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Tips & Checklist
for Studying & Working in Germany
2023

Because today's students...

Helpful Tips & Advice for Planning Your Stay Abroad

Recognition of Your Degree

As a first step, you should check if your degree is recognized in Germany - The [anabin website](#) acts as a database you can search for degrees worldwide (*in German only*).

German Language Acquisition & Skills

Do you speak any German yet? If so, that would be beneficial, as most employers ask for a **B1/B2 level of German**. There are some international courses of study and also companies where you'll get by with English only but for full immersion into German culture, it's very helpful to know some German. Usually, the [Goethe-Institutes abroad](#) offer **German classes** and may even accommodate special requests like professional language courses (i.e., teaching Business German or the vocabulary needed and used within a certain profession).

Finances

The next point is your financial situation: Applying for a visa usually requires you to pay a processing fee determined by the German embassy in your home country, so take a look at their website and familiarize yourself with the process and its costs. If you are a non-EU citizen, or a citizen of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, then you'll need to show proof of having sufficient [financial resources](#) to come and stay in Germany (as of 2023, a minimum of 934 €/ month or 11,208 €/year¹). If you receive a **stipend**, the total amount may be reduced or even waived, depending on the total amount of your stipend.

University Fees & Tuition

Most universities in Germany only require you to pay an **administrational fee** (for your student card, bus ticket etc.) but no tuition. If you attend a private (as opposed to a public) university, the chances that a tuition fee arises are higher. Also try to calculate any additional funds you may need for language classes, travel, housing, health insurance etc.

Stipends & Scholarships

You can check if you are eligible for a **scholarship** - The [DAAD](#) is a good point to start your search because they are the largest provider of international stipends and scholarships in Germany. Their website hosts a [scholarship database](#) where you can filter your search by

¹ Please note this amount is subject to change due to annual increase of living costs.



country and subject. Keep in mind that scholarships vary - Most will cover the school fees, some maybe part of the travel fees but there are usually some expenses that you will have to raise yourself.

Applying for a Study Program or Job

Next, you need to apply for the study program or job of your choice, as your visa will be tied to the purpose of your stay. Usually, foreign nationals receive a temporary visa first which is extended if they continue their studies and/or work before being awarded a permanent visa eventually if they wish to. If you apply for a job, make sure you have an updated CV at hand, listing all your skills (work experience, language & IT skills, specialties etc.).

Documents & Planning Your Stay Abroad

You should then gather all the documents you need to apply for your visa and also start planning your stay abroad early. There are many aspects to consider before your departure, such as where you will live, what kind of health insurance suits your needs and if you need to take additional German classes here. Once you've started your program, you will usually be quite busy and therefore have little time to take care of these issues except during the first few weeks. Also keep in mind that you need to register with the authorities here once you've arrived and found an accommodation, so there are a lot of bureaucratic and administrative issues to take care of (such as enrolling at university, preparing for the start of classes etc.)

Stays abroad should be planned as much as one year in advance because there are a lot of things to take care of - but no worries, counseling is available at most schools and universities in Germany but you should also consider taking charge and preparing your stay abroad as good training to deal with organizational matters because there will be more of these once you've arrived. Also, planning in advance usually saves you a lot of headache later on.

You can also try to contact your home country's embassy in Germany, even though we cannot guarantee they'll have the capacities to attend to requests from outside Germany. Also, if possible, try to connect with other people who have been to or currently live in Germany to get an impression of what life is like here in Germany. This will help to ease the culture shock most foreign students and professionals experience upon their arrival in another country. It's important students and professionals have a realistic idea of what awaits them when studying or working abroad.

» Upon request, we are happy to send you a brief summary of the points above along with some info material, so that you can read up on the matter some more. We hope this helps to start you off - Please let us know if you have any additional questions.

Check List for Studying & Working in Germany

01. Inquire about the **visa fees & procedure** at the website of the German embassy in your home country.
02. Make sure that you have sufficient **financial resources** to support yourself throughout your stay in Germany.
03. Make sure you have a **valid passport** that is good for international travel.
04. Find out what minimum language level you need (usually B1/B2) to start your studies and/or job so you can train for it. Check if you need a special **language test** as part of your qualifications and what its costs are, if applicable. You can take **language courses**, for instance with the [Goethe-Institutes](#), in order to prepare for your stay abroad. [Online courses](#) are another great option available at language schools or with private tutors. Keep in mind that not everyone you encounter in Germany might speak English fluently - While most people do, some people off campus and outside or even inside your work place may only have basic English skills, so the more German you speak, the better off you will be.
05. Try to **familiarize yourself with German culture** as much as you can by reading up on the topic and speaking to internationals who have lived or are currently living in Germany - They usually are a great source of information and advice!
06. Find out if there are **scholarships** or other funding which you may apply for to cover part of your expenses.
07. If you would like to work in Germany, **compile an updated CV** with your job skills, especially those relevant in your field.
08. If you already have a degree or professional qualification, check whether they are recognized in Germany or not.
09. **Research the education infrastructure and job market** and try to find out which universities or companies might be a good fit for your interests and/or skill set. Depending on these, there might be various options at different universities or, with regard to jobs, in different industries and areas of work here. Also, if you already have a university or company in mind, check their website to look for information on courses, job postings etc. and try to find out about the requirements to start there.
10. Set up a **budget plan** to calculate the total expenses for going abroad. Please note that your expenses may vary a lot depending on your lifestyle and other circumstances, such as the city you live in, whether you share accommodation or live by yourself, have a job alongside your studies or are

eligible for a scholarship to cover part of your expenses. A good tip is to always calculate a bit more as to be on the safe side – Maybe you will need new clothes for a different climate, special equipment for your job etc.

11. Once you are accepted at a university and/or have gained a job here, start planning all further details of your trip, such as **accommodation, health insurance, travel arrangements** etc. You may seek the help of the international office at your university, an agency or exchange organization but please note that the latter two may charge you for their services.
12. Calculate some extra time after your arrival for organizational matters, such as **registration** with the authorities, **opening a bank account** etc.
13. Make sure to have some Euros with you upon your arrival in Germany as to get by until you've set up your bank account here. While most places accept foreign credit cards, not *all* cards are accepted and Germans still tend to pay cash a lot. Also, smaller businesses may only accept payment in cash.
14. Last but not least: **Don't be discouraged** - Stays abroad take a lot of **planning ahead** and while this may feel overwhelming at times, the better you plan ahead, the less trouble you will have after your arrival. Remember: You will meet people who are in the same situation as you and you can support each other, plus there are a lot of points of contact to assist you after your arrival as well, such as the international office at your school/university etc. Remember: Planning and organizing your stay abroad is a big challenge to take on and will help you train your organizational and financial planning skills, so that in and of itself is the best preparation for your studies and any future job!

» Good luck!

... are tomorrow's teachers.



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