



**Studying in
Germany**

Essential Guide to Studying in Germany for Free



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About This Guide

We have created this Study in Germany guide to help international students increase their chances of getting admitted at a German university, learn more about the requirements for international students, and best prepare themselves for studying and living in Germany.

This guide covers all the stages you need to go through and the actions you need to take from gathering the early information, preparatory stage, and all the way to staying in Germany after graduation, so you can make your dream of studying and living in Germany a reality.

Our guide will help you have the best experience studying and living in Germany as an international student, without the issue of figuring everything out on your own.

In this guide you will find answers to:

- What is the real cost of studying in Germany and do universities really offer free-tuition education for international students?
- Do you have to speak German fluently to study in Germany or is English language sufficient?
- What are the main requirements to study in Germany, how to increase your chances of admission at a German university, and where to look for scholarship opportunities.
- Who needs a student visa and how to get one?
- Can you work in Germany during/after your studies?
- **And a lot more inside...**

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STAGE I - Planning and Preparing to Study in Germany

Planning and preparation are essential steps for studying in Germany. This means, you will need to know how to properly plan and prepare so that you see yourself pursuing your qualifications in Germany in no time.

This section will help you understand the higher education (HE) sector and the living conditions/environment in Germany. Once you get an understanding of these, you will be able to choose a study programme that best suits your interests.

Commitment is an important factor when it comes to studying and living in Germany. Everything you do towards your goal to study in Germany, commit to it and do not give up when things get challenging. For a simpler process, from start to finish, go through our guide.

In this guide, you will find the key pieces of information, tools, and instructions to get yourself in Germany and create your dream career. The following pages will cover the requirements to study in Germany, the visa application process, admission requirements, living costs, and more.



1. Things to Know About Studying Abroad

Studying abroad has a wide range of benefits, both professional and personal. It is an experience that will change your life for the better, helping you become an independent person, excel in the labour market, and create life-long memories and friendships.

As an international student, you will learn to manage your time, finances, and prioritize your needs. Apart from the academic benefits of studying abroad, the aforementioned skills are essential if you want to become successful in your chosen field.

1.1. Advantages of studying abroad

The main advantages of studying abroad include:

- Academic knowledge boost.
- Social and cultural knowledge boost.
- Internationally recognized study degrees.
- Career prospects in the global labour market.
- Second/third language improvement.
- Improvement of soft skills (people, social, and communication skills)
- Improvement of hard skills (professional skills)
- Increase in diversity understanding.

1.2. Disadvantages of studying abroad

Disadvantages of being an international student include:

- Being away from family and friends.
- Managing living costs on your own.

2. Things to Know About Studying in Germany

Germany is an ideal place to study for international students who want to pursue their higher education qualifications. The higher education system is unmatched and highly regarded, which essentially is what makes Germany, as a study destination, so valuable and worthy.

Germany is a place of culture and art, and its quality of education is one of its most distinguished aspects. Throughout the years, this country has created some of the most successful people in the world, through its education and expertise.

2.1. Top 5 Reasons Why to Study in Germany as an International

Here are five things that make Germany a top-notch country to pursue a degree:

Reason 1: Germany Has Free Education and Internationally Recognized Qualifications

Most public German universities are free of tuition fees after the government approved a decision to abolish international fees in all public colleges in 2014. In the majority of higher education institutions, all you will be required to pay is a small amount dedicated to administrative and public transportation costs. Depending on the university, this payment ranges somewhere between €150 and €250 per semester.

But this is not all, German higher education institutions offer internationally recognized degree programmes which provide students with the necessary means to enter the global job market and tackle the issues of society. Having an internationally recognized degree gives you an extra edge and provides you with the confidence you need in today's competitive labour market. Germany has recognized what students need and has made those needs a priority.

Reason 2: German Universities Are Ranked Among the Top World's Best Universities

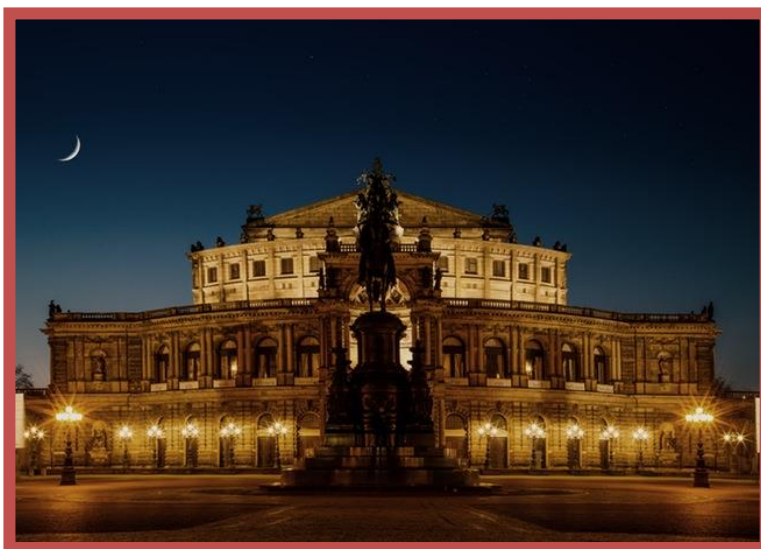
Due to their academic, teaching, and learning quality as well as the contemporary environment, scientific paper citation numbers, a good international reputation, great international students proportion and other quality standards, numerous German universities stand among top world universities. This further proves that higher education institutions in Germany know what is essential and needed in the world today.

According to two of the most renowned and credible higher education ranking authorities:

- [The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020](#) ranked 8 (eight) German universities among the top 100 world's best universities.
- [QS World Rankings 2020](#) ranked 8 (eight) German universities, among the top 150 world's best universities.

Reason 3: Germany Offers a Variety of Attractive International Study Programmes

Germany offers countless degree courses designed to suit everyone's interests. As an industrialized country Germany has invested a lot in engineering universities and today engineering programmes are particularly valued at German universities. However, there are numerous other study programmes offered at these universities, including



medicine and pharmacy where they are global leaders.

German universities offer a wide variety of more than 1,500 international programmes available for international students. Students get the opportunity to choose among numerous options, such as studying in German only, English only, or a combination of both. This is especially convenient for students who cannot speak the German language but are particularly interested in pursuing a degree from one of the many renowned German universities.

To find international programmes (but not only) check the DAAD database [here](#).

Reason 4: Germany Offers an Appealing Dual Education System in Germany

Education providers in Germany harmonize dual aspects of learning, such as theory and practice, something that greatly facilitates the student's understanding of labour market trends and needs. Theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge might be 'good enough' on their own, however, when they combine, they increase the employability rate by creating graduates with crucial skills.

Reason 5: Germany Is the Perfect Place to Build a Career

Prospects to enter the local labour market for a graduate in Germany are decidedly good. The dual education system, as aforementioned, does not only provide a degree but an immense career perspective, offering the opportunity for students to become active members of the developed German economy. Regardless of your academic field or country of residence, your German degree will help you build your career.

2.2. Higher Education Institutions, Study Levels, and Degrees Available in Germany

Depending on what students are interested in and their circumstances, Germany offers a large range of higher education institutions, different and attractive degree programmes, at all study levels. Basically, students have numerous options to choose from, since every degree programme you might be interested in, can probably be found in Germany, at a convenient cost.

2.2.1. Three Categories of HEIs Available to Internationals in Germany

Germany has a range of higher education opportunities available, depending on the student's focus and preference. In Germany, students can choose from the following:

- **Universities** - typically scientific-research oriented,
- **Universities of Applied Sciences** - mostly oriented toward professional practices, offering several internship opportunities during studies,
- **Colleges of Art, Film and Music** - dedicated to passionate individuals on creative and entertainment aspects.

2.2.2. Levels of Study Obtainable by International Students

Based on the highest degree of the student, Germany offers the three following study levels:

Undergraduate studies - for first-time students,

International exchange - students willing to complement their studies with a year or a semester of studies in an international institution abroad (bachelor or master),

Graduate studies - for bachelor graduates,

PhD studies - postgraduate studies, for students who have received their master degree.

2.2.3. Study Degrees Offered by German HEIs

There are three study degrees that German HEIs provides:

- **Bachelor Degree** (BA, BSc, BSEng) - First academic degree.
6-8 semester programme, 3 to 4 years, awarding 180 up to 240 ECTS Credits.
- **Master Degree** (MA, MSc, MEng) – Second academic degree.
2-4 semester programme, 1 to 2 years, awarding 60 up to 120 ECTS Credits.
- **PhD Degree** – Third academic degree.
4-10 semester programme, with a research work (dissertation), concluded with a doctorate.

2.3. Extensive Variety of Study Programmes Available by German HEIs

There are over 400 HEIs in Germany, offering an extensive variety of study programmes, such as Economic Sciences, Law, Agricultural and Forest Sciences, Art, Music, Design, Engineering Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Language and Cultural Studies, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Medicine, Health Science and Education. Programmes are available to local and international students alike.



2.3.1. Online Channels for Searching Study Programmes and Universities in Germany

When looking for online channels of finding a preferred study programme and/or preferred university there are several options, which can help you. If you are searching for a specific study programme, the following online databases offer categorized information in this regard:

- Online database for searching all available study programmes in Germany [here](#).

- Offering a comprehensive list of around 20,000 study programmes available in Germany.
- Online database for searching only International Study programmes in Germany [here](#).
 - Offering a categorized list of over 1,500 international programmes available in Germany.

The below online resources might greatly assist you in finding the ideal university:

- [Top universities in Germany based on specific study fields](#) - offering an extensive categorized list of universities in Germany, if searching for subject-specialized universities, e.g. best universities for Business or Technology
- [Comprehensive list of universities in Germany](#) - offering a wide comprehensive list of universities in Germany, if searching for all existing universities in different locations of Germany.

Top Business Schools in Germany

[GISMA Business School](#)

[Berlin School of Business and Innovation](#)

[EU Business School](#)

[IUBH University of Applied Sciences](#)

[Lancaster University Leipzig](#)

[University of Applied Sciences Europe](#)

[Arden University Berlin](#)

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2.4. Available Study Languages in German HEIs

Depending on the study programme you choose, there are three main study languages in Germany:

1. German only,
2. English only,
3. English and German.

2.5. Living Costs for International Students in Germany

Before making the decision to go to Germany and pursue a degree, it is important to get informed about living costs and expenses. The cost of living in Germany is quite reasonable compared to other European countries. One of the largest expenses in Germany is rent.

On average, you will need around 853 EUR/month to cover your living expenses in Germany as of 2020 (around \$957 US dollars) or 10,236 EUR/year (around \$11,484 US dollars). The cost of food, accommodation, bills, clothes, and entertainment are basically in line with the EU average.

Here are the essential monthly expenses for an average international student in Germany:

Category:	Average Cost:
Tuition Fees	None
Semester Contribution	€150 - €250 per semester
Accommodation	€350 - €500 per month
Public Transport	€80 per month
Study Materials	€30 per month
Food and Drink	€165 per month
Utilities and Bills	€215 per month
Entertainment	€68 per month
Health Insurance	€103 – €111 per month (public)
Clothing	€50 per month

Note: Keep in mind that the prices shown in the above table list the expenses of an average international student in Germany. The cost of accommodation will be lower/higher depending on the type of accommodation. Student halls, for example, are the cheapest form of accommodation in Germany, while private apartments and shared flats are more expensive. The cost of utilities and bills is typically divided depending on how many people you live with.

Living costs for different types of expenses in some of the main German cities:

	Munich	Berlin	Hamburg	Frankfurt
Rent	€1,094.30	€795.90	€838.94	€868.91
White bread (500g)	€1.43	€1.27	€1.27	€1.29
Restaurant meal	€12.25	€8.00	€10	€12
Milk (1liter)	€0.84	€0.79	€0.71	€0.77
Eggs (12)	€1.71	€1.77	€1.78	€1.61
Rice (1kg, white)	€2.14	€1.79	€2.15	€1.97
Tomatoes (1kg)	€2.82	€2.62	€2.61	€2.61
Potatoes (1kg)	€1.00	€1.32	€1.04	€1.29
Beer (0.5liter)	€3.80	€3.50	€4.00	€4.00
Taxi 1km	€1.90	€2.00	€2.00	€2.00

Find the cost of living in Germany detailed at length in [this article](#).

2.6. Covering the Living Expenses in Germany as an International Student

There are different forms of covering living expenses while studying in Germany as an international student. The information below will help you understand the possible ways international students can finance their expenses.

Here are the common ways international students choose to finance their living expenses in Germany:

- **Parents, family, or guarantor support** - parents or other relatives might decide to financially support your living costs during studies by providing a monthly financial assistance, also a guarantor (German citizen) might be your eligible funding source,
- **International Scholarships** - there are several scholarship opportunities available to help you financially while studying in Germany, offering full and partial financial support during studies in Germany. When you decide to apply for scholarships to study in Germany, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is the biggest scholarship database online to search for scholarships available in Germany, while [Study in Germany](#) is similarly a resourceful online tool helping to get this type of information,
- **Part-time jobs** - This is the most common funding option chosen by international students and if considering to use this option to fund your living costs, there are several facts and legal limitations you should recognize, including:
 - International students are eligible to work in Germany while studying,
 - There is a law limitation in Germany with regards to the allowed hours of work for students, depending on your country of origin,
 - Students are not allowed to work more than 120 full days or 240 half-days per year,
 - There is an exception if your job is as a student assistant, or research assistant at the university, where exceeding the limit of allowed hours of work it is not seen as an issue, however, the Alien Registration Office of the town where your university is located must be informed,
 - It is not preferable for students to start working in the first semester, as there is a certain time needed to get adapted to the study programme and working might have a negative impact on studies.

2.7. Requirements to Become an Eligible Applicant to Study in Germany

There are a few things that should be considered when deciding to study in Germany, in order to be an eligible applicant. The process requires your full attention and commitment, and it is nothing that cannot be done with the proper instructions and information. The higher education sector in Germany requires international students to provide the following, to be considered eligible:



2.7.1. Higher Education Entrance Qualification

A higher education entrance qualification or certificate of a general higher education qualification, allows you to apply at university programmes and colleges in all German states. If you are interested in studying at a German university, you will be required to provide this qualification, also known as ‘Hochschulzugangsberechtigung’. This is a school-leaving certificate which confirms you have the qualifications to begin university.

In Germany, this university entrance qualification is known as ‘Abitur’, while for qualifications for a university of applied sciences, secondary school graduates receive what is known as ‘Fachhochschulreif’. If you come from an EU country, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway or

Switzerland, your qualifications will be recognized in Germany, otherwise, you will have to enter an exam.

Check the [DAAD database](#) to see if your school-leaving certificate is recognized in Germany.

2.7.2. Free Short Preparatory Courses

Short preparatory courses are courses offered to international students of three categories: those who need recognition of an early education, who need recognition of education to enter university, and individuals in need of knowledge in a specific field related to their study programme.

The short preparatory courses to study in Germany, include:

Propaedeutic Courses

German universities usually offer free preparatory short courses known as “propaedeutic courses” to help potential applicants get the needed knowledge and preparation for the admission into specific HEIs. These courses are offered typically for the candidates whose earlier education is recognized in Germany, but want to prepare themselves for a specific degree programme.

Test for Academic Studies (TestAS)

TestAS is an examination, which helps prospective applicants to study in German HEIs and perceive their ability to meet specific programme criteria. The results of this test also serve as help when it comes to choosing a study programme. Passing this test successfully also increases the chances of getting admission to German universities. A great thing about this test is that applicants can realistically assess their chances of finishing a degree programme. You can find more information on TestAS and its fees and assessment periods on the official website [here](#).

Foundation courses (“Studienkolleg”)

These courses are aimed at candidates whose education is not recognized in Germany. Specifically, if your earlier education is not recognized in Germany, you are required to take a qualification assessment examination known as “Feststellungsprüfung”. To prepare for this, you can enter a foundation course, “Studienkolleg”, in order to properly prepare for the examination.

Courses are offered on subject specific areas, usually lasting up to 2 semesters, typically offered for free by universities. Usually students undergo the examination 1 year after the beginning of the course. But if they show an above-average achievement during the course, they may enter the examination after one semester as well.

Students willing to get enrolled in this course, must have at least German language proficiency B1 level – Common European Framework Reference for Languages. Upon successfully passing the examination, students will qualify as legitimate applicants to enter higher education institutions in Germany.

[Studienkolleg in Germany](#) will provide you with the necessary information on fees, requirements, and application process.

2.7.3. Proving Your German Language Proficiency

The majority of German universities offer study programmes in German language, therefore, German language proficiency is necessary if you choose to apply for your studies in such programmes.

However, this does not apply to several international programmes, which have English only study programmes. In addition, some universities do not require knowledge of German language for students who are on an exchange experience for a semester or two.

In addition, some universities offer a combination of programmes of English and German languages and in such cases, English and German language proficiency is necessary.

German language proficiency can be proved with the following:

- [German Language University Entrance Examination for International Applicants \(DSH\)](#),
- [Test of German as a Foreign Language \(TestDaF\)](#),
- [Goethe Institut German Language Diploma \(GDS\)](#),

- [German Language Diploma of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, Level II \(DSD\)](#)

For courses held in German, DSH 2 or TestDaF 4, at the time of course, begin at least at Level A2.

There are free online courses and tools to assist in learning the German language, such as the following:

- [Here is a comprehensive guide on learning German language for beginners.](#)

These free portals offer lessons, readings, writings, listening and they test your knowledge. However, they do not offer a recognized language certificate and yet the aforementioned forms are the only accepted proof of German proficiency level.

Watch the video for more: [Student life: How much German do I need in Germany?](#)

2.7.4. Proving Your English Language Proficiency

If you choose to apply to study in English only programmes in Germany, or English-German combined study programmes, proof of English language proficiency is required upon applying. The following are recognized examinations, when it comes to proving your English Language proficiency:



TOEFL Test Results

Test of English as a Foreign Language and is the most common form of proving English language proficiency. [TOEFL centers worldwide](#) are where you can get the information online on each country's TOEFL's testing dates. Valuable information and materials can also be found on [TOEFL test preparation](#).

The level of required English proficiency can differ depending on university requirements, however Europe generally requires from students to have the following test results:

The general recognized test results are:

- PbT (paper-based test): 550 Points
- CbT (computer-based test): 213 Points
- IbT (internet-based test): 79-80 Points

IELTS Test Results

The International English Language Testing System is the second most common form of proving the English Language proficiency. Same as TOEFL, [IELTS.org](https://www.ielts.org) is the official website where you can get all the information on testing dates and more about IELTS.

While, if you chose to follow a course in your country, there are centers and/or institutions spread around the globe, which prepare individuals for the TOEFL Test, and IELTS, with an amount of tuition fee applicable.

The general recognized test results are:

- 5.5 – 6.5 Score

Other commonly accepted forms of proving your English language proficiency for academic studies in Germany include the following:

- **Educational Certificate of an English-Speaking School.** You must have completed at least 5 (B1) /6 (B2) schooling years in a school whose main language of instruction was English.
- **Cambridge English Certificates.** Any of the following, depending on the higher education institution's requirement:
 - B1 Preliminary (rarely).
 - B2 First.
 - C1 Advanced.
 - C2 Proficiency.
- **UNICert® minimum I (B1) or II (B2).**
- **TOEIC certificate.**
- **University Entrance Qualifications obtained in an English-speaking country.**
- **University Degree obtained with a higher education of an English-speaking country.**

2.8. General Requirements for University Admission in Germany

Germany has a diverse HE application system. There are three common channels or intermediating institutions, through which the applicant can submit their university application. Consequently, there are numerous application procedures that somewhat differ from each other, yet, the general application requirements are similar whatever the channel of application is.



The generalized list of documents required to apply for university admission in Germany as an international student includes:

Completed Application Form (Soft and Hard Copy)

The application form is the key requirement of the application. This form needs an appropriate completion, including the information, which corresponds to the candidate's data on earlier education and training history of record jointly with other required information. All the information presented in the application form must have a corresponding document, which ensures the faithfulness of information provided.

The structure of the application form can vary, depending on the university or institution who receives your application. Typically, these forms are obtainable in electronic version, with a possibility to be filled electronically sometimes even online by the applicant. Application forms can be accessed in two main forms: downloaded online or received upon request via e-mail from the International Office of the university.

Proof of Certified Copies of Certificates

Certificates showing the applicant's earlier education records will be accepted only as authenticated copies, not originals:

The list of such certificates includes:

- University entrance qualification/school leaving certificates,
- Official academic records or transcript,
- Certificate (document showing the overall average grade achieved),
- Diploma (document proofing the academic title achieved, e.g. "Bachelor", "Master"),
- Diploma supplement,
- Language certificates,

- Certificate of applicant's earlier educational background (educational, professional, extracurricular training, and so on)
- Certificate of other volunteer activity.

*Certificates ought to be translated by a registered translator and officially certified (notarized), in order to be acknowledged as eligible.

*In order to be recognized as certified true copies, certificates must include:

- Confirmation that the copy is identical with the original (Beglaubigungsvermerk),
- Signature of the certifier,
- Official seal stamped on the copy.

Recognition of Earlier Qualifications

To be admitted to a German university, your qualifications must be recognized by the university you have chosen. What this means is that you need to have a recognized 'higher education entrance qualification', also known as Hochschulzugangsberechtigung (HZB) or [Abitur](#). If your school-leaving certificate is not recognized in Germany, you will be required to attend a one-year preparatory course known as Studienkolleg.

Proof of German Language Proficiency

Refer to [Stage I, Section 2.7.3](#) for more.

Proof of English Language Proficiency

Refer to [Stage I, Section 2.7.4](#) for more.

Proof of GRE/GMAT Required Level of Test Results

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) is a test preferred by most business programmes, typically for applicants for Master studies. The [official website of the GMAT](#) is where you can also access all the information needed on how to prepare for the test and needed materials and testing dates in different countries. Also, you get the opportunity to register and get a GMAT preparation software.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is an examination accepted by thousands of graduate and business schools worldwide. [The GRE official website](#) is where you can get all the information and preparation materials as well as testing dates and centres worldwide. GMAT or GRE are typically offered by private centres worldwide, charging a specific fee. You can find such centres in your home country as well.

Proof of Health Insurance Coverage

Anyone about to study in Germany ought to have health insurance. Some foreign students can use their home health insurance, if Germany has social insurance agreements with that specific country, such as the European Union and European Economic Area member countries.

Two types of health insurance in Germany are:

- Public (statutory)
- Private

Students under the age of 30 enrolled in a degree programme at a German university, can choose to register with a public health insurance provider in order to benefit from the statutory health insurance scheme. Students over 30 years old, language and preparatory course students, PhD students, and guest scientists, only have the possibility of getting private health insurance.



Students who need a visa to enter Germany will be required to get private health insurance as part of their visa application, before entering the country, since they can only get public health insurance once they enter Germany.

The difference between private and public health insurers is that private ones cover wider and more comprehensive health treatments. In addition, there is a legal limit when it comes to choosing which category of health insurances to use, as most of the students are obliged to get statutory health insurance or public health insurance.

Health Insurers in Germany

Dr. Walter is a popular private health insurance provider covering a wide range of student health insurance plans recognized by all universities in Germany. Dr. Walter also offers travel health insurance using a very user-friendly platform for application. Click [here](#) to get more information on health insurance plans by Dr. Walter.

The following are the most known statutory health insurance issuers in Germany: AOK Baden Württemberg, Barmer GEK, DAK – Gesundheit, KKH – Kaufmännische Krankenkasse, and TK – Techniker Krankenkasse. Additional information regarding offers and prices by these providers can be found [here](#).

More: [Health Insurance in Germany for International Students](#).

Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Resume

The CV and resume are also amongst required documents to submit when applying. The CV and resume are summaries of your achieved academic record, extracurricular activities, and work record. Both documents are the same when it comes to purpose and information they present and the only difference stands in their length. Resumes typically are shorter and cover more generalized information, while CVs tend to be more detailed and well explained.

Depending on the HEI, they might ask the applicant to submit either a CV or resume. In addition, the HEI must require the applicant to submit a Europass, as the standardized European form. Get more information on writing a stunning CV and Resume in the following sites: [Europass](#), [Example CVs](#), and [Resumes](#).

Passport Photo

HEIs might also require the candidate to submit a passport photo, up to five. Scan a photo and upload it in the electronic version, if required electronically.

Passport Copies

Same applies for passport copies, where you also can scan the passport and submit it electronically, while when sending the hard copy, read the requirements and send the exact number of required photocopies.

Motivation/Cover Letter

Motivation letter/cover letter is the term used for the same document, just with different terminology. The motivation letter is a term used in the majority of worldwide countries and a cover letter is used in the USA. Typically, a motivation letter is used when applying to university, while the cover letter is used when applying for a job. Find how to write a motivation letter [here](#).

Recommendation/Reference Letter

A recommendation letter is a letter typically written by a former professor assessing the applicant's qualities, knowledge and skills which could make him/her a great candidate to become a student for a specific study programme. Find more information on how a reference letter can be written, [here](#).

Essay

The essay is a written document from the personal perspective of the applicant, reflecting past academic experiences. The essay must have these elements: the study field, the programme, and how they relate to the personal vision of the applicant. The writing must be objective, genuine, based on truthful facts, clear and concise in order to attract the reader's attention. Find more information on how to write an essay [here](#).

Detailed information on submitting the university application through each of the three channels is presented in [Stage II, Section 2](#).

2.9. Visa Application Process and Requirements

To become an international student in Germany, a student must undergo a visa application process and be awarded with a specific study German visa in order to be eligible to travel and stay in Germany.

2.9.1. Who Needs a Visa to Study in Germany?

As a non-German resident, you have to keep in mind that all international students must get the proper visa in order to stay for a certain period of studies in Germany, with exclusion if you come from the European Union, the European Economic Area (EEA), Switzerland,

Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea and the United States of America. This category of students will not be required a visa, but an ID card or equivalent document to travel in Germany, and afterwards, they have to obtain a residence permit.

Students coming from Andorra, Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Monaco and San Marino also can travel without a visa, but a residence permit will be issued to them to prove they do not intend to work during or after finishing studies in Germany.

Detailed information on applying for a German visa for study purposes is presented in [Stage III, Section I](#).

2.9.2. When to Apply for a Visa

Since there is a set time frame for each action, being punctual in your arrangements is a key aspect to a successful application. The proper time to apply for a visa is immediately after submitting the application or after receiving the university admission letter.

2.10. Key Study Dates of German Higher Education Sector

Regardless of the fact that there might be some HEIs in Germany with a different study timeline most of them use the same study calendar for their academic activity. Knowing the study calendar assists the applicant to arrange preparations and application punctually.

The following is the study calendar for the majority of HEIs in Germany, categorized by type of HEIs:

The study calendar for Universities (Universitäten)

- Summer semester time: April to September (lectures begin: 15 April)
- Winter semester time: October to March (lectures begin: 15 October)

For Universities of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschulen)

- Summer semester: March to August (lectures begin: 15 March)
- Winter semester: September to February (lectures begin: 15 September)

Semester vacation/break (non-lecture period)

- Summer: end of July to September
- Winter: end of February to mid-April

2.11. Being Punctual for a Successful University Application

The applicant should give a lot of attention to the fact that there is a timeframe to be respected starting from the early preparations and all the way to the university application. This is due to the fact that there is a deadline for university application and a needed time to prepare for language and other foundation assessments which are needed to make the student an eligible applicant. There is also a time for visa appointments and getting a visa and other related deadlines.

In the preparation stage, the applicant should respect the following time frame:

One year and a half before:

- Searching for available study programmes amongst available options,
- Considering and preparing to meet all the criteria to become an eligible applicant for entering higher education studies in Germany (with a special focus on school leaving qualification and language proficiency proofs),
- Starting preparatory courses,
- Planning ways to finance your living costs in Germany.

Nine months before:

- Choosing a preferred study programme and university to apply,
- Identifying all university admission requirements,
- Contacting the International Office of selected HEI for additional information on application procedure and requirements.

Four to five months before:

- Preparing documents needed for university application,
- Applying (this also depends on the given deadline for application).

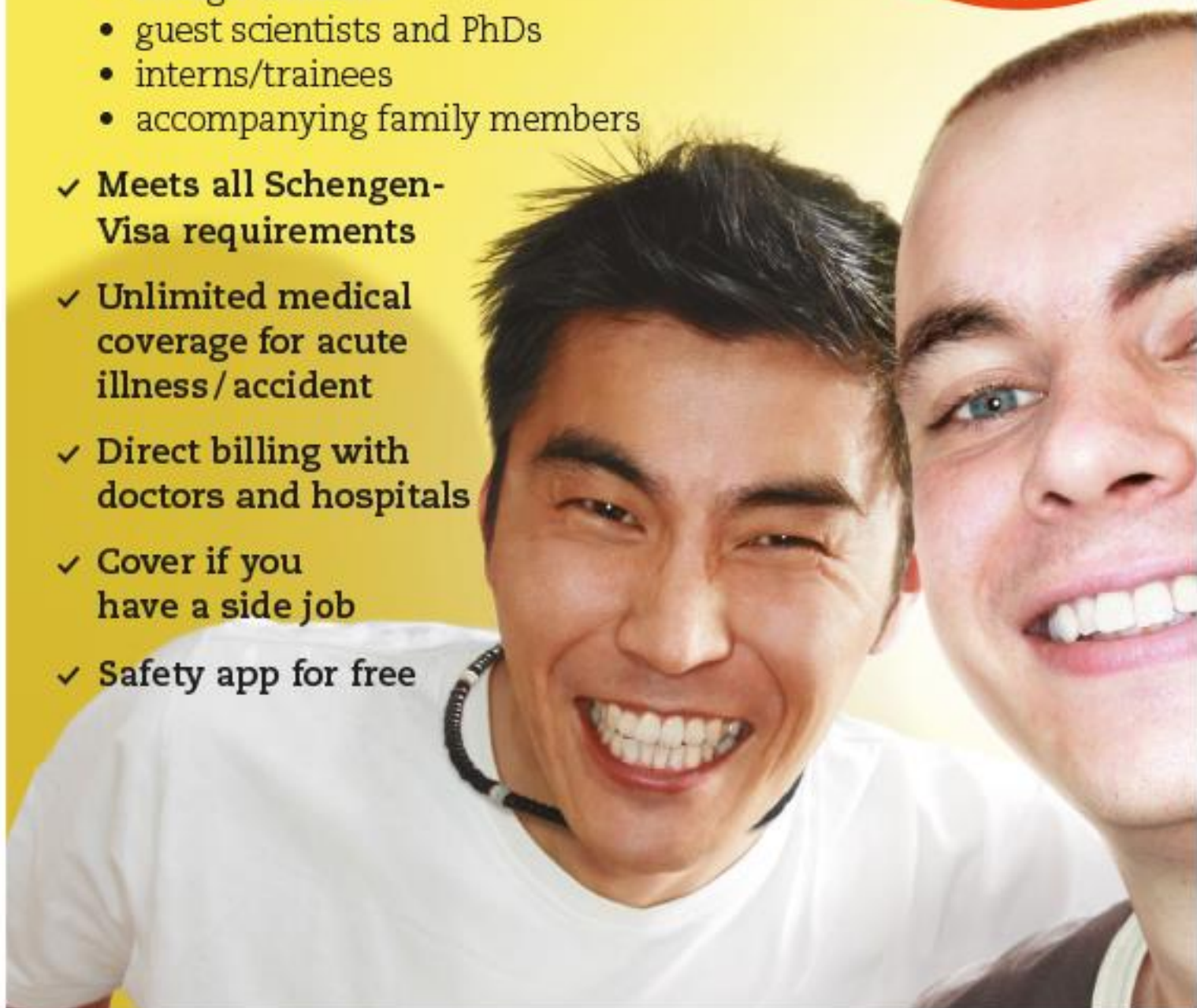
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- ✓ One of the leading private health insurers for:
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 - foreign students
 - guest scientists and PhDs
 - interns/trainees
 - accompanying family members
- ✓ Meets all Schengen-Visa requirements
- ✓ Unlimited medical coverage for acute illness / accident
- ✓ Direct billing with doctors and hospitals
- ✓ Cover if you have a side job
- ✓ Safety app for free



STAGE II - Applying for a Study Programme

You have already chosen the study programme that you want, among all available options in Germany! Having chosen a funding option and considered all the other important components of studying in Germany, this section offers resources and information on how to successfully meet the preconditions and application requirements making the university application appealing and likely to guarantee university admission.



1. Meeting the Requirements to Become an Eligible Applicant to Study in Germany

Once you choose your preferred study programme and higher education institution in Germany, what you should do is focus your attention to meeting the requirements which make you an eligible HE applicant in Germany. Essentially, you will need to fulfil a few requirements so you can increase your chances of gaining admission to your dream university and thus pursuing your dream career.

Find the requirements listed below:

1.1. Recognition of Earlier Education to Enter HEIs in Germany

Almost each university application requires the applicant to submit proof of earlier education recognition, also known as a higher education entrance qualification in Germany. This higher education entrance qualification in Germany is a certificate which proves that you are eligible to apply to university and that your earlier education is recognized as credible in Germany.

1.1.1. Levels of Earlier Education Recognition

Depending on the latest education of the international applicant in Germany, the following are the three earlier education levels, which should be recognized in order to be considered eligible:

- High School Leaving Diploma– for individuals concerned with undergraduate studies,
- University Diploma– for individuals concerned with graduate studies,
- Graduate Program Diploma– for individuals concerned with PhD studies

1.1.2. Online Databases to Search If Your Earlier Education Needs to Be Recognized

In order to find out whether your earlier education qualifies you to enter HE in Germany, make sure to check the two large online databases below:

[The Anabin Database](#) (available in German language only): This database offers specific information for each country with regards to recognition and evaluation of foreign educational qualifications,

[The DAAD entrance qualification database](#): This database offers information on recognition of foreigners' earlier education in selected countries.

Results that might show up upon searching through the database include the following:

Earlier education is recognized to enter HE - A recognized higher education entrance qualification known as "Abitur" legitimizes the candidate to directly apply for admission at university. However, a prospective student might even be required to test the ability to meet the university demands and the main recognized assessment tests in Germany for this purpose are Test for Academic Studies (TestAS) and Propaedeutic courses.

To find a short preparatory course, search the [DAAD online search database](#) for International Studies.

Earlier education is recognized only for specific study fields - The subject-specific higher education entrance qualification “Fachabitur” permits applicants to only study particular subjects. These subjects are usually shown on the candidate’s school report card.

If you come into contact with the word “Fachabitur”, you are advised to contact the university’s student advisory service and check whether it is referring to the subject-specific higher education entrance qualification or the entrance qualification for universities of applied sciences since the term is sometimes used interchangeably.

Earlier education is not recognized – This means that earlier education does not qualify the candidate to directly enter higher education in Germany. In such a case, the candidate gets the opportunity to obtain an equivalent qualification, undergoing a course and its examination at universities in Germany. These courses are known as Foundation courses “Studienkollegs” and “Feststellungsprüfung”. **Refer to Stage I, Section 2.7.2. for more information.**

1.2. Proof of German Language Proficiency

Proving you have the necessary German language skills is something that distinguishes you as an applicant. Typically, you will need to prove your German language proficiency in cases when the degree programme is in German only or it is a combination of both, English and German.

1.2.1. Accepted forms of proving German language proficiency

In Germany, if one wants to study in the aforementioned programmes, proving the level of German language proficiency is accepted in the following forms:

- **German Language Test for the Admission of Foreign Study Applicants (DSH) Assessment Results:** This test is typically offered by universities in Germany. To know more about testing dates, the candidate should contact the international office of the chosen university.
- **German as a Foreign Language Test (TestDaF) Assessment Results:** This is the second most required form of proving German language proficiency. An applicant can undergo the examination in their home country, even before moving to Germany.

For additional forms of proving German language proficiency, check **Stage I, Section 2.7.3**

1.3. Proof of English Language Proficiency

In Germany, you will be required to prove your English language proficiency in certain cases such as when the degree programme is completely in English, or in German combined with English. Depending on the university, you will be required to provide the assessment results of certain examinations.

1.3.1. Accepted forms of proving English language proficiency

- TOEFL Test Results
- IELTS Test Results

For additional information regarding English language proficiency requirements, check [Stage I, Section 2.7.4](#).

2. Applying for a Study Programme in a German HEI

If you have already met all the requirements to become an eligible applicant to German higher education institutions, then the next step is gathering all the necessary documents and finally applying for admission. The application process is a key component, it should be done with the utmost attention, and only candidates who follow the application guidelines in a strict manner will gain admission.

2.2. University Application Channels

Applying to university in Germany does not always have to be, directly, through the university, since there are two more intermediating institutions that can pre-check your application.

2.2.1. Understanding the University Application System in Germany

Due to the fact that there are many more applicants than open places to study, Germany has decided to put some restrictions with regards to university admissions, known as “Numerus Clausus” or NC.



There are two different restrictions, including:

- **Central NC or “Zentraler NC”** - restriction applies nationally, all over Germany. The subjects that are centrally restricted include medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, and pharmacology.
- **Local NC** - restriction for this category applies solely for the specific universities. The restriction in these cases is made by the university.

Depending on restrictions which apply for a chosen programme and the applicant’s country of

origin, there are three eligible channels to submit a university application:

- Trust for Admission to Higher Education “Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung”,
- Uni-Assist,
- University directly

2.2.2. Finding the Proper University Application Channel

In order to find the proper university application channel, it is important to know there are three different categories of applicants.

First Category of Applicants:

- The applicant obtained the university entrance qualification in Germany or German school abroad.
- The applicant comes from an EU member country, Liechtenstein, Iceland or Norway.

They register at: [The Trust for Admission to Higher Education \(TAHE\)](#).

Afterwards, they have the possibility to carry out one the following application method:

- *Decentral application*, using the application portal of respective chosen HEI,
- *Central application*, using the application portal of TAHE (a continuing application process that you've already started when registered on TAHE portal).

Second Category of Applicants:

- The applicant does not have a recognized university entrance qualification in Germany.
- The applicant comes from other Non EU countries.

They must check if the chosen university is a member of [Uni-Assist](#):

- If YES: Application must be done through Uni-Assist.
- If NOT: Application must be made directly to the university.

Third Category of Applicants:

- If the applicant chooses a programme with local NC or no NC at all.

They must check if the chosen university is a member of Uni-Assist:

- If YES: Application must be done through Uni-Assist.
- If NOT: Application must be made directly to the university.

Note: If you still have problems finding the proper channel to submit your university application, you can contact the International Office of your chosen university and obtain more information.

3. Applying for University Admission Using One of the Three Channels

When you get all the information about the proper channel to submit your application, what you should do is create a checklist of all the application requirements. This is an essential step in order to make sure that the application dossier is completed as required.

Only submit your application after you have gathered all the documents needed to apply. Your application dossier is not only one document but a collection of documents which vary depending on the respective university.

Make sure that you submit your application in the right format and follow the right procedure. In the following sections, you will find a step-by-step guide on how to apply for university admission using the three main channels of application.

UNIVERSITY APPLICATION THROUGH UNI-ASSIST

The Uni-Assist is the address where you submit your application if your university is a member of it. The web page is fully practical, offering detailed information and instruction on how to successfully submit your application. You get the opportunity to apply in several universities through uni-ASSIST online portal for the same semester.

Visit [list of Uni-Assist universities](#) to find out if your chosen university is a member.

Uni-ASSIST online portal gives you the following options:

1. You can take a look at the courses being offered by uni-ASSIST universities and choose the one(s) you wish to apply for,
2. You can fill in applications to uni-ASSIST universities, read important messages from the universities regarding certain courses, edit and print your application forms and send your applications to uni-ASSIST in electronic form,
3. You can upload documents and allocate them to individual applications,
4. You can contact uni-ASSIST.

Application through uni-ASSIST portal must be done in the following way:

- Reach [Uni-Assist application portal](#),
- Register (as the first time applicant) and confirm your registration,
- Create an online application form in application portal with the account data required,
- Fill the data required in “basic questions” section, entering your personal data and details of education,
- Select preferred university and study programme in the section “search study offers”,
- Upload relevant documents:
 - Application form (printed and signed),
 - Sample work,
 - Curriculum vitae,
 - Letter of motivation,
 - Passport copy,
 - Language certificate/Proof of language/s proficiency,
 - Study certificate,

- School certificate,
- Work experience/Internship,
- Other extracurricular activities or voluntary work,
- Other documents of experiences presented in CV.
- Submit the application:
 - Uni-ASSIST only receives your application after you have submitted all the compulsory fields within the application form and have received the applicant's processing fee.

For the application to be considered as completed, the applicant must also send the hard copy application to the address of Uni-Assist.

Find the Uni-Assist FAQs [here](#).

UNIVERSITY APPLICATION THROUGH TAHE

If the applicant is an international student [equal to German citizens](#), the university application should be done through the Trust for Admission to Higher Education (Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung). If not, then the applicant should contact the respective university and enquire whether they need to register for the dialogue-oriented service procedure (DoSV) of [TAHE](#) or apply directly to the university.

This application procedure is also called Dialogorientiertes Serviceverfahren (dialogue-oriented service procedure). It does not apply to Master's courses but only undergraduate courses with a local Numerus clausus (NC). Numerous universities coordinate their applications with this site and you can find out at your respective university whether the course of study you have chosen is part of DoSV.

The procedure of applying through TAHE includes the following steps:

- Register at the application portal of TAHE giving personal data,
- Provide proof of recognized entrance to HE in Germany,
- Find courses where to apply (elective database within the TAHE applicant's portal)
- Submit the application.

When the applicant selects preferred study courses, depending on the HEI, the applicant should either carry out a decentral application (applying directly at the university – a link appears to orient the applicant at the university's website) or a central application (applying through TAHE application portal on [hochschulstart.de](#)).

UNIVERSITY APPLICATION DIRECTLY TO THE UNIVERSITY

Applicants who apply directly to the university, generally have to follow the below procedure to submit their application:

- Find “The Application Form for Admission to German University for International Applicants with Foreign Academic Qualification” at the university webpage,
- Select the “desired degree” within the application form,
- Enter personal details (as shown in your passport),
- Postal address,
- Proof the educational background,
- Proof the language proficiency (English, German),
- Admission relevant questions (as they put forth by German State Study Allocation Regulation),
- Enter TestAS results and documentation,
- Process the online application.

You need to print and sign the application form, attaching certificates and other documents required in the application, and send them to the university in a HARD copy version as well, so your application can be considered complete. Make sure to write your applicant’s registration number (applicant number of online application) in the cover page of your hard copy application.

To send the hard copy of the application you can use the services of a regular post, or express postal services such as FedEx, DHL or other.

You can find a university application sample for international students with a higher education entrance qualification [here](#).

For more on the general list of required documents for the university application in Germany please refer to **Stage I, Section 2.8**.

INFORMATION ON THE UNIVERSITY APPLICATION STATUS IF SUBMITTED THROUGH UNI-ASSIST

If the applicant’s eligible channel for submitting the university application was Uni-Assist, then there are 2 stages of application review of receiving the notification on application’s final status:

1. Pre-check by Uni-Assist
2. Final review by the University.

The applicant gets information on the application status as:

- Uni-Assist notifies the applicant by email about the application’s pre-check results,

- Uni-ASSIST can also inform the applicant on missing documents, giving the opportunity to the applicant for including the missing documents in the application,
- Uni-Assist forwards the application's electronic version of the university for the final review, upon successful passing the pre-check stage,
- Uni-ASSIST also informs the applicant on passing a pre-check stage,
- The university notifies the applicant about the final review result, sending a letter of acceptance, if the applicant fulfills; or letter of rejection if the applicant fails to fulfill university requirements.

Note:

- If the applicant receives notification of successfully passing the Uni-ASSIST review, the applicant must immediately send to the Uni-ASSIST the hard copy of the application form and relevant application documents (as submitted in electronic application),
- The applicant must also send a hard copy of the application to the university the same time they send it to Uni-ASSIST. If the applicant does not send the hard copy application to the university, the university might not consider the application.

INFORMATION ON UNIVERSITY APPLICATION STATUS IF SUBMITTED THROUGH TAHE

Every application done through **hochschulstart.de** is marked with an application status. This status is shown on the user account of the DoSV application portal. This status should be checked regularly by applicants so they do not miss anything important.

The different forms of application status include:

- **In preparation:** Has not yet been submitted by the applicant.
- **Received:** Not yet participating in the award procedure.
- **Valid:** Application can take part in the award procedure.
- **Offer is available:** Admission by the university is possible.
- **Admission offer currently not possible:** This can change throughout the procedure.
- **Authorized:** Application approved.
- **Temporarily excluded:** Important information is missing.
- **Locked out:** Application does not participate further in the process of admission.
- **Withdrawn:** Withdrawn by the applicant.
- **Deferred:** Admission offer has been postponed by the applicant.
- **Eliminated:** Applicant has accepted another offer.
- **Declined:** Application has been rejected.

- **Registered:** Applicants have registered with the admission letter at the university.
- **Not registered:** Universities refuse to enrol applicants if application details and actual documents do not match.
- **Time limit expired:** Admitted applicants do not show up for enrollment within the deadline.

INFORMATION ON APPLICATION STATUS IF APPLIED DIRECTLY AT THE UNIVERSITY

When applying directly at the university here's what you should expect regarding your application:

- The university sends you a notification upon receiving your online application and
- another one upon receiving your hard copy application.
- University reviews your application and sends you a letter of notification informing you whether you have been admitted or rejected (approximately four weeks after).
- If after four weeks you don't receive the notification, you can contact the
- International Office of the University.

4. Deadline for Receiving an Answer From University

Generally, universities have their deadlines when it comes to notifying applicants on whether they have gained admission or not. The deadlines are as follows:

For the winter semester:

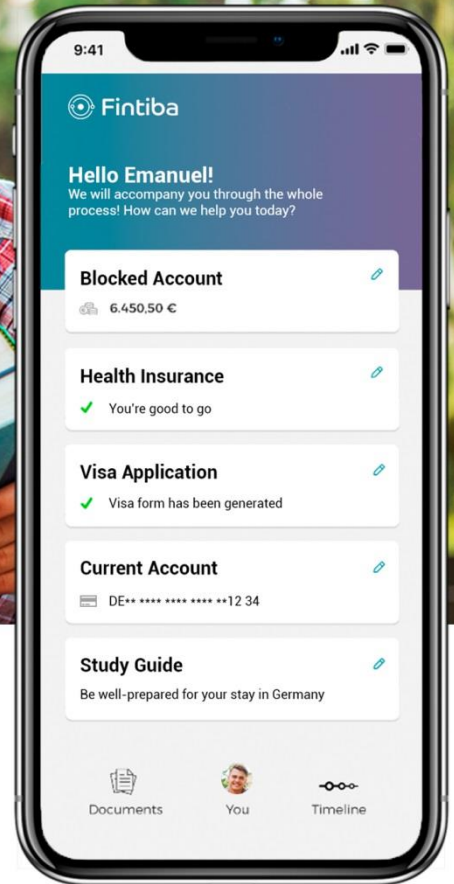
- Acceptance letters are sent out in August / September.
- Rejection letters are sent out in September / October.

For the summer semester:

- Acceptance letters are sent out in February / March.
- Rejection letters are sent out in March / April.

If you do not receive an answer from the university within the deadline, you can contact the university's international office and inquire about your status.

ENSURING A SEAMLESS START IN GERMANY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



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Online generator for the visa application form

Accommodation

Fintiba Rent Deposit Insurance

Daily Life

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STAGE III - Before and After Arriving in Germany

After you have been admitted to a German university and you know you are going to live in Germany for a while, this section will help you with tips and information to get set for travelling, accommodating, studying, and working in Germany.

Being an international student in a country away from family and friends might seem challenging at first, but it is one of the most rewarding and memorable experiences in your life. From creating new friendships to creating your dream career, it's all part of the package.



1. Applying for a German Visa

If you got the news that you have been admitted to a German higher education institution or will be going to Germany for a preparatory course, the next step is your visa application. This applies to students who come from countries that need a visa to enter Germany and commence their studies.

What you should know about the visa process is that it is crucial to be punctual and apply for your visa on time. The recommended time is as early as possible upon finding out you will be travelling to Germany soon. In this section, we have listed everything you need to know about this process in detail.

1.1. Different Types of Study Visas in Germany

Depending on the type of study and circumstances, there are three types available for international students in Germany, including:

- **German Student Visa:** For international students who have been admitted to a German university and are ready to start their studies at a full-time university programme.
- **German Student Applicant Visa:** To apply for university admission in person. This visa doesn't allow you to study in Germany, it's only valid for the university application process.
- **German Language Course Visa:** To study for a German language course in Germany.

1.2. When to Apply for a Study Visa

The best time to apply for a German student visa is as soon as you receive the university letter of admission and secure the necessary finances to live and study in Germany. This is because German authorities will ask for proof you have the financial stability to support yourself in Germany.

Generally, it takes about 25 days for your German student visa application to be processed. The processing time depends on the country and the German embassy you apply to. Typically, German visa applications for studies are normally processed within 3 months.

1.3. How to Apply for a German Student Visa

To properly apply for your German student visa, you should make sure to follow the steps below:

1. Locate and contact the closest German embassy or consulate in your country and set an appointment.
2. Review all the required documents and pay the visa application fee (€60.00 – €75.00) and have the payment confirmation with you when you attend the interview.
3. Prepare for your visa interview by looking at the most commonly asked questions. Find these questions in [Section 1.6. below](#).

1.4. German Student Visa Requirements

The essential visa application requirements you will need to provide include the following:

1. Visa Application Documents

- Filled out and signed national visa application form.
- Valid national passport.
- Two photocopies of your passport.
- Certificate of birth.
- Marriage certificate. (If applicable).
- Child's certificate of birth. (If applicable).
- Recent passport-style photographs. (Up to 3).
- Photocopies of previous German residence titles. (If applicable).
- Previous Schengen visa.
- Previous German resident permit.

2. Proof of Financial Resources “Finanzierungsnachweis” (Provide one of the following):

- A total of at least €10,236 deposit confirmation at a [German blocked bank account](#).
- Letter of commitment and evidence of your parent's income records and financial assets.
- Letter of commitment by a German resident “Verpflichtungserklärung” showing they will cover your costs during your studies.
- Scholarship awarding certificate showing the cost covered.
- Bank guarantee, by a recognized German financial institution.

3. Proof of Admission to a German University (whichever is applicable):

- Letter of university admission.
- Letter of admission in foundation/propaedeutic/German language course.

4. Proof of Earlier Education

- Original school-leaving certificate.
- Degree certificate. (If you're entering Master or PhD studies).

5. Student Health Insurance

In order to apply for a student visa in Germany, you need to prove you have a health insurance covered for at least three months of your stay in Germany.

Dr. Walter is among the best companies offering health insurance for international students. The registration and application process online is simple and comprehensive.

6. Proof of English/German Language Proficiency

- Proof of English language proficiency (for English or combined-language programmes).
- Proof of German language proficiency (for German or combined-language programmes).

1.5. Preparing for the Visa Interview

The German student visa interview is one of the most important steps of the visa application procedure so it is crucial that you prepare beforehand. You will be asked both personal and specific questions, some about your future plans after you finish your studies in Germany.

Here are some of the most common questions asked during German student visa interview sessions:

The decision of studying in Germany:

1. Why do you want to study in Germany?
2. Why this city?
3. Why did you choose this course? Is it relevant to your previous study?
4. Why did you choose this university and how did you find out about it?
5. Isn't this course offered by any university or college in your country?
6. Which are the other universities you have applied to?
7. Who motivated you to go to Germany?
8. Why do you want to study in Germany and not in Canada or the USA?
9. Can you tell me some facts about your university?

Knowledge about Germany:

1. Name any tourist places in Germany and why they are famous?
2. Do you speak German?
3. How many borders does Germany have and with which countries?
4. Which are the top most expensive cities to live in Germany?
5. How many states are there in Germany, and can you name some of them?

Information about your future studies in Germany:

1. What's the duration of your course?
2. What is the scope of your course?

3. What is the course structure?
4. In which university are you going to study? What is the location of your university?
5. Why do you think the university is awarding you a scholarship?
6. What benefits can this course bring for you?
7. What is the course start date?
8. What will be the total cost of studies per year?

You might also be asked about information on your accommodation options and future plans. You can get a full list of commonly asked questions and suggestions on how to answer the questions [here](#).

2. Things to Do Before Travelling to Germany

When you finally get your German student visa, there are some things you should do in order to prepare for your arrival in Germany. From booking the travel ticket to finding accommodation, and making sure you do not forget any essentials, this section will list a few things you should do before travelling to Germany.

2.1. Book the Travel Ticket

There are numerous options you can book your travel ticket from. Make sure you find affordable options since sometimes the ticket prices can be quite costly. When you finally know the date of your departure to Germany, go and book that ticket and you're halfway there.

2.2. Book Accommodation

As an international student in Germany, you have the opportunity to choose from two main forms of accommodation: student halls and private apartments. As mentioned before, rent is one of the biggest expenses for a student in Germany so it is important to be wise when it comes to deciding on accommodation.

2.2.1. Finding Permanent Accommodation



There are two kinds of accommodation you can find in Germany as an international student. The economical option - student unions' halls of residence and the private accommodation which can be more costly compared to the former option.

Finding a place to stay in Germany is very challenging for students who are outside of Germany. This is why most of the international students of Germany wait for it up until they can explore their options for private accommodation in person.

This, however, does not include cases when the student wants to apply for halls of residence, since this can be done entirely online and should be done immediately after being accepted to university.

- **University residence halls (dormitories):** There are several students' residence hall

rooms available in different locations in Germany. They are the cheapest accommodation option. Getting this type of accommodation sometimes is not easy, due to the large demand. We suggest that you apply as soon as possible through [the student union](#). The student union websites have the information on the places available, registration dates and conditions. German student residences can also be found in the [DAAD Accommodation Finder](#).

- **Private accommodation:**

- **Shared flat:** Shared flats are a good option since students can live with flatmates and share the cost of rent and utilities, which ends up being quite affordable.
- **Private flat:** Living alone on an apartment means that you will get to spend more on rent and utilities since you will be required to pay the full amount alone.

2.2.2. Booking Temporary Accommodation

If you are not interested in finding accommodation before arriving in Germany, then you can book a form of temporary accommodation and stay there until you find suitable housing in Germany. Specifically, you can book a hostel or hotel online, somewhere close to your university campus. Search for hotels or hostels in Germany and you will likely find something that suits your needs.

2.3. Get an ISIC Student Card

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is a student card, which offers discounts for international students. The discounts cover travelling tickets, insurance and lifestyle in 133 countries of the world. You can get an ISIC card if you are a "full time" university student, with no age limitation. "Full time" means 12 weeks or more of study workload during one academic year. The registration fee is 25 US Dollars.

You can apply online for ISIC Card by paying the fee and submitting the following:

- Recent passport-sized photograph.

- A scanned copy of full-time student status proof.
- A scanned copy of your proof of identity.

Visit the [ISIC webpage](#) to register and order your ISIC Card online.

2.4. Download Helpful Mobile Apps

Now that everything is digitalized, finding your way around a foreign country is not as difficult as it was before. All you need to do is write the location on your online map, and find yourself at your destination in no time. But this is not the only way a digital world and smartphones can come in handy, since there is [a wide range of apps](#) you can download on your smartphone and make your life easier.

Here are some essential apps you can download before heading to Germany:

1. **TransferWise.** This app is one of the most practical and efficient ways of transferring money overseas and you get to pay around 8x cheaper prices for transfer fees in comparison to bank transfers. [Click here set up an account for free.](#)
2. **DBahn Navigator.** This app is perfect for public transport users, it provides real-time information on departures and arrivals, and you can also book your tickets online.
3. **Duolingo.** This one is an excellent app to practice your German language skills, or even any other language of your choice. It will definitely be useful.
4. **Number26.** Through this app, you can open a checking account with no extra cost, through which you can manage your account by means of online banking.
5. **Google Translate.** You probably already know this is an essential part of travelling to a foreign country. With Google Translate you get quality translations from any language to any language.
6. **AccuWeather.** If you want to be updated with the weather properly, make sure you download AccuWeather.
7. **Spotted by Locals.** In this app, handpicked locals who can speak the local language post their local tips on places you can go to and visit.
8. **Mint: Budget App.** This budget app will help you take care of your finances and better understand your financial life.
9. **Der Tagesspiegel – German Newspaper.** Getting the online German newspaper is perfect if you want to stay up to date with German news and practice your language skills while at it.
10. **Google Maps.** An online map is essential when you are in a foreign country. This is one of the first apps you should download before heading to Germany.



3. Preparing to Leave for Germany

The preparation period can be stressful because you are trying to think of everything at once hoping you're not forgetting anything. The key is to keep a list of necessary things to take with you and a list of things you should do before you leave. Basically, if you stay organized from the beginning, be sure that you will not forget any of the essentials.

This section will help you stay organized by listing some of the things that should be kept in mind when you are preparing to leave for your study journey to Germany:

3.1. Visit a Doctor

It is always better to be on the safe side, so meeting a doctor before your trip to Germany should be one of the things on your list. The doctor can help you with information about your overall health, and inform you whether you need to take any type of vaccine or medication before heading to Germany. They may also advise you on any health issues you might have.

3.2. Pack Smart

Packing is quite difficult, especially when you know you are moving to Germany for a longer period of time. You somehow want to take everything, but at the same time you cannot take everything. So, start by making [a list of things you use on a daily basis](#), since those are marked as essential, and then proceed to the other items.

Below, you will find a list of items you should make sure not to forget while packing for Germany:

Make sure you give priority to the main category of items below:

Personal	Toiletries	Clothes	Health Items	Additional
-----------------	-------------------	----------------	---------------------	-------------------

Documents				Items
Valid Passport	Toiletries Bag	Socks	Gauze	Phone
Visa	Toothpaste	Underwear	Thermometer	Phone Charger
ID	Toothbrush	Belts	Sunburn Cream	Laptop
Flight Ticket	Deodorant	Pyjamas	Antiseptic	Laptop Charger
Travel Insurance	Shampoo	Shoes	Insect Repellent	German Dictionary
University Admission Letter	Nail Clippers	Rain Boots	Personal Medication	Map
Birth Certificate	Towels	Jacket		Umbrella
Cash or Credit/Debit Card	Hair Conditioner	Gloves		
	Face Lotion	Hat		

Note: These are some essentials, however, you can fill the table boxes with additional things you think are important for the trip. Some of these things you can purchase when you get to Germany, items such as toiletries, if you do not feel like adding a larger weight load to your suitcase.

3.3. Secure Transportation From the Airport to Your Destination

There are numerous ways to get from the airport to your destination, but it is important to think of these options before arriving. In Germany, you can also use trains and buses to get from one place to another. However, if you do not feel like getting on a train, you might also get a cab. Keep in mind, however, that cabs tend to be more expensive, depending on how far from the airport your destination is. Additionally, if there is someone you know living in the same area as your destination in Germany, you might also ask them to give you a ride. A good thing about airports is that they typically have car rental services nearby, so renting a car is also an option.

3.4. Inform Your Financial Institution You're Moving Abroad

If you have an opened bank account in your home country, inform them you are moving abroad to study. They will then provide you with information on what you could do and the possible procedures that follow.

3.5. Make a List of Essential Contact Numbers

The fact that you will be abroad does not mean you cannot keep your contacts close with your friends and family. Make sure to get the contact numbers you need and communicate with the people you love through mobile applications such as WhatsApp, Skype, Viber, Gmail, or even Facebook Messenger. Nowadays it's pretty simple to stay in touch, since all you need is a smartphone and internet connection.

3.6. Read Other International Student Stories

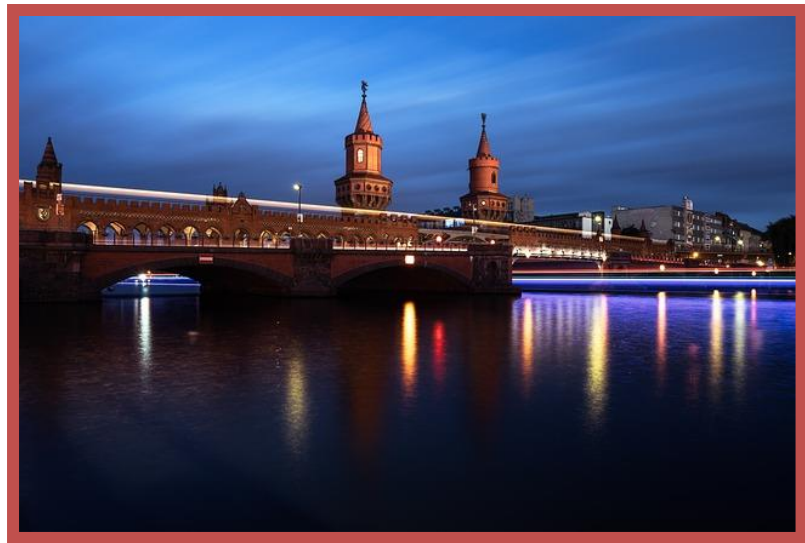
Thousands of international students go to Germany to study every year, meaning there are thousands of students who have gone through the same things as you. What you should do is take your time and read what these international students have to say about their study experiences in Germany and the tips they are willing to give (most of them never hesitate when it comes to giving pieces of advice). First, you can see whether someone you know has been to Germany to pursue their education and ask them. If not, then you can search for different Facebook groups where people post their experiences, or even read blog posts online.

You can find an interesting student story in this article [here](#), but there are also numerous others all over the internet.

4. Arriving to Germany

You have finally landed in Germany, and this is exactly where your study abroad experience begins. Being in a foreign country away from your family and friends can be a bit overwhelming but make sure not to stress this a lot. Right now, what is in front of you is a great possibility to shape your career and create memorable experiences you will cherish for the rest of your life.

Find the steps that follow once you arrive in Germany below:



4.1. Going From the Airport to Your Destination

Make sure you have the address of the place you booked in Germany with you. It can be a hostel, hotel or your permanent residence. Also, do not forget to download the map of Germany on Google map apps, so you can access the map offline. While, airports typically have free access to Wi-Fi, in case you need to get any sort of information from your laptop or smartphone. Depending on the chosen transportation, you might travel by train or private taxi from the airport to your destination.

4.2. Contacting Your Family

Contacting your family and informing them you arrived safe is another thing to do immediately after you arrive. As mentioned, you will have the possibility to use Wi-Fi at the airport so you can either write them a free message or call them for free.

4.3. Finding a Permanent Accommodation

If you have not booked your permanent accommodation online, then you have to consider it as soon as possible, since you need to settle down and focus on your studies. Refer to **Stage III, Section 2.2.1** for more information on permanent accommodation.

5. Student Life

The most exciting part is about to begin, meaning you are about to embark on your international student journey, praised by so many before you. In order to begin your student life properly, you will have to go through a few more essential steps, such as enrolment at university, getting a residence permit, or opening a German bank account. Find all these, and more, elaborated in the following sections.

5.1. Enrol at University

After your admission to university and arrival in Germany, the next step you should take is enrol at your university. The process of entering university studies is known as enrollment or “matriculation” and as an admitted student you are allowed to register in courses and undergo examinations (assessment tests), and then get a degree upon successful completion.

To enroll, you need to submit the following documents at the Office of Student Affairs “Studentensekretariat”:

- Passport,
- The University Admission Letter,
- The University Entrance Qualification (or substitute),
- Passport Photos,
- Proof of Health Insurance Coverage,
- German Language proficiency proof (for German only programme),
- English Language proficiency proof (for English only),
- Both languages proficiency proofs (for combined languages programmes).

After you submit the previous documents:

You get a certificate of enrollment (as a temporary student ID),

- You will be provided with an electronic payment slip in your email, in order to pay the semester,
- The Student ID will be provided to you by post, once it is confirmed you paid the semester slip,

- The university will open you an online account with your Student ID number - an account that will give you a wide access to the university internal services, networks and external e-resources such as the electronic course materials, the online registration for courses and exams, the e-library, and more.

Note: You will be required to re-register each semester, since you have to pay the semester fee and get your ID activated for the upcoming semester.

5.2. Get Your Residence Permit

The residence permit allows you to reside in Germany while you pursue a degree. You should also get a residence permit when you are taking part in a study exchange programme, enrolled in preparation courses, language courses, or trainings and internships in Germany. You can get your residence permit in two simple steps once you arrive in Germany.

1. **Register:** As soon as you find accommodation in Germany, you should register with the *local residents' registration office*. You will receive a confirmation (Meldebestätigung) proving you have registered. You will need this document for your residence permit.
2. **Apply:** You apply at the *foreigners' registration office* in the city you are studying in within three months. The fee when you first apply is €50-60 up to €110 and it takes about two to three weeks to process. When you apply, you should provide the following documents:
 - a. Passport and visa
 - b. Registration confirmation
 - c. Proof of Health Insurance
 - d. Certificate of Enrolment from your university
 - e. Proof of financial resources
 - f. Health certificate
 - g. Tenancy agreement
 - h. Biometric passport photos
 - i. Proof of English/German proficiency
 - j. Original certificates of previous education

More information about the Student Residence Permit can be found [here](#).

5.3. Open a Bank Account in Germany

Many international students decide to open a bank account as soon as they arrive in Germany. A bank account is actually a necessity when it comes to easily paying rent, receiving your salary, or even purchasing items such as electronics. In Germany, there are two main types of bank accounts, the current account (Girokonto) used to receive pay-checks as well as pay bills, and the savings account (Sparkonto), used to save money and earn interest.

To open a bank account in Germany, you are required to provide the following documents:

- Completed application form.
- Valid passport and current German residence permit.
- Proof of registration/address.
- Initial deposit (the minimum depends on the bank of your choice)
- Proof of income/employment (if employed).
- Proof that you are a student.
- SCHUFA credit rating (some banks require it).

Find detailed information on how to open a bank account in Germany in this article [here](#).

5.4. Attend Integration Courses Offered for Internationals in Germany

As an international in Germany, EU or non-EU resident, you can get free courses, which consist of language and orientation for foreigners in Germany. Courses teach you about daily aspects of Germany, such as the workplace, shopping, television and radio, writing emails and

letters, job interviews, administrative aspects, culture, country of Germany, politics, social aspects and more. Language course consists of 600 hours of instruction, while the orientation course consists of 100 hrs. When you get your residence permit, you can ask the Foreigners' Registration Office to orient you about the course and eligibility.

5.5. Focus on Your Studies

As an international student in Germany, it is important to create a balance between social life and studying. It is true that being in a foreign country can get exciting but it is also important not to fall behind on studies. This means, ever since the beginning, you should focus on learning the study methods that work for you and ensuring you are not missing out on university responsibilities, such as attendance, term papers, exams, presentations, tests, and more.



5.6. Engage in University Career Center Activities

Many German universities have career centers that will help you get started on your professional career. Visit the career center of the university in order to get advice or join courses which will help you prepare for the labor market. Additionally, career centers offer information on internship opportunities as well as job opportunities. These centers also

organize career fairs where you have the opportunity to meet with employers and be interviewed directly for certain job positions.

5.7. Make Use of Internship Opportunities

As an international student in Germany, you might be offered the possibility of doing your internship at a local company or institution, related to your field of study. German universities typically have a specific office for career counselling and maintain strong links with local recruiters. So, your university should be the first place you go to if you are interested in an internship, since they might be able to provide you with a full list of open positions.

Other sources where you can find internship opportunities include local agencies as well as career fairs. You may also consult with international student unions in Germany, or search through career-focused portals like **karriere.de**. You also have the option of contacting employers directly and asking them whether they are offering any internships for international students of your field.

5.8. Learn How to Use Public Transport

The public transport in Germany is highly regarded due to its efficiency, comprehensiveness, and reliability. Although Germans are known for their love towards cars, most citizens who live inside the big cities and especially internationals, tend to use public transport in Germany.

In Germany, you can find the following forms of public transport:

- **U-Bahn (subway/underground):** This is the underground rapid transit and it is the fastest form of travel in the bigger cities.
- **S-Bahn (suburban commuter rail):** It operates within city center traffic including the suburbs and nearby towns. It is faster and covers larger areas, but it is typically less frequent.
- **Bus & Tram:** This mode of transportation also runs at regular intervals and it's typically quite comprehensive in Germany.
- **Taxis:** Taxis in Germany tend to be quite expensive and they might even be slower than trains or trams in case they get stuck on traffic. However, they are efficient on cases when you have to carry luggage or are in a hurry.

As a student, you will get to use the public transport in Germany quite a lot, be it for commuting or travelling. Sometimes your university ID card serves as a traveling ticket for public transportation.

5.9. Get a Part-Time Job as an International Student in Germany

Once you have your residence permit, you can apply for a work permit at your local labour office (Arbeitsamt).

Students who come from the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland practically have the same rights as German students when it comes to the job

market. In case these students want to work more than 20 hours per week, they are eligible for certain insurance contributions, just like German students.

Students who come from countries other than EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, will have to follow specific restrictions. As an international student belonging in this category, you are allowed to work for 120 full days or 240 half days per year. You are also not allowed to undertake self-employment or freelance work.

If you want to work more than allowed, you should ask for permission from the local employment agency (Agentur für Arbeit) and the foreigners' registration office (Ausländerbehörde). Permission to work more hours is often granted to students who live in areas with a low unemployment rate.

International students enrolled in a language course or preparatory course are only allowed to work (during lecture-free periods) with permission from the Federal Employment Agency and the Immigration Office. Students working as academic assistants are not typically restricted to a limit of working hours.

Students can earn up to 450 EUR/month without having to pay taxes. If you earn more than this amount regularly, you will be required to obtain a tax number, meaning a certain amount of money will be deducted from your wage every month. If you are permanently employed in Germany, you will also have to pay social security contributions.

You can find available job offerings at numerous portals online, such as **stepstone.de**.

5.10. Socialize and Create Memories

Creating that study-socialize balance is crucial because what's a university experience if you do not create friendships with people from all over the world? One of the best parts about being an international student in Germany is that you get to meet new people in a diverse environment and this way learn about different cultures and make friends while at it. You will get to meet numerous people at university, during lectures, by attending workshops, study groups, voluntary activities, parties, and numerous other extracurricular activities. It is important to make use of these chances to get to know people, have fun, and create memories.



5.11. Get to Know the Culture and Customs of Germany

Germany has a beautiful culture and remarkable customs. Germany is actually known as the country of poets and thinkers and its culture has a key role in the history of Europe, but not only. Over 95% of the residents of Germany speak the German language, the standard German or any of its dialects. Minority languages include the Upper and Lower Sorbian, Romani, Danish as well as North and Saterland Frisian. While you are in Germany, do not forget to visit all the beautiful places this country has to offer, some of which part of UNESCO World Heritage. You can find many worthy places to visit in Germany, the majority listed in [Germany.Travel](#).

Read more about German culture, customs, and traditions [here](#).

5.12. Being Safe and Asking for Help in Germany

Germany is generally a safe country so there's no reason to be overly worried. Taking into consideration the large number of international students that enroll in German universities every year, you should rest assured that you will be fine without taking special safety precautions in ordinary life situations. However, when travelling to a foreign country, there are some things you should keep in mind regarding safety.

- Know the emergency numbers:
 - Ambulance and Fire Brigade (112)
 - Police (110)
- Ask help from the police whenever necessary.
- Keep your belongings close.
Be cautious of pickpockets when using ATMs.
- Do not keep your belongings all in one place.

Find more information regarding safety in Germany in [this article](#).

5.13. Getting Medical Treatment in Germany

If you have health insurance, you will not have to worry about medical costs anytime the need for medical treatment arises in Germany. The healthcare system in Germany is of great quality and highly regarded worldwide, so you will be in good hands. Your doctor will provide you with a medical prescription, which you can use to get medication in any pharmacy in Germany.

5.14. Driving in Germany as an International

You might be wondering whether it is possible to drive in Germany using your international driver's license. Well, the truth is you can use your license, but only for a particular amount of time. However, it also depends on whether you have a European Union license or a non-EU driver's license. Those coming



from the EU/EEA can drive in Germany using their driver's license without a set limit of time, meanwhile citizens of countries outside of the EU/EEA will only be able to use their driver's license in Germany in their first six months of residence in the country.

Everyone who is 18 years old or older can drive in Germany for their first six months in the country, meaning person's under 18 are not allowed to drive in Germany. After the period of six months, internationals (non-EU/EEA) must exchange their existing license for a German one, if they want to continue driving in Germany. Depending on the country they are from, they might be required to take additional tests, such as a written exam or a driving test.

6. Career in Germany

As an international student, it is possible for you to create a career in Germany and work in the country after graduation. Of course, you will be prone to certain restrictions at first, so it is important to read through the following section if you plan on working in Germany after you finish your studies. Keep in mind that knowledge of the German language will increase your prospects of finding employment in Germany, so use the years you spend at university to work on your language skills.

If You Are From the EU/EEA

You will be allowed to work in Germany without the need to obtain a work permit. You will be treated the same way as German citizens with regards to employment possibilities, work conditions, and taxes.

If You Are From Outside of the EU/EEA

After you graduate, you have the possibility of extending your residence permit for up to 18 months in order to find work *related to your studies* in Germany. You should start looking for work during your last semester of studies since the 18-month period begins as soon as you get your final exam results. During these 18 months, you are allowed to work as much as you want to support yourself as you look for employment related to your field of study.

Keep in mind that you should apply to extend your residence permit with the purpose of finding a job. To apply, you should submit the following documents:

- Passport
- University Degree (proof you have completed your studies)
- Proof of Financial Resources
- Proof of Health Insurance

After you secure a job related to your field of study

When you finally secure employment (with a minimum one-year contract), you can apply for a *permanent residence permit* and *EU Blue Card*, so you can live and work in Germany.

- **When to apply for a permanent residence permit:** When you secure a job with a minimum of one-year contract, related to your field of study.
- **When to apply for an EU Blue Card:** Apply for an EU Blue Card if you plan on living and working in another EU country. In Germany, you should be offered a job that pays a certain amount per year (at least €53,000 or €41,808 for mathematicians, engineers, physicians, etc).
- **When to apply for a settlement residence permit:** You can apply to settle in Germany at least two years after you receive your permanent residence permit or EU Blue Card.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is 'Studienkolleg'?

Studienkolleg is a year-long preparatory course for students whose school-leaving qualification is not recognized by German higher education institutions. During this course, students learn subjects of a particular degree programme as well as the German language, for five days a week, aiming for a passing score in the final examination. After they pass the final examination, they are eligible and qualified to apply for a degree programme at a German university. In order to attend a 'Studienkolleg', your German language skills need to be at the B1 level.

The examination (test or evaluation) assesses the applicants' knowledge in specific fields, crucial for a study programme that the applicant has chosen to pursue education in. One component of the course and the examination is also the assessment of German language proficiency related to the programme terminology. The course length is up to two semesters, around a one calendar year. Students who show above average results can enter the examination even after one semester.

2. What is 'Fachhochschulen'?

'Fachhochschulen' is a term used for Universities of Applied Sciences, which are designed to maximize the practical experience of the student. They are an ideal choice for those who are interested in gaining practical experience and skills. Most of the degree programmes in these universities are in the fields of engineering and hard sciences. However, just like other universities, they also offer Bachelor and Master's degrees but not PhD titles.

3. What is 'Studentenwerk'?

Studentenwerk is a state-run non-profit organization that helps with student affairs in Germany. Studentenwerk is organized at a local level to cover one or more universities. The organization works for students by organizing and running cafeterias, restaurants, accommodation. It also provides the BAföG programme to finance studies with grants and loans.

4. Why do I need TestAS?

TestAS assesses your ability to cope with the university programme demands. Moreover, after taking the test you have a bigger probability to get admitted into university. Some universities require TestAS as a mandatory precondition for a student to become a legitimate applicant for admission. The best way to find out if your university requires this test is by contacting the International Office of the university directly.

5. Where can I find more scholarship opportunities online?

There are plenty of scholarships available in Germany for international students. Those include government-funded scholarships, such as the [DAAD Scholarship](#) or [Erasmus+](#), non-government scholarships, as well as German university scholarships. To find more information regarding scholarships, check: studying-in-germany.org/scholarships.

6. Are there scholarship opportunities for all study disciplines?

There is a wide range of scholarship offers, mainly covered by the [DAAD scholarship database](#). However, an exclusion applies to medicine, but not exclusively.

7. Are university libraries equipped with free access for e-libraries and other e-materials of learning?

The majority of universities in Germany have well-equipped libraries, possessing facilities and materials needed for students. They also have access to international e-libraries, where students can download their needed materials for learning and/or research purposes.

8. Can an international student work as a volunteer/freelancer/self-employed?

An international student in Germany can work 120 full days or 240 half days per year (students from outside of the EU), however, they are not allowed to be self-employed or undertake freelance work.

9. Can my wife/husband accompany me in Germany during my studies?

You can bring your family (spouse or children) with you if you have a residence permit in Germany. If your stay in Germany is longer than one year, you have the possibility of applying for a family reunion visa. You must also provide proof that you have enough financial means to support your family in Germany, without the need of social assistance.

See more information about bringing your family to Germany while you study [here](#).

10. Do I need proof of German language proficiency for an English programme?

If the programme is not combined with German language, then German language proficiency

proof it is not needed to apply for a visa.

11. What is the difference between public and private universities?

Public universities are state funded universities, meaning these universities usually do not charge any tuition fee. While, private universities, which also offer recognized degrees, typically tend to charge tuition fees. However, the quality of studies both in public and private universities in Germany is excellent.

12. What is a state examination?

State examination is an examination regulated by the Federal State of Germany and it is administered by state invigilators, not by the university. This examination does not offer an academic degree, but rather represents a state qualification. This is an obliged double examination of those who have finished their master degree and are interested to work as medical doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, or teachers. Afterwards, they have to undertake a professional practical training to prepare themselves for the second state examination or to enter PhD studies. However, passing this test does not guarantee a job position for the candidate.

13. What is a double degree programme?

A double degree is an international programme, offered by universities in cooperation with other universities abroad. This degree is enabled through inter or multi agreements between universities, where students, who take part in these programmes can study in a partner university for a semester or two. The aim of these programmes is to exchange knowledge and culture between different universities. By the end of the exchange period, participating students gain a double degree, one for each university.

14. How do I know my application documents (physical) arrived at university or uni-assist?

The respective university, or application channel like uni-assist, will send you an email upon receiving your application documents.

15. Do I have to pay tuition fees in Germany?

Tuition fees at all public universities were officially removed in the year 2014, but they were reintroduced in the year 2017 in the state of Baden-Württemberg for non-EU/EEA students. These fees are set at €1,500 per semester and students pursuing a second degree will be required to pay €650 per semester. Students coming from Erasmus member states are exempt from these fees.

In the other German states, tuition fees for non-EU/EEA member states have not been reintroduced yet, which means undergraduate-level tuition at all other public universities remains free of charge. Students will still be required to pay a small administration fee per semester which is usually not more than €250 per semester.

16. Should I submit original application documents or copies?

You should submit authenticated copies of your documents, not originals. However, make sure to read through the university requirements carefully before submitting your application, since different universities tend to set different requirements.

17. Is there any age limitation to study in HEIs in Germany?

There is no age limit to studying in Germany. Any international applicant who fulfills the necessary requirements to study in German HEIs, can apply to do so.

18. Can I take my health insurance after I arrive in Germany?

It is an obligatory requirement to have your health insurance covered for the first three months of your stay in Germany. Afterwards, you need health insurance to cover the rest of your stay. If you need a visa to enter Germany, health insurance is a requirement to be issued a visa.

19. As a foreign student can I travel to other Schengen zone countries?

Yes, you can travel to other Schengen zone countries with your German student visa, however, you have to respect the maximum duration of a short stay, which is 90 days in a 180 day period.

20. How can I travel around Germany without a car?

Germany has a nice and comprehensive public transport system, including the underground, suburban trains, buses, and trams, which means you can pretty much depend on the German public transport to be efficient and reliable.

21. Which are the most affordable cities to live in Germany?

Some of the most affordable cities to live in Germany include Bielefeld, Frankfurt (Oder), Halle, Krefeld, as well as Passau.

Study in Germany: Essential Guide To Studying In Germany For Free

We have created this Study in Germany guide to help international students increase their chances of getting admitted at a Germany university, learn more about the requirements for international students, and best prepare themselves for studying and living in Germany.

This guide covers all the stages you need to go through and the actions you need to take – from the early information gathering, preparatory stage to graduation and staying in Germany after your studies – so you can make your dream of studying and living in Germany a reality.

In this guide you'll find answers to:

- **What is the real cost of studying in Germany** and do universities *really offer free-tuition education* for international students...
- Do you have to speak German *fluently* (and start taking language courses in your home country) to study in Germany or **can you study in English language** as well...
- What are the *main requirements* to study in Germany, how to **increase your chances of admission** at a German university, and where to look for **scholarship opportunities**...
- What are the best cities in Germany to study and live in, that are not just interesting and fun, but also have a **low cost of living and are great for international students**...
- What are the most in demand and **urgently needed** professionals in Germany, in case you're thinking of staying in Germany after you graduate and *landing a well-paid job*...
- And a lot more inside...



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