allows them to enjoy breakfast together at the weekend or cook together after a day at university. You have your own room but share a kitchen and bathroom with the others, so you quickly make new friends. If you are leaving home or moving to a foreign country, sharing a flat may help you feel less lonely.

## You meet new people right from day one in a shared flat.

**A room in a shared flat** is often cheaper than renting your own apartment – and is much easier to find. Especially in the semester vacations many shared flats are looking for new flatmates. Rents can vary a great deal, and even a room in a shared flat can cost quite a bit in urban centres such as Munich, Cologne or Hamburg. How much you pay, also in terms of utilities, will depend among other things on the size of your room. If you plan to embark on life in a shared flat, it's best not to be overly sensitive – there's bound to be a bit more hustle and bustle than in your own place. One typical headache is how to set up a cleaning rota!

**You should therefore think carefully** about which type of accommodation will suit you best. Renting a room as a lodger in someone else's house might also be a solution. “Accommodation for home help” projects (“Wohnen für Hilfe”) are currently being initiated in many cities – they involve people, usually senior citizens, renting out rooms in return for a bit of help around the house. With this type of accommodation you will only have to pay your own bills, such as electricity.

→ [www.wohnenfuerhilfe.info](http://www.wohnenfuerhilfe.info) (only in German)

### CHECKBOX

## Where do you want to live?

### Student hall of residence

A room in a hall of residence is the cheapest option. You may find that there is a wider choice of accommodation available in most cities than you realised – from a furnished room to apartments for couples with children.

### Shared flat

Shared flats are popular alternatives and involve two or more people sharing a private apartment. It's a good way to meet people, and the costs are reasonable. You can find vacant rooms online.

### Private apartment

A private apartment is almost always unfurnished and tends to be more expensive than other types of accommodation. Incidentally, you will have to pay a deposit when you first rent any flat – assuming you hand it back in good condition, you will have your deposit returned to you.

## Well prepared for university

You want to study in Germany but don't feel that you have the requisite level of subject knowledge? No problem! Many universities offer preparatory courses to give you a good grounding and introduce you to academic working methods, helping to get you off to a good start in Germany!

→ [www.daad.de/prepcourses](http://www.daad.de/prepcourses)

## Helpful students

Many young people in Germany are happy to help others.



**Social commitment** is taken seriously in Germany, with many young people working as volunteers – for instance in a sports club or in facilities for children. There are also many possibilities for students at university to make themselves useful, such as in the student parliament, in the various student bodies or in mentoring programmes. Obviously, such activities are not compulsory, but they can be an opportunity to meet people and make some useful contacts.

**Your hard work** will be rewarded because you will acquire important experience. In some cases, you may even receive an award. For ten years now, the DAAD prize – which is financed by the Federal Foreign Office – has been awarded to foreign students who perform particularly well in their studies and also engage in the community. During her time studying in Bremen, Svetlana Korotkova from Russia looked after students from abroad who already had children to support, Tomer Shenar from Israel gave after-school tuition to children in a Berlin neighbourhood centre, while others help promote intercultural relations at their universities.

→ [www.daad.de/preise](http://www.daad.de/preise)





# How much German you really need

Alexander Moriarty (24) from Canada is doing a master's degree in Autonomous Systems at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

**“** I have a German girlfriend – actually she would be the ideal language tandem partner for me. To be honest, we mostly speak English together, but I don't really know why.

**There's no doubt that** you can survive in Germany even if you don't speak German. My university is really international – many of my fellow students come from abroad and tend to speak English amongst themselves. The matriculation forms I had to complete were available in my native language, and the courses in my master's degree programme are also run in English.

**Nonetheless, I believe it's important** to be able to speak German as it allows you to get to know people much more quickly and understand the local culture a lot better. You are much more likely to really enjoy your time in Germany if you speak the language. Admittedly, even the people I have to deal with in official authorities do speak English, but I know that that is not always the case. **I would therefore advise any international student who is coming to Germany to take a language course beforehand or when beginning their studies in Germany.** When I graduate I'd like to work in a German company, and I'm sure that a knowledge of the language will improve my chances in finding a job.”





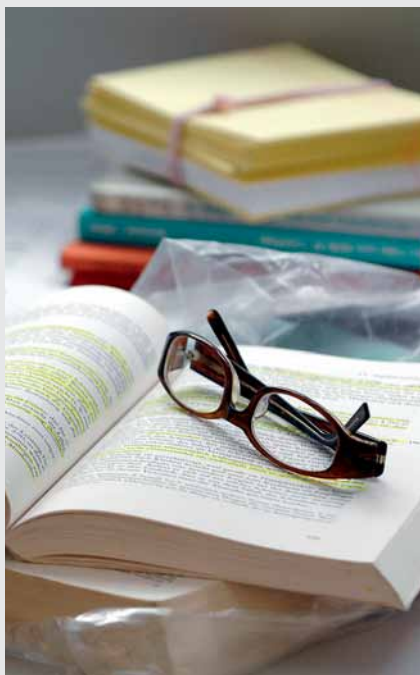
## Studying in German or English

There are more than 1,000 degree courses in Germany that can be studied in English. You will also find it easy to use English at university outside the lecture theatre. Often it is possible to take a German language course while you are doing your degree. Some subjects are only on offer in German, however. In some cases you will have to prove that you can speak German when you submit your application. A knowledge of German is also important in everyday life – after all, the best way to get to know a country is by talking to the people who live there. One way to improve your German is in a language tandem: students with different mother tongues meet regularly and learn by chatting to one another.

→ [www.daad.de/international-programmes](http://www.daad.de/international-programmes)

## Did you know that ...

... around 15 million people in the world are learning German as a foreign language?



100  
million  
native speakers

With more than 100 million native speakers, German is the most commonly-spoken language in Europe. Until today, the German language also plays a key role in certain academic disciplines such as philosophy.

How good are you at German grammar? You can put your language skills to the test online. The Goethe-Institut even offers a memory game, and an on-line assessment test (onDaF) is also available. You can use the test to apply for a scholarship.

Ausserhofer/Hinzel/DAAD, Norbert Hüttermann/DAAD (2), Stephan Pramme

## Stimulating summer school courses



University holidays differ in length depending on which federal state you are in and at which university you are studying. Normally there are no lectures between July and September. During this time, many universities offer a range of summer courses in all kinds of subjects. Perhaps you want to learn German or improve your knowledge of the language? Then take advantage of one of the training courses for the TestDaF ("Test of German as a Foreign Language"): you can prepare for the language test, improve your business German or take a crash course with a special focus on Germany and its culture. You will also find a large selection of specialist courses in the database of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Art and architecture are on offer, as are technical disciplines and seminars in science or economics. But don't worry, there will also be a bit of a holiday atmosphere, as excursions or trips to exhibitions and concerts tend to be part of the summer course programme. What is more, the summer courses give you plenty of opportunity to explore the local area.

→ [www.summerschools.de](http://www.summerschools.de)

### CHECKBOX

## How best to learn German

### ☐ Foundation and advanced courses

Universities run these courses to prepare you for the usual language tests. In specialist courses you can collect credits that will count towards your degree.

### ☐ Goethe-Institut and adult education centres

Non-university institutions such as the Goethe-Institut and the adult education centres ("Volkshochschulen") offer a selection of courses and also give you the chance to learn German for everyday use.

### ☐ Online language courses

You can use online language courses to prepare for your time here, for instance at the Deutsch-Uni Online (DUO) e-learning portal.

→ [www.deutsch-uni.com/en](http://www.deutsch-uni.com/en)

→ [www.goethe.de](http://www.goethe.de), [www.goethe.de/memo-spiel](http://www.goethe.de/memo-spiel)

→ [www.ondaf.de](http://www.ondaf.de)

## Scholarships for courses

Summer schools at German universities are not free of charge, but you can apply to the DAAD for a scholarship.

→ [www.daad.de/hsk-kursliste](http://www.daad.de/hsk-kursliste)





# At a glance: key facts about studying in Germany

Covering everything from accommodation to working in Germany, our service section explains some of the main aspects of German university life and provides concise and easily understandable answers to frequently asked questions.

## A Accommodation

If you are planning to live in a student hall of residence, the local student service organisation is a useful port of call. On its website you will find an overview of the different types of accommodation available, as well as application dates, online forms, location maps, current vacancies and all the key information you will need about accommodation. The best places to find a room in a private shared flat or your own apartment are on the Internet, on the display boards in the refectionary, faculties and student union, or in the local newspaper. Beware: if you rent a private room or a flat rather than opting for a hall of residence, an estate agent may be involved who will charge a commission.

→ [www.daad.de/wohnen](http://www.daad.de/wohnen)

→ [www.internationale-studierende.de/meta/studentenwerke](http://www.internationale-studierende.de/meta/studentenwerke)

→ [www.wg-gesucht.de](http://www.wg-gesucht.de)

→ [www.studenten-wg.de](http://www.studenten-wg.de)

→ [www.immobilienscout24.de](http://www.immobilienscout24.de)



New home: many students live in a shared flat and quickly make new friends.

## Application dates

Some degree courses – such as medicine, for instance – are subject to restricted admission regulations nationwide. You will need very good grades if you wish to study one of these subjects. Since places are allocated centrally, there are standardised deadlines for all universities. Applications for the winter semester must be received by 15 July, while 15 January is the closing date for summer semester applications. In other subjects, the individual universities set their own dates for degree course applications, aptitude tests, interviews and matriculation. Make sure to check the closing dates for application to your desired course in good time – you don't want to be late and miss out.

→ [www.hochschulkompass.de](http://www.hochschulkompass.de)

## B Bank account

You will need a bank account to handle monthly payments such as your rent and insurance premiums. Before you open an account, check which fees are charged and ask about a student account. Many banks and savings institutions offer free current accounts for students. Universities often have a tutor programme – if so, someone can help you to set up an account or arrange appropriate insurance.

## C Career services

Even though it may seem a long way off when you begin your studies, sooner or later you will graduate and

start looking for a job. Professional assistance can be found at universities, many of which have set up career service centres where you can find out about the employment market and take seminars to learn how best to apply.

## Certificates

The admissions database of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the "Anabin" information portal will help you work out whether your school-leaving certificates will also be recognised in Germany. If they are, you will be able to apply for a place at a German university. If the qualifications you have obtained in your home country are not sufficient, you will have to take an entrance examination. The results of this test are intended to indicate whether you fulfil the subject-specific and language requirements to undertake a course of study at a German university. You can take a one-year foundation course at a "Studienkolleg" to prepare you for the entrance examination.

→ [www.daad.de/zulassung](http://www.daad.de/zulassung)

→ [www.anabin.de](http://www.anabin.de)

→ [www.inobis.de/bewerben.html](http://www.inobis.de/bewerben.html)

## Credit Points

You collect credit points whenever you attend lectures and seminars, when you prepare presentations and when you submit coursework. In line with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), one credit point is

equivalent to roughly 25 to 30 hours of work. If you wish to complete your course of study within the standard period of time, you should aim to collect around 30 credit points each semester.

## E Entering Germany

Entry requirements differ depending on the country you are from, so it is important to check what is needed at an early stage. Students from the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and certain other European countries can enter Germany without a visa. Everyone else needs a visa if they wish to stay for an extended period. Upon arrival, you must present it to the foreigners' registration office ("Ausländerbehörde"), which will convert it into a student residence permit that is valid for periods of two years at a time. Make sure not to enter the country on a tourist visa, as this cannot subsequently be converted into a residence permit.

→ [www.auswaertiges-amt.de/visum](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/visum)

→ [www.internationale-studierende.de](http://www.internationale-studierende.de)



Centres of learning: German universities give you the best possible preparation for your degree.



Go exploring: the semester ticket often allows you to travel through the region for free.

## F Fees

"Diplom" and bachelor's degree courses are free of charge at state universities. All you will have to pay when you first matriculate and enrol for each new semester is a semester contribution to cover administrative charges and a contribution to the student service organisation ("Studentenwerk"). It costs between 100 and 350 euros depending on the state and the university, and often includes a season ticket for regional public transport. When looking at subsequent master's or PhD programmes, you should check carefully, as some of them incur fees. This is particularly the case for degree courses run by private universities, of which there are now around 100 in Germany. Whether you choose a state or private institution, the quality of teaching will be high.

## G German

Normally you will have to take a language test before being admitted to study at a German university. The best known are the DSH language proficiency tests that are taken at the universities themselves, and the DaF German as a foreign language test which you can take while still in your home country. All over the world there are language centres that prepare students for and carry out the DaF test. There are also other language

tests that universities will accept: the level II language diploma of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the "Central Advanced Language Test" and the Goethe-Institut large or small language diploma.

→ [www.daad.de/deutsch\\_lernen](http://www.daad.de/deutsch_lernen)

→ [www.goethe.de](http://www.goethe.de)

## H Hardship loans

What are you supposed to do if you cannot come up with the funds you need to cover your living expenses? What if you fall ill for an extended period and are unable to go out to work, for instance? Under certain circumstances, student service organisations are able to offer international students financial support in the form of hardship loans which you will later have to pay back. It is often difficult to meet the requirements for obtaining such loans, though students who find themselves in financial hardship will always find people at the student service organisations who are willing to give useful advice.

→ [www.internationale-studierende.de](http://www.internationale-studierende.de)

## Health insurance

You will not be able to matriculate in Germany without valid health insurance. Reciprocal agreements exist with certain countries, such as with European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) member states: if you have statutory health insurance in your home country, you can apply to a statutory health insurer in Germany to have your insurance cover recognised. To do this you will need a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which you can apply for from your health insurer. If the insurance cover you have in your home country is not recognised in Germany, you will need to take out health insurance in Germany, just the same as German



students do. Up to the age of 30, or until you have completed your 14th semester, this costs around 65 euros per month. It is important to clarify before entering Germany whether your health insurance is recognised here and which costs are covered by your insurer when you are abroad.

→ [www.internationale-studierende.de/gerade\\_angekommen/krankenversicherung](http://www.internationale-studierende.de/gerade_angekommen/krankenversicherung)  
→ [www.ehic.europa.eu](http://www.ehic.europa.eu)

## I International Office

There is an International Office at every German university. The staff there will be happy to help you and answer any questions you may have about organising your stay in Germany, including questions concerning matriculation, forms you will have to complete and finding accommodation. Welcome parties, tutor programmes and International Office events give you the chance to get to know your university, the local town or city and many other students. The International Office is also a useful port of call if you have questions or problems during your studies.

→ [www.daad.de/aaa](http://www.daad.de/aaa)

## Internship

Students in Germany often complete an internship while at university. In many degree courses, especially at universities of applied sciences, internships are even compulsory. Students are often paid a salary while undertaking an internship. Even if you do an unpaid internship, however, it will still count as regular work. For students who do not come from a European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) member state, this means taking care not to exceed their 120-day limit (see "Working in Germany" for more information). If you have already exceeded

your limit, you will need to obtain permission from the foreigners' registration office ("Ausländerbehörde") and the local employment agency ("Agentur für Arbeit") before starting the internship – except in cases where it is a compulsory part of your degree course.

→ [www.zav.de/arbeitsmarktzulassung](http://www.zav.de/arbeitsmarktzulassung)



Big choice: numerous leisure activities are available, so you'll never be bored.

## L Leisure time

Whether sport, singing or acting is your passion, you will find leisure activities that suit you at every university. Useful contacts in this context are the tutors in the halls of residence, the international clubs of the International Offices and representatives of the university's religious communities. They stage events – particularly at the start of the semester – aimed at helping you settle in and meet people. Many universities also have a choir and/or an orchestra, where new members are always welcome. University sport is a good way of balancing out all that mental exertion, with everything from fitness classes to competitive sport on offer.

## Living costs

Students in Germany spend about a third of their money each month on rent. You will also need to budget for expenses such as food, clothing, travel, leisure activities and health insurance. You should expect to spend between 750 and 800 euros a month, even if you live frugally.

## M Matriculation

You can apply from your home country. However, once you have been allocated a place that you wish to take up at a university, you will need to matriculate there in person at the start of the semester. The closing date for matriculation is set by the university, and you must not miss it. Find out in advance which documents you will need to bring with you that day. You will generally need your letter of acceptance, proof that you have health insurance, the receipt to prove that you have paid the semester contribution, your passport and visa, plus a passport photograph for your student ID card.

## P Proof of funding

If you wish to apply for a visa to study in Germany, you will need to provide proof that you are able to pay the costs incurred by a course of study. This can be proof of your parents' income, a bank guarantee or a security deposit paid into a blocked account. A scholarship also counts as proof of funding. At

Many student unions offer service packages for international students. Besides the costs of accommodation, subsistence and the semester contribution, they also include arranging health insurance cover. Depending on which services you require, the package will cost you between 158 and 385 euros. You book the package before beginning your studies and no longer have to worry about it. It also makes it easy to calculate how much your stay in Germany will cost you. Please note that only a limited number of service packages is available.

→ [www.internationale-studierende.de/service/internationales/servicepaket](http://www.internationale-studierende.de/service/internationales/servicepaket)

the present time, the amount that is required for the proof of funding is around 8,000 euros per year. This is also important for you, as it ensures that you will not run out of money before you complete your studies.

→ [www.daad.de/einreise](http://www.daad.de/einreise)



Global: German bachelor's and master's degrees are internationally comparable.

## Q Qualifications

Roughly 90% of all degree programmes in Germany lead to a bachelor's or master's degree, which are internationally comparable. The bachelor's degree is a practice-oriented course that takes around three to four years and prepares you for the world of work. If you want, you can then follow it up with a master's. A consecutive master's programme simply builds on the content of your bachelor's degree, while other master's degree courses allow you to approach your subject from a slightly different angle. Having a master's is considered helpful in career terms. Remember that some master's courses incur fees. What is more, Germany also has some degree programmes that lead to a state examination – as for example is the case with medicine. Although you will study at a university, you will then take your exams at a state examination board. In the past, there were hardly any bachelor's or master's degree courses in Germany – students in the humanities would work towards the "Magister", while students of science and technology would generally acquire a "Diplom".

These qualifications are still available in a few isolated cases.

→ [www.hochschulkompass.de/en](http://www.hochschulkompass.de/en)  
→ <http://studiengaenge.zeit.de>

## R Refectory

Canteens at German universities are state-subsidised and will provide you with an inexpensive and well-balanced lunch. You can usually choose between one particularly cheap dish and a variety of other dishes, including vegetarian options. Refectories at most German universities also offer a salad bar.

## S Scholarships

Only few scholarships are awarded in Germany as compared with other countries. A quarter of international students receive a scholarship, roughly half of these being provided by a German organisation. One important point of contact in this context is the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD): its scholarship database contains information about all the different types of funding available, allowing you to find the scholarship that best suits you. You may also be able to qualify for a scholarship from a foundation, an organisation that supports highly-gifted individuals, a religious body or an industry-oriented organisation.

→ [www.funding-guide.de](http://www.funding-guide.de)  
→ [www.begabtenfoerderungswerke.de](http://www.begabtenfoerderungswerke.de)



Hard work pays: a scholarship allows you to finance your studies.

## T Tax

Students in Germany benefit from rather generous tax regulations and often pay little or no social security contributions and tax. The contributions you do have to pay will depend on your income. If you have what is known as a "mini-job" and earn no more than 450 euros per month, you will pay no tax whatsoever. If you earn up to 850 euros per month, which is equivalent to working more than 20 hours per week, you will pay a reduced rate of tax. You only become fully liable for tax if you earn more money over a longer period of time.

→ [www.internationale-studierende.de](http://www.internationale-studierende.de)

## W Working in Germany

Do you come from a European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) member state? If so, you are entitled to work in Germany, subject to certain time restrictions: you are only permitted to work 120 full or 240 half days per year. If you want to work more than that, you will have to seek permission from the local employment agency ("Agentur für Arbeit"). If you work as a student or graduate research assistant at university, you will be exempt from this regulation. In that case though, you will have to notify the foreigners' registration office ("Ausländerbehörde") of your job – they will decide whether the work can be classed as a part-time student job. If you do not come from an EU or EEA member state and have not yet begun your studies – perhaps you are still taking language classes in preparation for university courses – you are not permitted to work in Germany.

→ [www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)  
→ [www.daad.de/job](http://www.daad.de/job)  
→ [www.studentenjobs24.de](http://www.studentenjobs24.de)



PhD  
Bewerbung  
Praktikum  
degrees TU  
internship  
science  
German application  
Sprache  
university sport  
Hamburg  
Fachhochschule  
student service organisation  
Hochschulsport  
Bildung  
language diploma  
Scholarships  
Semester Berlin  
education  
Freizeit Hochschule  
Bewerbung Studienplatz  
Summer school  
International Office  
Fakultät Europäische Union  
Start university  
Studieren in Deutschland German  
accomodation  
Bachelor Master  
Dresden  
Wohnen Köln  
Studying in Germany  
Wohngemeinschaft  
Career Services Wohnen Sprachkurs  
Stipendien European Union  
Internationale Studierende research  
Wissenschaft seminars  
Regelstudienzeit Kunst Theorie Campus  
university of applied sciences  
Sprachdiplom language courses  
Credit Points qualifications  
Deutsch Forschung  
Wohnheim München  
international students  
Praxis hall of residence  
Vorlesung