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Start your studies in Germany!

Information sheet for Non-EU citizens

Requirements

UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE QUALIFICATION

In order to study in Germany, non-EU citizens need a recognised higher education entrance qualification. This means that the school-leaving qualification from your home country must be comparable to the German Abitur. A university degree can also be recognized as admission. Foreign qualifications are recognised by special bodies, such as the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB). As the requirements vary depending on the degree programme and university, it is advisable to find out about the specific requirements and the recognition process at an early stage.

VISA

Students who are not EU or EFTA nationals must apply for a residence permit in accordance with §16b AufenthG in order to take up a dual study programme or full-time studies in Germany. This is a visa for study purposes and can be applied for at the relevant German embassy or foreigners authority in the home country. In addition, the approval of

the foreigners authority at the place of study is required. More detailed information can be found on the websites of the respective universities. The visa is already required for entry into Germany.

In order to be able to apply for the visa at all, a certificate of admission to study at a state or state-recognised German university must be submitted to the authorities. The certificate of admission is issued by the university after enrolment in a degree programme.

If you are attending a Studienkolleg (preparatory college) to prepare for your studies, you can also apply for a visa without a university admission certificate. In this case, the certificate of acceptance to the Studienkolleg should be enclosed with your application.

You can find more information [here](#).

LANGUAGE CERTIFICATE

In order to study at a German university, you must prove your German language proficiency. This also applies to a dual study programme in cooperation with a company. Your language skills should be at level C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). There are various examinations that can be taken either in your home country or in Germany:

TestDaF

The Test of German as a Foreign Language, „TestDaF - Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache“, is accepted by all German universities and can be taken in your home country. The test is offered in special centres in 100 countries. You can register for the upcoming dates via the websites.

DSH

The German Language Examination for University Admission of Foreign Applicants, „DSH - Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber“, is taken directly at the German university at which you wish to study. Information on dates can therefore be found on the respective university website.

In addition to these two tests, there are other ways to prove sufficient German language skills:

- Abitur from a German-speaking school
- Goethe Certificate C2: Large German Language Diploma taken at a Goethe-Institut
- German Language Diploma (Level II) of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs
- Passed telc German C1 university exam

Attendance at a Studienkolleg (Preparatory college)

If you attend a Studienkolleg before studying at a German university you must already have some German language skills. The Studienkolleg helps strengthen both your subject knowledge and language proficiency. The assessment test, which is taken after one year, is therefore also recognised by the universities as sufficient proof of language skills. All information on the preparatory courses can be found [here](#).

Exception: International degree programmes

Many German universities also offer international degree programmes that are taught in English. In most of these programmes, no proof of German language skills is required. However, exceptions confirm the rules: You should therefore always take a close look at the admission requirements for the degree programme of your choice.

Admission to a degree programme

SCHOOL-LEAVING CERTIFICATE

In order to be admitted to a German degree programme, a higher education entrance qualification must be presented. In most cases, this is the school-leaving certificate that corresponds to the German Abitur or technical diploma (Fachabitur). Universities recognise the German Abitur and the German International Abitur (DIAP) obtained abroad. The IB and the GIB are equivalent if the requirements of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs are met.

You can check whether the international school-leaving certificate is sufficient for admission to a German university here, for example:

[DAAD](#)

[My Guide](#)

OTHER EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Depending on the university and admission requirements, there are opportunities to study in Germany without an Abitur, particularly in engineering subjects.

Studying without an Abitur

If the educational qualification in your home country is recognised as a university entrance qualification, for example an apprenticeship with work experience, this could possibly also be recognised in Germany. The following applies here: check online once to be able to plan with certainty. Completing one or two semesters of higher education in your home country could also have a positive impact on your admission to university in Germany. To verify if your qualification is sufficient or if you need to attend a Studienkolleg first, you can check the [anabin database](#) provided by the Central Office for Foreign Education.

Studienkolleg (Preparatory college)

Your international school-leaving or educational qualification is not sufficient for admission to

a German university? Don't worry, your dream of studying in Germany won't be shattered. Studienkollegs offer the opportunity to attend specialised and language courses before the actual course of study, which can even be adapted to the desired course of study. The prerequisites for this are German language skills at level B1 and a successful entrance examination. With this qualification you can apply for your desired degree programme at German universities. Information on the Studienkollegs in Germany can be found [here](#).

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Most degree programmes in STEM subjects in Germany start in the winter semester. For degree programmes with restricted admission, the deadline is 15 July for the winter semester and 15 January for the summer semester.

For non-restricted degree programmes, you can usually enrol directly at the university. The deadlines for this are 15 May for the winter semester and 15 September for the summer semester. However, it is important to ensure that you fulfil all the necessary requirements. For some engineering degree programmes, for example, internships must be completed before the start of the course.

Application deadlines for dual study programmes

Most dual study programmes and apprenticeships in companies start every year between 1 July and 1 October. Companies also advertise vacancies for the following year during this period. If you wish to complete a dual study programme in Germany, you must therefore apply to the companies a year in advance.

Living in Germany

HEALTH INSURANCE

Anyone wishing to study and live in Germany is legally required to have health insurance. This also applies to international students. Proof must be submitted to the residents' registration office and when enrolling at a university. There are two types of health insurance in Germany: statutory and private. Students under the age of 30 who are enrolled at a German university can take out statutory health insurance. These are cheaper thanks to the student status. However, anyone over the age of 30 or taking part in language and study preparation courses must take out private health insurance.

Exception

International students from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, Tunisia or Turkey do not have to take out German health insurance. Their domestic health insurance also applies to them in Germany. This exception applies until the students accept an internship or part-time job. From this point onwards, they must also take out German health insurance.

Dual students

Dual students are employed by the company in all four dual study models and are subject to compulsory insurance as employees. This means that social security contributions must be paid, including health insurance. These contributions are paid by the employer directly via the salary. German health insurance is usually required for this. Applicants should clarify the issue of health insurance directly with their new employer.

WORK PERMIT

The student visa according to §16b AufenthG authorises you to work a part-time job for a total of 120 days or 240 half days per year. An extension of the hours may be authorised in individual cases.

An extension of the work permit is not necessary for dual study programmes, as the practical phase in the company is an integral part of the course.



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