



PURSUING AN UNDERGRAD IN GERMANY

What you should know

ARSHAD SALEH

Renowned for its industrial excellence and being home to some of the world's greatest minds, Germany sits at the heart of Europe as a hub of opportunities. German institutions have always had a reputation of being academically rigorous, and in recent years, have attracted thousands of international students looking to pursue a high quality of education. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is a national agency for tertiary education in Germany. DAAD offers a vast database, allowing international students to find their preferred programmes with ease.

"The efficiency of navigating DAAD, de for my undergraduate application to Germany was remarkable. With nearly 200 English-taught programmes available, it surpassed most European offerings, though there was a noticeable lack of diversity in business courses compared to STEM fields," said Hasiba Khan, a Spring '25 applicant.

A major benefit of higher education in Germany are tuition policies at public universities. When asked about to what extent such benefits influenced her application, Hasiba explained, "I've always aimed to relieve my parents of the financial strain of funding my education which made Germany an appealing choice. With most public universities offering little to no tuition fees alongside a nominal semester fee, covering public transport fees, and ample work opportunities for international students, I can pursue my studies without the worry of accumulating student debt, all while attaining a high-quality education that is recognised worldwide."

However, the structure for Germany's secondary school education is different to that of Bangladesh.

"I was initially taken aback by Germany's 13 years of education requirement for undergraduate

eligibility, but my A levels allowed me to apply directly. For students with an HSC qualification, they must complete one year or 25 percent of their bachelor's degree at an Anabin-verified university to transfer credits to a German institution," said Zayn Ahnaf, also a Spring '25 applicant. However, an alternative pathway to this is through Studienkolleg, a preparatory school that seamlessly bridges the gap between the 12th and 13th years. In addition, you will typically need your O/A level or SSC/HSC equivalent grades as well as your English proficiency test scores (IELTS/

longer. There is not much that the Bangladesh government can do here and so, the situation has not improved much," says Fardin Alam, a freshman at South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences.

Although the waiting period is long and strenuous, if you plan ahead, you can still progress without wasting time. After completing HSC, work on getting a 13th year certificate from an accredited university as this is a requirement. Also finish taking IELTS, learn German or maybe even get a job to gain experience. Being productive during this time will

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TOEFL).

When applying to Germany, the visa application process is said to be the most challenging aspect. From long waiting periods to considerable paperwork, it is a process which demands great patience.

"The visa process was very tiring and time consuming. After the pandemic, the waiting period and the documentation required has increased. Universities continuously nudge students to submit their documents. Despite their best efforts, students are unable to attend classes on time even because of the long waiting period which may take up to 20 months or

make the path to Germany easier.

Despite the large and growing international community, the importance of the German language to its people cannot be overstated. While it is not required to apply, life in Germany proves to be difficult when you do not know the language.

"The German language has a massive importance here. Even if people know English, they do not speak it unless it is absolutely necessary. Most applications that are needed on a daily basis are not in English either. You'll have a very hard time if you know no German. I came here after completing the

A2 level German course, so I am not

completely lost. It still proves to be very difficult, especially when filling out various government paperwork. Although the people here have been helpful to me for all sorts of things, they will not go out of their way to help unless they feel that you are doing something very wrong," Fardin added.

Nonetheless, students are able to find jobs even without knowing German. It is, however, advised to learn the language up to the A2 level before going. This can be done through online courses or joining an institution such as the Goethe Institute. Although the language barrier may pose a challenge, studying abroad gives students the privilege of experiencing new cultures.

"German culture is very different, but I found that exciting. The young people here are very welcoming. If you speak German, it is a lot easier to interact with people but they will try to speak to you even if you aren't fluent. Try to embrace their culture and speak their language," says Sadat Hossain Adol, a student at Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences.

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"Germany's allure extends far beyond its tuition-free education. The ease of obtaining permanent residence compared to other European countries, and securing a Schengen Visa are real game changers for me," adds Zayn.

Although Europe's historical architectural and ethereal nature add to its appeal, choosing a university abroad is a decision that should be thought out thoroughly with all factors evaluated. Despite all its benefits, applying to Germany requires patience and perseverance.

