



GERMANY

Background: In 2013, The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (<https://www.daad.de/en/>) launched its Strategy 2020 campaign, which includes a goal of hosting at least 350,000 international students in Germany by 2020. Toward that end, Germany's public universities offer more than 1,700 degree programs taught in English, though most are at the graduate level.

Germany is home to more than 427 state-accredited universities in 180 towns and cities countrywide, of which 120 are private institutions. There are three types of higher education institutions in Germany: universities, universities of applied sciences—which make up the majority of the private institutions—and colleges of art, film, and music. Universities offer strong theoretical and academically-oriented degree programs in a broad range of disciplines. Instruction at universities of applied sciences is very practice-oriented, and internships are an integral part of the degree program. Colleges of art, film, and music are for students who want to develop their artistic talents, and instruction at most of these institutions is in German only.

Subjects popular among international students include economics and business administration, Germanic studies, electrical engineering, computer science, and music. During the 2013-14 school year, more than 3,000 US students were enrolled in full-degree programs in Germany, about one-third of them (1,001) in undergraduate programs.

Good to Know: More than 90 percent of all university students in Germany, domestic and international, are enrolled in public universities, where they must choose and specialize in a specific course of study when they first apply. Students pursuing a bachelor's degree can complete their studies in six to eight semesters. Undergraduate programs in Germany are very structured in terms of course selection, when compared with programs at many American liberal arts colleges. Students are encouraged to study the German language even if they enroll in English-taught programs.

Private universities in Germany offer undergraduate and graduate programs. These institutions typically offer more of a US-style campus experience.

Academic Calendar: At German universities the academic year is divided into two terms: the winter semester (October to March) and summer semester (April to September). (See timeline on next page.)

Sometimes students sit for exams during breaks between semesters. They also use breaks to travel, work, or do internships.

Search: Several websites are designed to help international students find best-fit opportunities, including the DAAD-sponsored Study in Germany website (<https://www.study-in.de/en/>) where students can plan their studies

February	Summer semester application decisions released
March	Winter semester ends
April	Summer semester starts
Early May	Applications open for winter semester
Mid-July	Applications close for winter semester
August	Winter semester application decisions released
September	Summer semester ends
October	Winter semester starts
Early December	Applications open for summer semester

by searching and viewing programs according to the language in which the course is offered. Inobis (www.inobis.de/index-en.html) is an affiliated site which includes databases, application checklists, and other tools.

Apply: Upon identifying their desired program of study, US students should check to see if the university offering it is a member of Uni-Assist (http://www.uni-assist.de/index_en.html). Uni-Assist is an application service that evaluates international documents and credentials for roughly 160 member universities. If the university is part of the Uni-Assist network, international students must apply using the Uni-Assist application service. If the university is not a member of Uni-Assist, international students can apply directly to the institution.

Applications from international students whose credentials are determined by Uni-Assist to meet the standards for admission

to German university study programs are forwarded to the individual university. The university itself makes the final admission decision.

In most cases, students can apply to as many programs as they would like. For high demand subjects, including medicine, veterinary science, pharmacy, and dentistry, the number of spaces available is restricted. These programs are designated *numerus clausus*, referencing the “closed number” of spaces. Students interested in these areas of study are advised to directly contact their universities of choice for details. More information can also be found at <http://www.hochschulstart.de/index.php?id=3606&L=1>.

Deadlines: Applications for the winter semester can be submitted from late May through mid-July, though some universities have deadlines as early as the end of May. Applicants who will not receive their high school diploma until after the application deadline are advised to contact the specific university and program for guidance. Decision notifications generally begin in August. Summer semester submission season runs from early December to mid-January, with notification beginning in February.

Application Fees: Uni-Assist charges 75 euros for the first application, and 15 euros for each additional application submitted for the same semester. Other fees for translation services, notarized copies, and exams (see “Admission Requirements”) may also apply.



Photo courtesy of Taylor

“The hardest problem for me would be the cost of returning home. Since I started my degree I have only been able to fly home one time, whereas some of my friends can take a trip back home easily on the weekends or during breaks. I miss my family and friends, but going abroad has given me a new appreciation for the time that I do spend with them.”

—Taylor Hafemeister, Wisconsin (Jacobs University, third-year student studying in international politics and history)

Germany

Admission Requirements: Many German universities require the equivalent of a German state-accredited Abitur qualification, a document issued to German secondary school students who have passed their final exams.

International students can typically meet this requirement in one of two ways: 1) via a US high school diploma with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and a SAT score of at least 1300 (math and critical reading on the old SAT), or an ACT composite score of at least 29; or 2) an IB diploma that fulfills Germany’s IB requirements. IB requirements can be found at <http://www.ibo.org/university-admission/recognition-of-the-ib-diploma-by-countries-and-universities/country-recognition-statements>.

Applicants who fulfill the requirements above qualify for direct general admission to a German higher education institution in the subject area they have chosen. More detailed information about admission requirements can be found at: <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/nach-deutschland/voraussetzungen/en/6017-admission-requirements/>.

Applicants who do not fulfill direct admission requirements may qualify for general admission to a preparatory program, undertaken at a *Studienkolleg*, which offers foundational courses to prepare international students for university. Students are eligible for admission to *Studienkolleg* preparatory courses if they have either 1) an SAT score of 1150 to 1290 (math and critical reading); 2) an ACT composite score of 25-28 along with a GPA of 3.0; or 3) an IB diploma that does not include six mandated examination subjects. See <http://www.studienkollegs.de/home.html> for more information.

For *numerus clausus* courses, admission is based on a calculated *average grade*, which takes into account applicants' high school grades and standardized test scores. Because admission is competitive, successful applicants usually have strong grades and test scores.

GEDs issued by individual states are not accepted by German universities.

With some exceptions, students who plan to enroll in programs taught in German must submit scores from either the German Language University Entrance Examination for Foreign Applicants (DSH) or the Test of German as a Foreign Language (TestDaF). Completion of certain *Studienkolleg* preparatory courses may also satisfy German language requirements. More information on language requirements can be found at https://www.study-in.de/en/plan-your-studies/requirements/german-skills_26609.php.

Students applying to English-taught programs do not have to demonstrate German proficiency.

Letters of recommendation are usually not necessary, though some programs may require them.

Upon Acceptance: Universities typically accept or deny students; conditional offers are uncommon. If accepted, the university will advise students on what paperwork they need to complete.

Tuition and Fees: Tuition, even for international students, is generally free at all German public universities, though students are required to pay fees each semester for public transportation, meals in the dining halls, use of athletic facilities, and cultural programming. The fees average about 250 euros per semester, but vary by university.

Private German universities charge tuition, some up to 20,000 euros per year. Some schools offer flexible financing options, such as allowing students to defer fee payment until after graduation when they have secured employment.

The DAAD website (<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/en/>) includes a database of merit-based scholarship opportunities for international students; see the Information for Foreigners section.

Housing: Students typically live in either a student residence hall or private accommodation. The DAAD website (www.Study-in.de/en) offers an online search tool based on a student's destination; see "Plan Your Stay." This search feature allows students to view options, locations and prices, the related application process, and deadlines for securing a spot.

Campus life at German institutions is typical of European universities. Many students live off campus in shared or single apartments. Dormitories with cafeterias and meal programs are not usually available at the larger public universities. Most offer only shared kitchen spaces.

Visa and Other Permits: Although US citizens are eligible to enter Germany without a visa, students can apply for a student visa from a German embassy or consulate prior to departing for Germany. This will facilitate their application for a residence permit, which is required. Students must apply for a valid residence permit within their first three months in Germany. To apply for this permit, students must first find accommodations and obtain a confirmation of registration (*Meldebestätigung*) document from the local Residents' Registration Office. Students will also need the following when applying for a residence permit: passport, letter of university acceptance, evidence they can cover the expected cost of their education and living expenses (approximately 7,908 euros per year), and proof of health insurance. Additional documents may also be required.

The residence permit is valid for two years and must be renewed before it expires. An extension of the residence permit will usually be granted provided the student shows proof from their university that their studies are proceeding properly. For more information on German visa regulations, visit http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Visabestimmungen_node.html#doc480844bodyText2.

Fees for residence permits vary according to location but cost up to 110 euros. Additional guidance about specific locations can be obtained through the German Consulates General: <http://www.germany.info/>.

Non-European Union (EU) students can work 120 full days or 240 half-days per year—or more if a work permit is obtained—excluding research assistant work. Germany has recently eased its post-study work eligibility requirements for students. After graduation, international students can extend their residence permits by 18 months in order to find a job, beginning from the date their final exam results are issued. If they obtain a job in Germany, after two years of work they can apply for permanent residency status.

Advice from the Field: General queries can be directed to The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) at daadny@daad.org. DAAD also provides numerous resources about studying in Germany:

- **A pocket guide for international students:** https://www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/nach-deutschland/publikationen/ziel-deutschland_en.pdf
- **A practical guide for international students:** https://www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/nach-deutschland/downloads/sid_en.pdf
- **A Q&A guide for parents:** https://www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/nach-deutschland/publikationen/elternbroschuere_en.pdf

Academic standards across German universities are high and generally consistent among institutions.

While some programs in Germany may be taught in English, the majority are not. To take full advantage of their experience, students are encouraged to learn some German either before or during their studies.



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