

# ROAD TO GERMANY

Session: 2020-21



## SSGSA

**SIR SYED GLOBAL SCHOLAR AWARD (SSGSA)**  
(formerly Sir Syed Emerging Scholar Award (SSES))



*This document provides a basic roadmap to the students who are interested in higher studies in Europe, especially in Germany. The content is aimed to provide an initial guidance to SSGSA scholars, thus, providing a platform to work in the right direction towards achieving their goals.*



## Disclaimer

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## ***Phase I***

***Provides you with general information about pre-application preparation that is needed for a successful admit.***

### **1. Introduction and Timeline**

Before starting the search for any degree, it is important to know the types of educational institutes in Germany. There are two main categories in terms of funding: **Public** (funded by federal states) and **Private** (no state funding). Also, based on the type of education, there are four major categories of universities in Germany:

- **Research based** mainly for academic research work
- **Technical Universities (TU)** specialised research focussing sciences, engineering and technology
- **Universities of Applied Science (Fachhochschulen)** industry-oriented education but not research focused
- **Colleges of Art, Film and Music** specialised education in creative disciplines

Doing any master's abroad requires well-planned and well-prepared applications to ensure successful admissions. The preparations should start at least 6-8 months before the beginning of your target semester. So, the first and foremost step is to search your course of interest. An important point to consider while selecting your institute is the ranking. The first thing that everyone looks for is the world ranking of the target university. However, it is not always recommended to choose your institute based on rankings published online on various websites but rather to look for the rank of the desired course based on course contents and market requirements. Because the quality of education you will get is more or less same in all the universities and thus choosing the right course is essential. It is quite an effort to find the right course specially in English language, but various online portals are available nowadays to search the language limited courses as well. Some of websites are mentioned here:

- <https://www.mastersportal.com/countries/11/germany.html>



- <https://www.findamasters.com/study-abroad/europe/masters-study-in-germany.aspx>
- <https://www2.daad.de/deutschland/studienangebote/international-programmes/en/>
- <https://www.masterstudies.com/Masters-Degree/Germany/>
- <https://www.hochschulkompas.de/en/degree-programmes/study-in-germany-search.html>
- <https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/plan-your-studies/find-programme-and-university/>

Most of these portals helps to narrow down the search based on your requirements, especially, the DAAD portal has a huge database for universities.

## 2. Application

After sorting out the desired courses, look for the application requirements. These requirements are different for different universities and sometimes vary within a university for different courses as well. Extra attention should be paid to each requirement because even a minor error at this point can lead to cancellation of your application easily. General admission requirements can be:

- Certified copy of the [higher education entrance qualification \(Hochschulreife\)](#)
- An overview of your subjects and grades (certified and including an official translations)
- Certified copies of previous higher education certificates if applicable
- Passport
- Photograph
- Certified copies of language certificates

Courses taught in English usually requires a proof of English language proficiency. And again, the exact scores that you need varies from university to university. Below you can find the links for various exams that you might be asked to take.

- <https://www.ets.org/toefl>



- <https://www.ielts.org/>
- <https://www.ets.org/gre/>
- <https://www.inlingua-koeln.de/startseite.html>

Only officially certified copies and translations are accepted as proof. You can have these issued by the German embassy in your home country as well. Some higher education institutions also accept documents in English and French. Apart from the official documentation that you need in your application, one of the most influential document that can increase the chances of your acceptance is your **SOP (Statement of Purpose)**. This document is your first token of creativity and sincerity towards your willingness to get an admit. There is no strict rule to follow while you write the SOP as it includes your own words and ideas. However, a useful tip to consider is to not write those things which you have already mentioned in your CV, rather your SOP should speak out everything that you couldn't reflect in your CV. Also, the **LOR (letter of Recommendation)** can also play an important role in your selection. Try to get a recommendation either from your internship/training supervisor or your thesis professor. Someone who has some affiliations in Germany can be a huge plus for you.

*\*\*Prepare a checklist for all the documents that you need before sending the application just to be sure that you don't miss out anything\*\*.*

**Application fee** varies for different universities and is sometimes completely free for some universities as well. If you apply through [uni-assist](#), an assessment of your certificates and a preliminary review of your documents costs 75 EUR for the first higher education institution. Each additional application within a semester costs 15 EUR per university. Universities will charge an administration fee for examining the application documents. The application will be processed only when this is paid. But this not valid for every institution.

In terms of **academic financial requirement**, it can be said that it is a kind of misconception that education is free in Germany. Yes, there is no tuition fees in most of the public universities but still you have to pay a little amount of so called 'semester fee'. This amount depends on the location of the university as every federal state can decide the amount on



its own. If it has enough money to abolish tuition fees, it can choose not to charge any fee or if it needs additional fees, then it may charge a certain nominal amount that is approximately 280-300 euros/semester.

States like Bayern, Niedersachsen, Hamburg and Nordrhein-Westfalen charge some amount of tuition fees. All other states do not charge tuition fees.

For the **living expenses**, it is always stated in the visa requirements that you need to show a sum of 8650 euros for one whole year (this has been increased in some states) and a certification/affidavit for your second-year expenses. But if you can regulate your monthly expenses you can manage even in less than the stated amount.

Some university-specific **scholarships** are always available in every university based on different criteria which you can always find on the university website or in the international office section of the website. Some of the websites where you can find more information about scholarships are stated below:

- <https://www.boell.de/en/foundation/application>
- <https://www.kas.de/web/begabtenfoerderung-und-kultur/auslaendische-studierende>
- <https://www.daad.de/en/study-and-research-in-germany/scholarships/>
- <http://www.bayer-foundations.com/en/international-fellowship.aspx>
- <https://www.kaad.de/>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>
- <https://www.mawista.com/en/scholarship/>

A quick tip to be noted here is to keep an eye on the deadlines and to send your complete application on time. And it is always good to apply for multiple scholarships at the same time.

The ideal time to apply for master's is between January to April for the winter semester (October Session) but it can vary as well. Application deadlines usually starts from the end of March upto July. The letter of acceptance is sent usually between May-August, sometimes even before the deadline for all the applications.



Once you have sent all your applications, start learning the language at your home as it will prepare you mentally for the new world that you are about to experience and also will be a huge help when you'll visit the country for the first time.

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## ***Phase II***

***This section consists of information about the challenges that students face after reaching Germany. It is to be noted that not everything mentioned here can vary for different states and universities.***

### **1. First Help**

The first thing to do after coming or before your arrival is to get in touch with your **International office** or your **coordinator** and talk to them about each and everything you want to know and inform them about your arrival. People are really kind and willing to help if you reach out sincerely. **Studentenwerk** as mentioned above deals with issues such as student housings, financing and social affairs etc. Another important body that every university has is **AStA (The General Student Committee)**. It is the political representation of students that works in a broader spectrum and should be the first unit to reach out in case you need any help. They help students to get housing and jobs and also work to help students financially if needed. Also, each university has **Student associations** of different countries like **ISA** (Indian Students Association), reaching out your homies is always a better choice in unknown atmosphere.

### **2. Enrolment**

This is usually done at international office. Once you reach the office you have to show your documents at the reception, and you will be issued a waiting number. Once your waiting number is shown on the screen, you have to go to the designated room and complete your enrolment procedure. Please keep in mind that you need a valid address for the enrolment as your matriculation certificate as well as the details to pay your semester fees is sent on this address by post. If you don't have an address, please make sure you give the address of a friend or any welcomer student to carry out the enrolment. The address can be easily changed later online. The documents to be taken for enrolment are usually mentioned in the acceptance letter.



### 3. House Hunt

I count you lucky if you have a house before coming to Germany. Finding an accommodation sometimes gets really challenging specially when you don't know the language and the housing systems in the country. Some universities provide housing for the first year and some do not promise any housing facility. So, it is always recommended to get in touch with local Indians/ Aligs who can help you settle down.

There is a body called **Studierendenwerk** which usually provides housing to students. It is an independent body that works in cooperation with universities. A quick tip here is to apply to Studierendenwerk housing on the day when you get your admit letter because there is a long waiting list and your enrolment for housing starts 4-5 months prior to actually coming to Germany thus reducing your waiting time. And this application is independent of your enrolment at the university.

Although there are many Facebook groups and websites available these days for housing in Germany but the frequently used one are:

- **Wg-gesucht.de**
- **Immobilienscout24.de**
- **Wg-suche.de**
- **ebay-kleinanzeigen.de**

### 4. Health Insurance

This step can be done from your home country as well or once you arrive in Germany. Usually two companies, namely '**Techniker Krankenkasse**' and '**AOK**' have their offices in the campus. One simply has to show their acceptance letter and passport to get a document which will be used during enrolment. Once the university enrolment is done, you have to go back to the health insurance office again with a photograph, passport and your matriculation certificate to start your procedure to obtain the health insurance card. A health insurance can be also applied to using Coracle which makes the whole process a lot easier. The document from Coracle can be used for enrolment.



## 5. City Registration/Visa Extension

This is the most important step after your arrival. Earlier this could be done after three months but now it is compulsory for each international student to carry out this procedure within 15 to 30 days of their arrival. The documents needed are your passport, a copy of your passport details (usually the first and the last page), a photograph, matriculation certificate, a blocked account statement showing 8640 euros for your first year in Germany, health insurance certificate and money (last year it was 56 euros for one year of visa extension but it might have been changed as the card system for the residence permit has been reinstated). Most of you won't have an EC Debit Card to pay so it is better if you carry cash. Also, if you carry an 'affidavit of support' along with your blocked account statement then you might receive a visa extension for two years directly. It is a matter of luck I would say.

More information for example can be checked out here,

<https://www.fh-dortmund.de/en/studi/interN/intstudierende/englisch/io/intstudi/registration-and-residence-permit-during-your-studies.php>

## 6. Bank Account

This can only be done after you have a house contract and thus you have to follow everything step by step only as everything is interrelated. There are many options where you can open your account but I have mentioned only the big and most popular banks in the country.

- **Sparkasse**

*Pros:-* The most widespread bank only and a bank branch is always available in the university campus. Just like Deutsche Bank it allows you to make a blocked account which might be needed if you want to extend your visa for the second year.

*Cons:-* You can only get cash from a Sparkasse ATM for free. Using any other ATM can cost minimum 5 euros per transaction. The bank has various kinds of monthly fees for insurance, bank usage charges etc. which are deducted every month.



Link:- <https://www.sparkasse-dortmund.de/en/home.html>

- **Volksbank**

*Pros:-* Bank branch usually available at the university. Very similar to Sparkasse but not so many branches or ATMs.

*Cons:-* Same as Sparkasse but Volksbank does not deduct any monthly fees from students.

<https://www.dovoba.de/homepage/girokonten---karten/fuer-junge-leute/fuer-junge-leute.html>

- **Commerzbank**

*Pros:-* Commerzbank has a tie up with three banks in Germany namely Deutsche Bank, Postbank and Hypovereinsbank. This means except the Commerzbank ATMs, ATMs from these three banks can also be used for no costs. Also, Shell Petrol pumps can be used to get cash without extra costs. This bank is my personal favorite as it gifts you 100 euros for every new person you recommend to the bank.

*Cons:-* This bank does not provide you the facility to create a blocked account and hence extending your visa for the second year can be a problem if you do not have an affidavit of support.

<https://www.commerzbank.de/>

- **Deutsche Bank**

The fourth option is Deutsche Bank which is like the national bank. But once you open a blocked account in Deutsche Bank from your home country then you really don't have a choice but to open a working account in Deutsche Bank itself.

<https://www.deutsche-bank.de/pk.html>



## Phase III

### *Life in Germany*

As we move to another country, be it Germany or any other place we experience a drastic transformation. The different lifestyle, education system, examination pattern, assessment criteria and a vast pool of opportunities to explore. But mainly the examination style. It is more about thoughtful approach and deep learning and not just mugging up predefined things. Every university has almost same high-quality education standard. The faculty and the Professors are mostly renowned in their fields and the departments are always willing to help students in all possible ways.

The student life in Germany is quite colorful and flexible. It requires a balance between utilizing your freedom and responsibilities at the same time. Managing your time and resources are the two main keys to success. You'll find a lot of social events taking place around you, specially student trips. The atmosphere in most universities is quite international and welcoming. **Hochschulsport** in the university is just like the games committee which provides you with great sports opportunities for both winter and summer sports with a very minimal membership fees of 15 euros per semester.

While studying, you will also find a lot of possibilities to earn for yourself if you want. Monthly expenses are about 700-750 euros/month. But it can vary from place to place and in most cases, you live easily with 600 euros/month. Managing your own expenses is a part of student life here in Germany. You only have the **right to work for 90 full days or 180 half-days a year** and if you wish to work more than that, you need to get a work permit. Voluntary internships are regarded as work hours too – even the unpaid ones – so please be mindful not to work more than you are allowed to, so you don't risk trouble with the authorities. You can have a student job and earn up to 450 EUR per month without having to pay taxes. But if you regularly earn more than 450 EUR, you will need a tax number. A certain amount will be deducted from your salary each month, which you will get back if you submit a tax return at the end of the year. Labor laws are very strict in Germany, so make sure to respect them. Usually student jobs are hourly paid with some exceptions of monthly salary. You can work



not only in supermarkets or cafeterias as part-time worker but can also get opportunities in the university and in companies as '**werkstudent**' where you can do a job related to your technical skills. Below you can find some websites to search for **student jobs**. Usually universities have their own portals to look for jobs as well.

- <https://studitemps.de/>
- <https://www.jobmensa.de/ratgeber/arbeitsmodelle/zeitarbeit>
- <https://www.timepartner.com/>
- <https://jobs.thelocal.de/>
- <https://www.studentjob.de/>

German **food** might not attract you as it is assumed that you are coming from the land of spices. But there are so many other cuisines to explore that you'll not miss out on your old flavors. Turkish restaurants and grocery stores can be found usually in every market. Syrian, Lebanese, Chinese and Indian restaurants are also a big thumbs up as well. **Grocery** stores are really great which offers you a wide variety of items and prices to choose from. Stores like Kaufland, Lidl, Netto gives typical normal prices however stores like REWE, REWE to go, EDEKA are slightly expensive but not much. Each store has their own production brand as well which is always the cheapest. Specific groceries such as Indian spices, mangoes, daals, sweets etc can be purchased from TTS and TKS stores which are usually found in every city.

There are so many **Aligs** as well in every city that you'll always find a home in case you are feeling homesick. It is always advised to look for old students that can guide you better. There is a database for Aligs in Germany based on different federal states and universities which is useful if you want to connect with a person of a university or place but can be shared with you upon request by **email** only.



Last and the most important point is that you should **LEARN GERMAN!** There is no other way to ease your life in Germany except to learn the language. This is not to scare you, but your 40% challenges will be due to lack of communication only. You will of course survive even without learning the language but to make things easier for yourself and to feel more inclusive it is always better to learn the language of the masses. This will not only help you in your daily life but will play an important role in getting a job during and after your studies.

So, keep calm and prepare yourself for an adventurous learning experience with lots of ups and downs that you'll cherish for your life.

**Willkommen in Deutschland!! The land of ideas.**