

Studying in Germany

A guide for international students & families — how German higher education works, why public tuition is free, the student visa and blocked account, English-taught programs, and post-study work.

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WORLD-CLASS — AND LARGELY TUITION-FREE

Germany has become one of the world's top study destinations, above all because **public universities charge no tuition**, even for international students. Add strong universities, a fast-growing range of **English-taught programs**, and a central EU location, and the appeal is clear. The path runs through a **student visa and a "blocked account."** This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. German visa rules, the blocked-account amount, and requirements change. The figures here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the German mission in your country, DAAD, and your university.**

Understand Why Students Choose Germany

WHAT TO KNOW

Germany offers **free public tuition, strong universities and applied sciences, a booming range of English-taught degrees, and a central EU location** — plus solid post-study work options. It's a way to earn a globally respected degree without heavy debt.

BY THE NUMBERS

Free tuition

at public universities

English programs

fast-growing

Low debt

globally respected degree

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Germany's **free tuition and quality** against living costs and the visa/blocked-account requirements — for many, it's the best value in global higher education.

GOOD TO KNOW

Even non-EU students pay **no tuition** at most public universities — a rare and powerful advantage.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

German higher education splits into **research universities (Universitäten)** and **universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen/HAW)**, which are more practical and industry-linked. Most are public and tuition-free; degrees follow the bachelor's—master's—doctorate structure.

BY THE NUMBERS

Universities

research-oriented

Applied sciences

practical & industry-linked

Mostly public

and tuition-free

HOW TO HELP

Choose between a **research university** and a **university of applied sciences** based on whether you want academic depth or practical, career-focused study.

GOOD TO KNOW

Fachhochschulen (applied sciences) offer strong, employer-connected programs — don't overlook them.

Understand the Visa

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU students usually need a **national (D) visa** for stays over 90 days. Citizens of some countries (US, UK, Canada, and others) can **enter without a visa and apply for a residence permit after arrival**; most others must get the visa first at a German mission.

BY THE NUMBERS

National (D) visa

stays over 90 days

Some visa-free

permit after arrival

Residence permit

registered after arrival

HOW TO HELP

Check whether **your nationality needs a visa before travel or can apply for the residence permit after arrival**, then follow the German mission's exact process.

WATCH OUT

After arriving you must **register your address** (Einwohnermeldeamt) and obtain your **residence permit** — don't skip these steps.

Apply Through uni-assist

WHAT TO KNOW

Many universities process international applications through **uni-assist**, a central portal. Check that your prior qualification is recognized (the official **Anabin** database helps), and note deadlines — degree programs often close in winter or spring for autumn start.

BY THE NUMBERS

uni-assist

central application portal

Anabin

credential recognition

Deadlines

winter/spring for autumn

HOW TO HELP

Verify your qualification in **Anabin**, apply via **uni-assist** (or directly where required), and track each program's deadlines carefully.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not every university uses uni-assist — confirm the application route for each program before you start.

Meet Admissions Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

You'll need a **recognized school or university qualification** that meets the program's requirements, plus a language certificate. Some applicants need a **Studienkolleg** (foundation year) if their qualification isn't directly equivalent.

BY THE NUMBERS

Recognized qualification

meets the program

Language certificate

German or English

Studienkolleg

if needed

HOW TO HELP

Confirm your qualification is **recognized** for your chosen program, gather your documents and language certificate, and check whether a Studienkolleg is required.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your prior qualification isn't equivalent, a **Studienkolleg** foundation year may be the route in.

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

For **German-taught** programs you prove German (e.g., **TestDaF** or **DSH**); for the many **English-taught** programs you prove English (e.g., **IELTS** or **TOEFL**). Even in English programs, some German helps daily life.

BY THE NUMBERS

German-taught

TestDaF / DSH

English-taught

IELTS / TOEFL

Some German

helps daily life

HOW TO HELP

Take the **right test for your program's language**, and consider learning some German regardless — it eases living, working, and staying on after study.

GOOD TO KNOW

English-taught programs have exploded, so you can often study without German — but a little German goes a long way.



Plan Costs & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

Public tuition is free (the exception is Baden-Württemberg, which charges non-EU students). Every university charges a modest **semester fee** (often €80–350), usually including a transit pass. **DAAD** offers scholarships. Budget mainly for living costs.

BY THE NUMBERS

Tuition

free at public unis*

Semester fee

€80–350

DAAD

scholarship database

HOW TO HELP

Budget mainly for **living costs and the semester fee** (tuition is free at public universities), and explore **DAAD** and university scholarships.

WATCH OUT

*Baden-Württemberg charges non-EU students tuition — the rest of Germany doesn't. Confirm your state.

Set Up the Blocked Account

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa, you must prove you can support yourself — typically via a **blocked account (Sperrkonto)**. The recent amount is about **€11,904 for one year (€992/month)**. You'll also need **German health insurance** (statutory, roughly €140/month).

BY THE NUMBERS

Blocked account

the standard proof

~€11,904/year

~€992/month

Health insurance

required

HOW TO HELP

Open a **blocked account** for the required amount before your visa appointment, and arrange **German health insurance** — both are essential for the visa.

WATCH OUT

The blocked-account figure was **raised in 2025** — always confirm the current amount before depositing.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, **register your address, get your residence permit, and confirm health insurance and a bank account.** Prepare for German directness, bureaucracy, and an academic culture of independent study.

BY THE NUMBERS

Register & permit

first tasks

Bureaucracy

be organized

Independent study

the academic norm

HOW TO HELP

Handle the **arrival admin promptly** (registration, residence permit, insurance, bank), and prepare for a self-directed academic culture and thorough German bureaucracy.

GOOD TO KNOW

German bureaucracy rewards **organization** — keep every document, and complete registration and the residence permit quickly.

Thrive & Work

WHAT TO KNOW

Students can generally **work 120 full days (or 240 half days) per year**. After graduating, an **18-month job-seeker residence permit** lets you find qualified work, with routes to the **EU Blue Card** — a strong pathway to staying on.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work

120 full / 240 half days/yr

18-month permit

to find work after

EU Blue Card

skilled-work route

HOW TO HELP

Work within the **permitted limits**, build networks, and use the **18-month post-study job-seeker permit** and EU Blue Card routes if you want to stay and work.

GOOD TO KNOW

Germany's **post-study work pathway** is one of its biggest draws — plan for it, and confirm current terms.

Studying in Germany: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm everything with DAAD, the German mission in your country, and your university.

The system

Research universities and universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen); mostly public and tuition-free; bachelor's—master's—doctorate.

The visa

Non-EU students usually need a national (D) visa for stays over 90 days (some nationalities apply for a residence permit after arrival); register your address and get a residence permit on arrival.

Applying

Often via uni-assist; check credential recognition in Anabin; prove language (TestDaF/DSH for German programs, IELTS/TOEFL for English).

Money

Public tuition is free (except Baden-Württemberg for non-EU); pay a modest semester fee; prove funds via a blocked account (recently ~€11,904/year) plus health insurance; DAAD scholarships.

Work & after

Work ~120 full / 240 half days per year; an 18-month job-seeker permit and EU Blue Card offer strong post-study pathways.

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