



**Practice-Oriented and
Readily Applicable:**
Studies at Germany's
Universities of Applied
Sciences



DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

“Full steam ahead, into the future: I’m studying in Germany.”

Maryam Safi from Iran is doing her Bachelor of Science in Media Technology at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences.



Maryam was photographed at Hubert Burda Media on the River Elbe in Hamburg.

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Preface

Universities of applied sciences (UAS) represent an important component of the German higher education system. They specialise in training professionals and contribute to the economic success of regional companies thanks to their practically oriented, application-based degree programmes.

More and more small- and mid-sized companies are expanding their international scope. They require employees with international and practical experience in addition to foreign language skills and intercultural competence. As a result, UAS offer enormous opportunities to international students. With a degree from a UAS, graduates can take advantage of numerous possibilities in pursuit of a successful career.

This brochure is targeted at international students and provides an overview of the broad range of programmes offered at German universities of applied sciences.







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What distinguishes universities of applied sciences (UAS)?

German universities of applied sciences (UAS) are known for their high quality of teaching, emphasis on practical training, and application-oriented research and development. Consequently, they play an integral role in furthering Germany's innovative capacity. Their strong focus on science and technology transfer and frequent cooperation with global business players in their region are additional factors that make UAS a model of success in the field of higher education.

Over one million students currently study at a UAS and their numbers are growing every year. They have become increasingly popular among international students as well. More than 75,000 international students are currently enrolled at a German UAS. The thematic focus of study is strongly oriented to the actual demands of the labour market. This allows graduates to quickly enter the workforce, which they prepare for in advance by completing practical semesters and in-service work placements.

The programmes at UAS are also characterised by excellent supervision thanks to a highly favourable student-professor ratio. The courses are designed to provide instruction in small groups and apply modern teaching and learning methods. To be eligible for appointment as a professor at a UAS, candidates normally have to have spent years working in their respective fields. The students benefit from this practical knowledge and their professors' business contacts.

There are basically four types of UAS: state, private, church-affiliated and dual (or cooperative) universities.



The first universities of applied sciences, so-called “polytechnic colleges”, were established around 50 years ago. In contrast to traditional universities with their stronger emphasis on fundamental research, UAS play an essential role in the German higher education and research landscape thanks to their focus on application-based research and training. Those who are interested in earning a degree with a strong practical orientation would be well-advised to enrol at a UAS. On account of their clear orientation, excellent learning and training conditions, and student advising services, UAS are also an attractive option for international students.



What subjects are offered at universities of applied sciences?

In principle, students can study any subject they wish – apart from teaching, medicine, law and theology. These four subjects are reserved for students enrolled at traditional universities in Germany. However, there are subjects offered at UAS which are directly related to these disciplines, e.g. medical engineering. Most UAS offer an extensive range of subjects.

The most commonly offered programmes at UAS are those in technical, engineering and business-oriented disciplines. Transnational degree programmes and binational universities worldwide have meanwhile based their own programmes on the German UAS model.

In many cities in Germany, UAS directly cooperate with local companies, conduct application-oriented research and intensively promote knowledge and technology transfer. This applies, in particular, to certain branches in Germany, such as the automobile industry and their suppliers, and the renewable energy sector. These export-oriented industries which operate production facilities in many regions of the world are constantly on the look-out for highly qualified professionals with foreign language skills and intercultural competence. This is where international students who are fluent in their native country's language are in particularly high demand. Consequently, after earning a degree at a UAS, they often have very good chances of finding employment – either in Germany or elsewhere in the world.



Prof. Dr. Karim Khakzar is president of the Fulda University of Applied Sciences, vice-president of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and spokesperson for the group of member universities of applied sciences at the HRK

» German universities of applied sciences offer great opportunities to international students

Universities of applied sciences (UAS) have enjoyed enormous and steadily increasing popularity in recent years. Today 40 percent of all first-time students in Germany decide to study at universities of applied sciences. There are already more than one million students currently enrolled at UAS in Germany.

There are good reasons for this. The degree programmes at UAS are characterised by a strong focus on practical application. Furthermore, students generally receive far more intensive and personal supervision from their professors than at traditional universities. It is this aspect that makes UAS so attractive to prospective international students.

The bachelor's and master's degrees from UAS are equivalent with those conferred by universities. And the doctoral study opportunities at UAS have also seen expansion in recent years. All in all, one can say that companies are particularly interested in hiring UAS graduates because they are optimally prepared for their profession.

What is a practical semester and how long does it take to complete a degree programme at a UAS?

Most bachelor's programmes include a mandatory practical semester which enables students to gain real-world, on-the-job experience during their studies. They become acquainted with their potential occupational field and work processes which helps them gain professional orientation.

Bachelor's programmes usually take six to eight semesters (including the practical semester) to complete. Master's programmes do not have a mandatory practical semester. Nonetheless, many students choose to write their master's thesis at a company, and so doing, become familiar with the practical aspects of their workplace. In most cases, master's programmes have a duration of four semesters, and many students are offered employment at the companies they trained at after graduation.

How do I find a suitable UAS and what are the admission requirements?

On the DAAD website, you can find information on the German higher education sector with details specifically related to the demands of international students – including university preparatory courses, searchable by subject and type of university. For more information, visit www.daad.de/international-programmes. A general overview of programmes offered at over 200 UAS in Germany can be found on the Higher Education Compass www.daad.de/hochschulkompass operated by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). In addition to UAS programmes and locations, the website also provides information on courses and programmes offered at all 400 universities in Germany.

The CHE Ranking contains valuable information on 6,700 ranked subjects at over 300 universities, searchable by subject (www.universityranking.de). The CHE Ranking is based on the assessments of around 120,000 students and 9,000 professors.

Once you have reduced the number of potential universities to a handful, we recommend contacting each UAS as soon as possible.

Admission requirements

If you wish to study at a UAS, you will require a higher education entrance qualification, such as a secondary school-leaving certificate or subject-specific university entrance qualification. Depending on one's prior academic qualification, international students can obtain a higher education entrance qualification or the equivalent thereof.

Generally speaking, the admission requirements for international students depend on their respective school-leaving certificate, or prior university degrees, as well as their country of origin. The admission requirements regarding previous work placements may also vary from programme to programme. Many universities offer students the option of participating in "preparatory colleges" (Studienkollegs) if they lack necessary knowledge in their desired subject of study. International students can gain a general overview of admission requirements in the DAAD database (www.daad.de/zulassungsdatenbank) and should contact the UAS of their choice in advance to inquire about any specific requirements pertaining to their desired degree programme.

The International Offices at UAS are the first point of the contact for international students. They can answer your questions concerning admission requirements, course planning and life in Germany.

Compared with the requirements for admission to undergraduate programmes, it is generally easier for international students to gain admission to a master's programme if they already hold a bachelor's degree from their home country. Furthermore, UAS offer a large variety of English-language, master's-level programmes and modules.



Prof. Dr. Jan-Henning Dirks earned his doctorate at the University of Cambridge and now teaches biological structures and bionics at the Bremen University of Applied Sciences.



We connect basic research with applied R&D

Why did you decide to teach at a university of applied sciences?

Bionics is a very interdisciplinary research field with numerous points of shared interest with industry. In order to quickly present my research projects to potential industrial partners, UAS, like the Bremen University of Applied Sciences (HSB), offer very good conditions. As a professor at the HSB, I was given academic independence and personal planning security very early on.

What role does research play at the Bremen University of Applied Sciences?

At the HSB, and especially at the Bionics Innovation Centre (B-I-C), research plays a central role. Without basic research, it's impossible to engage in any decisive applied research and development. We connect basic research and applied R&D, collaborate with renowned national and international research institutes and universities, and publish our findings in prestigious scientific journals.

What do you think are the advantages of a UAS for students?

For one thing, many UAS provide instruction in relatively small classes. This results in a better staff-to-student ratio and enables students to come in direct contact with their professors early in their studies. A practice-oriented education is less abstract and reveals direct points of reference to prospective professional fields.

How good does my German have to be to study at a UAS?

Universities of applied sciences in Germany are offering more and more study modules in English every year. In fact, English is the language of instruction in some 500 of over 6,000 degree programmes at UAS. If you received an Abitur from a German school abroad and would like to apply for admission to a German-language programme, you do not have to take a German language examination.

Because language skills are so crucial to studying successfully, international applicants have to show that they possess sufficient knowledge of German. Sometimes they are expected to pass an official German language examination before they are granted admission. Students in almost 100 countries around the world can take the required TestDaF (Test of German as a Foreign Language) in their home country prior to gaining admission to a German university. Here in Germany, universities offer the German Language Test for University Admission (DSH). Both tests consist of several parts and assess the candidate's reading, listening comprehension and communication skills. Most universities also recognise the Goethe-Zertifikat C2.

The DAAD operates a database specifically targeted at international students featuring a large selection of intensive language courses. For more information, visit: www.summerschools.de.

In any case, we recommend contacting the UAS of your choice to inquire about the specific language requirements for your degree programme.

In order to feel comfortable in a foreign country, to master the challenges of daily life and make social contacts, it is very helpful to have good language skills. This applies to Germany as it does in every other country.



Julinda Sokoli worked at the German software company TeamViewer while she pursued her MBA in international industrial management at the Esslingen University of Applied Sciences. She was offered a full-time position there even before she completed her master's thesis.

» My career prospects are very good

I come from Shkodra in northern Albania where I earned my bachelor's in business administration. I gained initial work experience after graduation in the Albanian capital of Tirana – at the Bank of Albania.

I always wanted to study abroad and get international work experience – and the dual study MBA programme in international industrial management at the Esslingen University of Applied Sciences was perfect for that. I found the curriculum quite attractive. English is the language of instruction for international students, which is naturally a very big advantage. What I liked best is that we had to complete our master's thesis at a company in our third semester.

All my fellow master's students have been able to find jobs at prestigious firms like Festo, Bosch, Audi, Daimler and Volkswagen. I myself started working at TeamViewer in the department for risk management. That's where I am now, writing my master's thesis and getting paid for it.

The degree programme has not always been easy. But the best thing is that I already have an official offer to continue working at TeamViewer after graduation. My career prospects are very good.

The 33-year-old Syrian engineer Laurence Alhrshy is a research assistant at the Flensburg University of Applied Sciences where he conducts research and teaches classes on wind energy.



Flensburg is a great place to live

I come from Syria and now live in Flensburg with my wife and my daughter Lilia. I'm employed as a research assistant at the Wind Energy Technology Institute at the Flensburg University of Applied Sciences. My research focuses on the area of rotor blades. Our job is to find ways to extend their life span and increase their efficiency.

I teach students and supervise their bachelor's and master's theses. Ours is an international degree programme and the classes are held in English. Our students come from every corner of the world: India, China, Egypt, Portugal and Cameroon.

Flensburg is a great place to live. Although it's a rather small city, Flensburg has a high quality of life, a beautiful historic downtown and the Baltic Sea nearby, where I like to go jogging. I can reach everything by bike and the people here are very nice. I find it's no problem meeting people, at the university or playing sports.

How much does it cost to study at a UAS?

Most universities in Germany are subsidised by the federal government. Normally students enrolled in bachelor's programmes and most master's programmes are not required to pay tuition fees. However, tuition fees are occasionally charged for certain postgraduate master's programmes, although compared with those in other countries, they are not especially high. Studying at private universities might result in higher tuition fees.

However, the state of Baden-Württemberg increased its tuition fees for non-EU citizens starting in the winter semester 2017/18 to 1,500 euros per semester (for bachelor's, master's, *Diplom* and state examination programmes). Doctoral candidates are exempted from paying these fees. In addition to possible tuition fees, students should expect to pay for their living expenses as well as health insurance premiums. And then there is the semester contribution. This fee usually includes the cost of a semester ticket which permits the holder to use all modes of public transportation in their city for free.

Living expenses in Germany are slightly higher than the European average. Students in Germany spend about 850 euros per month to cover their costs of living. This is only an approximate value. The amount of money students actually require each month also depends on where they study. Large cities are usually more expensive than smaller cities. And of course, living expenses can vary greatly depending on one's accommodation and lifestyle.

International students are required to present proof of financial resources to ensure they can finance their studies by themselves. Currently students must submit proof that they have 10,236 euros at their disposal for one year of study.

Taking a student job at a UAS or other part-time employment is a good way of earning money during one's studies in Germany. Students from the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland have free access to the German labour market and basically have the same rights and obligations as German students. International students from other countries are allowed to work 120 full days or 240 half days per year.

How can I get a scholarship to study at a UAS?

There are numerous short- and long-term scholarships and funding opportunities available to prospective students in Germany. Many of these can also be used to finance a degree programme at a UAS. You can find extensive information on the DAAD scholarship database (www.funding-guide.de). The database allows you to search for funding opportunities, listed according to regional or subject-specific criteria. International students can also find country-specific cooperation programmes and bilateral exchange programmes for students and researchers. The staff at our DAAD regional offices and Information Centres around the world would be more than happy to assist you with finding a suitable scholarship.

Some UAS offer scholarships of their own. It wouldn't hurt to inquire at the university of your choice about such funding opportunities, as more and more scholarship programmes are offered every year.

Alicia Anahí (28) from Mexico studied architecture in her home country and later earned her master's degree in Germany in environmental and resource management – with the support of a DAAD scholarship.



Germany made me curious

Even as a small child, I was fascinated by construction and architecture. It was logical that I ended up getting my bachelor's in architecture in Mexico. I was also interested in Germany at a young age. I especially liked the fact that things in Germany were done so accurately and with care. That's why, when I was sixteen, I started learning German in Mexico.

A few years later, a friend of mine told me about the DAAD. I was very fortunate as I was accepted into a German-Mexican master's programme in environmental and resource management, and then received a DAAD scholarship through the EPOS programme for students from developing and emerging countries.

During my studies at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences, I met students from many parts of the world, from Latin America and from Africa. It was very exciting. Today I work at a company which produces environmentally friendly systems in construction – primarily for Infonavit, which is one of the very large public Mexican building authorities. I'm a quality controller in charge of monitoring compliance with the laws directly at the building sites.



What is a dual study programme?

Dual courses of study provide students with the special chance to combine academics with professional practice. Dual study programmes (also called cooperative programmes) offer integrated professional training at a company while studying at a UAS. In other words, students receive on-the-job training and classroom instruction at two locations – at the company and at the university. Those who decide for this option are required to sign a contract with the respective firm. They are paid for the work they do there from the first day. They are essentially students and employees at the same time. Dual study programmes often conclude with a long-term employment relationship.

Although dual study programmes offer enormous opportunities, they also require a high degree of stamina and resilience. The in-service phases have to be carefully planned and coordinated with the university's curriculum. Because the business language at most German companies is German, excellent German skills are often a key prerequisite for admission to a dual study programme.

Depending on what country you come from, legal requirements may play a role as to whether and how quickly you can obtain a work visa. In the database AusbildungPlus, prospective students can find universities and companies which offer dual study programmes and additional qualifications.

Visit www.bibb.de/ausbildungplus/de/dualesstudium.php for more information.



Prof. Dr. Anne Lequy has served as Rector of the Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences since 2014. She started her career at the university as a professor for specialised communication in French (translation) in 2006, and later served as Vice-Rector for Teaching and Studies from 2010 to 2014.

» Excellent chances in the labour market

Why is it worthwhile for international students to study at a German UAS?

Those who hold a degree from a university of applied sciences have excellent chances in the labour market. Studies show that UAS graduates begin their professional career with higher entrance-level salaries on average and are offered permanent contracts more often than those who graduate from traditional universities. As a UAS, we specialise in providing outstanding academic expertise and innovative programmes. At the same time, we offer excellent student counselling services, international partnerships and close contacts with regional businesses and society. International students benefit from this practice-oriented profile from their first day on. Another very important aspect is that publicly funded universities in Germany do not charge tuition fees for undergraduate degree programmes.

In your opinion, what distinguishes a good education at a UAS?

For me, a good education is characterised by modern, practice-oriented academic content, active exchange with the scientific community and working on issues of social relevance. Good service, modern teaching and learning conditions, and knowledge transfer in industry and society are likewise indispensable.



Are there special services for international students at UAS?

Many UAS cooperate closely with international partners and strongly invest in internationalisation measures. Their goal is to optimally prepare German and international students for the demands of the global labour market where intercultural competence and foreign language skills are in high demand. Consequently, many UAS offer courses with an international orientation and in cooperation with international partners.

Numerous UAS offer orientation courses, buddy programmes and advice services specifically tailored to the needs of international students.



What are my career prospects after graduating from a UAS?

Because of their practice-oriented education with its focus on the needs of the labour market, UAS graduates have excellent chances of finding employment both in Germany and around the world. Practical semesters and work placements frequently yield important professional contacts to future employers even during one's studies. Career fairs organised in cooperation with the universities often provide promising business contacts as well.

Since the implementation of the Bologna Reform, bachelor's and master's degrees from UAS are recognised as equivalent to those conferred by traditional universities. Consequently, after completing a master's programme at a UAS, students are usually entitled to pursue a doctorate at university. Furthermore, more and more UAS in Germany are being granted the right to award doctorates.





Calvin Xu studied business intelligence and process management at the Berlin School of Economics and Law. Today he works for the TAO Group in New York City as a system administrator.



» US employers value my degree

Mr. Xu, why did you study at a UAS in Germany?

Universities of applied sciences are very practice-oriented, and the instruction in small groups allows students to engage in intensive exchange with fellow students and professors. My university cooperates with local companies which offered us the chance to work on real-world projects outside the classroom. This early practical experience proved especially helpful later on when I was looking for jobs.

Did your programme meet your expectations?

Absolutely. I especially appreciated having the opportunity to work with local start-ups in Berlin and even collaborate on projects with established German corporations like Deutsche Telekom. We could often decide on the type and scope of work ourselves and then pursued it with the backing of our professors.

Did companies in the United States recognise your degree?

My impression is that degrees from Germany have a very good reputation because of the high quality of academic training the students receive. This explains why a degree from Germany is so highly valued by American employers. And I had no problem getting my German degree officially recognised in the US. That's why it was easy for me to find work after graduation.

Where can I find more information?

The DAAD provides an extensive collection of information for international students in German and English on its website. In addition to our website, you can obtain further information on universities, degree programmes and admission requirements, as well as advice and instructions on all aspects of studying and living in Germany from:

- The DAAD Information Centres (ICs) and DAAD regional offices (for addresses, visit www.daad.de/local),
- DAAD-affiliated instructors and lecturers at universities worldwide
- The Goethe-Institut
- German diplomatic missions, i.e. embassies and consulates

As soon as you decide on a specific degree programme or UAS, we recommend contacting the university as soon as possible to plan all further steps. The preparations for a study visit abroad can take quite some time – especially for international students. The International Offices at UAS are always happy to assist international students with these matters.

You can also find helpful information online:

Extensive information about studying in Germany:

- ▶ www.daad.de/en/study-and-research-in-germany/
- ▶ www.study-in-germany.de

Study opportunities:

- ▶ www.daad.de/international-programmes
- ▶ www.hochschulkompass.de
- ▶ www.universityranking.de
- ▶ www.studienwahl.de

Visa requirements:

- ▶ www.auswaertiges-amt.de

Scholarships and funding programmes:

- ▶ www.funding-guide.de

Learning German:

- ▶ www.goethe.de
- ▶ www.deutsch-uni.com
- ▶ www.dw.de
- ▶ www.testdaf.de
- ▶ www.summerschools.de



UAS locations in Germany



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