

UNIVERSITÄTEN IN DEUTSCHLAND



University Studies in Germany

Costs, Admissions, Degrees, and Traditions

COST OF STUDY AT UNIVERSITY



USA
\$18,943 average tuition

GERMANY
\$933 average tuition

AUSTRIA
\$3100 average tuition

SWITZERLAND
\$5500 average tuition

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN GERMANY DO NOT CHARGE ANY TUITION.

STUDENT FEE: Students pay around \$100 per semester for a student ID card which allows access to the cafeteria meal plan (extremely low-cost meals) as well as free transportation on city buses.

EXPERIMENTED WITH TUITION: Around 2005, some universities began to charge tuition of around \$500 per semester. The public outrage was so large that they reversed course within a few years, and no public university charges tuition now.

FOREIGN STUDENTS: Foreign students can also attend German universities without paying tuition. Foreign students must have a student visa to live and study in Germany, as well as meet any entrance requirements for university study. A German-language proficiency exam is usually required for foreign students.

COST OF LIVING: Students still need to pay for their textbooks, as well as any living costs (rent, food, etc.)

FINANCIAL AID IN GERMANY



BAföG = Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz, *federal educational assistance law*

By German law, parents must financially support the education of their children until completion of either university or a job-training program.

Since "tuition" is non-existent at public universities and colleges in Germany, support mostly means money for textbooks as well as living expenses and food costs.

The German government provides hefty financial aid for German students. The federal financial aid system is called BAFöG, somewhat equivalent to FAFSA in the USA.

BAföG is given in packages of student loans, stipends or scholarships, and grants. All Germans, regardless of parental income, can get some aid, but the aid provided for lower-income families is more substantial (**need-based**).

Grants are funds that go directly to the individuals to use as needed, usually direct-deposited into bank accounts. Stipends and scholarships must be used towards educational purposes (textbooks, etc.) at specified stores and institutions.

Federal **student loans** in Germany charge **zero interest**, and there are caps on what must be repaid. As long as the student completes his/her education, students only need to **repay 50% of the loan**. No matter how much the original loan was, a student will never need to repay **more than €10,000**.

The majority of university students in Germany do not work during the semester. They do often take part-time jobs during school breaks and summer.

ADMISSION TO UNIVERSITY IN GERMANY



Abitur from Gymnasium is required; Numerus Clausus determines number of students admitted each year

Abitur Required

An **Abitur** (successful completion of **Gymnasium**) is the absolute requirement for admission into German universities.

Numerus Clausus Restrictions

Many high-demand programs have limited admission based on the student's **Abitur** grades and other scores during **Gymnasium**. This is called "**Numerus Clausus**" in German: a *Numerus Clausus* of 1,5 means only students whose *Abitur* score is over 1,5 will be allowed entry into that particular program of study.

The **Numerus Clausus** is controlled by the consortium of **all universities in Germany**: it does not change based on the location of the university, only for **each field of study**. Some states are allowed to set a state-wide NC.

Each year, the ZVS (college admissions center) sets a **Numerus Clausus** for each field of study. For example, to study **Informatik**, the **Numerus Clausus** might be **2,0** - regardless of which university. The *Numerus Clausus* is determined for **each new school year**.

Foreign Student Requirements Vary

For American students, the entrance requirements for German universities are usually **1-2 years of community college** classes (general education requirements completed). Other countries may vary.

COURSES OF STUDY



Nr 1:
Betriebswirtschaftslehre

Nr 2:
Maschinenbau

Nr 3:
Rechtswissenschaft

Nr 4:
Informatik

Nr 5:
Medizin

Nr 6:
Germanistik

Nr 7:
Elektrotechnik

STUDENTS AT GERMAN UNIVERSITIES BEGIN SPECIALIZATION IMMEDIATELY

ABITUR REQUIRED: German students must have completed their *Abitur* (certificate of completion from the *Gymnasium*) in order to study at university.

DECLARE MAJOR ON ENTRY: Students must declare their major when they begin their university studies. They immediately begin specialized classes in their field, and do not take broader courses outside their field.

NO GENERAL EDUCATION: Because the *Abitur* covers more advanced material in general, there are no "general education" requirements at universities in Germany.

NO ELECTIVES: Students cannot usually enroll in courses outside their field of study; the prescribed curriculum is quite rigid and courses must be taken in sequence, with little opportunity for 'elective' classes.

DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS



vor 1999 = Diplom und Magister; jetzt = Bachelor und Master

German universities have agreed to the European Union guidelines for standardization of coursework - the Bologna Process of 1999.

A Bachelor can be completed in 3 to 4 years of study at a German university. (General-education requirements have been completed before university begins.)

A Master takes about five or six years of university study - one to two years beyond a Bachelor.

Around 78% of German students continue towards a Master after completion of the Bachelor.

Prior to the Bologna Process of 1999, German universities did not award Bachelor or Master degrees. Instead, the course of study was around six years and resulted in a Diplom (for technical/scientific fields) or a Magister (for liberal arts). Both were equivalent to a Master.

Some students do not like the new shorter courses of study; they feel that they are rushed through material and are tested too often, compared to the older framework of slower study with less frequent testing.

At some universities and in some fields, students can still choose the older path and come out with a Diplom or Magister.

In certain fields where certification is required (teaching, law, medicine), the program of study culminates in the *Staatsexamen*, which issues a license to practice in that field. Teaching and Law degrees are generally around six years of study, equivalent to a Magister; medical degrees take around eight years.

About 15% of German students go abroad to study – either to the USA, or to European countries.

TYPES OF COURSES



German universities require several different types of classes throughout the course of study.

DIE VORLESUNG

Die Vorlesung is a lecture class with up to 600 students. Attendance is not taken and there are no tests; instead, students will be tested at the end of 3-4 semesters worth of *Vorlesungen* when they take a comprehensive written and oral exam to move on to the second stage of study. In traditional lectures, the professor simply reads aloud from prepared text, with no opportunity for student questions or interaction with the professor.

DAS SEMINAR

Das Seminar is a much smaller and intimate course, usually less than 20 students. In a *Seminar* course, students prepare presentations (*das Referat*), partake in daily discussions, group projects and must submit their class notes (*das Protokoll*) as proof of their class participation and understanding. There is frequent and personal interaction with the professor in each class meeting.

DIE ÜBUNG

Die Übung is a practical and hands-on style course, such as laboratory work, applied practice, or focused work on smaller topics. Tests and exams are the basis of completion in the *Übungen*. Class sizes are relatively small: 20-40 students. Some fields of study (especially in the humanities) do not require any *Übung*-style classes.

DER SCHEIN

Instead of a one-page transcript, German students collect certificates (Scheine) for each course they have taken. Once they have collected enough certificates (usually after 3-4 semesters), they take large exams to move on to the next stage of their studies. Now records are kept on computer, but they used to be kept on paper in a special *Studienbuch* which could not be easily replaced if lost/destroyed!

ROOM TYPES: HÖRSAAL (LECTURE), SEMINARRAUM (SEMINAR), LABOR (LAB)



Vorlesung im Hörsaal



Übung im Labor



Seminar im Seminarraum

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES



Public Institutions Preferred

- **Public** universities in Germany are excellent, world-class institutions.
- **Six** of the top 100 universities in the world are in Germany and **18** of the top 200. Germany ranks **third in the world** overall on lists of ranked universities.
- The **oldest** university in Germany was founded in **1386** in Heidelberg.
- There are around **100 public universities** in Germany, and many more technical colleges and specialty institutions (428 total).
- The overwhelming majority of German universities are **public** and **do not charge tuition**.
- There are **very few private universities** in Germany, by latest count only less than 50 total.
- The very first private university was founded in **1980**.
- Private universities in Germany **do** charge tuition, much like in the USA. Average costs are at least **€10,000 per semester**.
- Attitudes toward private universities tend to be negative, and they face **charges of 'elitism'** which German citizens detest.
- The private universities in Germany rarely feature on any rankings list; they are **not as excellent** and world-class as the public institutions.

STUDENT HOUSING



OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING COMMON (Wohngemeinschaften)

German students tend to live in rented and shared housing, often with several housemates.

Some students live with their parents if they attend a university close to home.

Die Wohngemeinschaft, often abbreviated as **WG**, means a house or apartment shared with several housemates, usually with a contract regarding food costs, chores, and maintenance schedules. Some English speakers say "co-op" for the equivalent of **Wohngemeinschaft**.

Putzplan in der WG

	Abfall	Küche	Bad	Rosen gießen
Nora				X
Sara	X	X		
Lena			X	

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING LIMITED (Studentenwohnheime)

Most German students **do not** live in dormitories. Dormitories are mostly reserved for foreign students and exchange students.



OTHER INTERESTING FACTS



Differences between American and German universities

NO CENTRAL CAMPUS

Many German universities do not have a centralized "campus" in the American sense. University buildings are scattered around the city in different locations; this is because the university grew after the city was founded, and there was no central space available. Classes for one subject will usually be held in one location, but other subjects may require a journey across town.

OTHER NAMES FOR UNIVERSITY

In addition to the major *Universitäten*, there are many other institutions of higher education in Germany. *Universitäten* are the only schools that can award doctorates (*Ph.D.* or *Dr. Phil.*) The word *Hochschule* can refer to any college or university. Other names for colleges are *Fachhochschule* (for applied sciences), *Kunsthochschule* (art institute), *Musikhochschule* (music conservatory), *Institut* (usually in the sciences), or *Akademie* (for humanities and arts).

COURSES IN ENGLISH

Many German universities are beginning to offer courses and programs in English rather than German, in an attempt to bring in more international students. These programs are still tuition-free, but courses are taught in English.

SELECTION OF FAMOUS GERMAN UNIVERSITIES



Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München



Gründung im Jahr 1472
Studierende: 51.000

Technische Universität München



Gründung im Jahr 1868
Studierende: 41.000

Universität zu Köln



Gründung im Jahr 1388
Studierende: 49.000

Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg



Gründung im Jahr 1386
Studierende: 31.000

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin



Gründung im Jahr 1810
Studierende: 33.500

Freie Universität Berlin



Gründung im Jahr 1948
Studierende: 33.000

Technische Universität Berlin



Gründung im Jahr 1770
Studierende: 32.500

Philipps-Universität Marburg



Gründung im Jahr 1527
Studierende: 26.500