

HKACMGM Germany Talk 2021

20 May 2021

Field Notes

Brief Summary of the Presentation

About Germany:

- Culturally diverse: 2nd biggest immigrant nation in the world
- Different education systems in the 16 federal states with distinct regional identity
- High quality of life in many cities (a lot of them are student cities)
- Interesting and joyful traditions celebrated by people from different towns (e.g. Christmas Market, Karneval)
- "Hidden Champions": world leaders in many businesses and industries
- Benefits of studying in Germany:
 - High quality (many German universities are among the top 200);
 - Low cost (low to no tuition fee, living cost as low as ~HKD8000 per month);
 - Study in English (many programmes are offered in English);
 - Variety (good variety of programmes and majors)

Reminders for Hong Kong Students:

- Application for HK Students:
 - Direct admission to university (for most majors): 4C+2X: all Level 3
- 3 kinds of post-secondary institutes:
 - 107+ Universities around the country (focus on theoretical knowledge);
 - 52 Music, Art, and Film Colleges (focus on practical knowledge; different application process);
 - 213 Universities of Applied Science (focus on practical application of knowledge; strong connection with the corporate world, offering students more internship opportunities)
- Dual Study Programmes (email Ms Bode for further information)
- CHE Ranking: ranking for different subjects (<https://ranking.zeit.de/che/en/>) | (free of charge, registration necessary)
- 2000+ International programmes: taught in English (www.daad.de/internation-programmes)
- Important reminders regarding application:

When applying, check with the university's International Office you are applying for to get the most accurate information regarding the application requirements (e.g. deadlines, conditions, financing).
- Scholarships: many from DAAD (mostly for postgraduate degrees) and AvH (for researchers)
- Learning German in Hong Kong: Goethe Institut (courses from Levels A1 to C2)

Visa Application:

- <https://hongkong.diplo.de> (→ Service → Visa Information)
- Different visa options:
 - Student visa (accepted by a university with a letter of acceptance)
 - Language Course Visa as a Preparation for University Studies
(max 1 year; for completing language courses required for the university admission)
 - Student Applicant's Visa (may not have been accepted by a university yet)
 - Student Internship Visa (with a future employer in Germany for your internships)
- Student visa holders are allowed to work up to 120 full days / 240 half-days per year
(allowed to work more as student/graduate assistants)
- Student visa holders are granted 18 months after graduation to find a job in Germany upon graduation
- Student visa holders can study at private universities if they are recognized by the state
- Students can do maximum 1 Bachelor's and 1 Master's in Germany after their first degree overseas

Q&A

Application Information (age limit, tuition fee, deadlines, support for international students, visa)	
Question	Answer
Is there an age limit for international students?	No.
Are postgraduate degrees free as well?	Some masters are free (e.g. doing masters right upon completion). Relatively moderate tuition fee for students who worked for some years before doing postgraduate programmes are charged.
When is the application deadline?	It varies (usually around mid/late July) as school calendar follows a federal system: start at a different time every year at different federal states. It is better to arrange things before getting HKDSE results then the application procedure can be completed upon the release of HKDSE results.
Is it possible to apply for German universities after taking a gap year?	Yes
Are there any support for international students?	Support systems for international students are generally available. One good way for students to be better adapted to the new environment is to get involved and be outgoing.
Can students switch the visa if they have a different offer after the visa application is successful?	They can do so during their stay in Germany. They do not have to return to Hong Kong and apply for a different visa.

German Language requirements	
Question	Answer
Can I know more about international programmes?	All state universities offer international programmes. Tuition is free for all degree programmes (although some preparation courses are charged). Some universities may require students to take German courses.
Do all state universities offer German language classes?	Yes
Do all students need to take a German language test?	For students who are applying for a German programme, they will need to take TestDaF – a centralized test which could be taken in Hong Kong testing the candidate's ability to take courses in German (comparable to Levels B2 to C1).
Are there extra benefits for applicants who speak German?	In terms of student benefits, all students can enjoy them. However, some scholarships are offered to students studying in German language or studying in English with a certain level of German proficiency (e.g. up to Level B2).

Questions about specific subjects and job prospect	
Question	Answer
Are students from TU preferred provided the practical nature of their training?	Employers are always looking for people with suitable abilities, personalities, and experience.
Will I be less competitive at work and study if I study liberal arts subjects like History and Philosophy?	No. It may be easier to find a job if you choose a particular subject, but it is important that you go for subjects you are interested in and passionate about.
I want to study Medicine. Any advice?	Medicine is usually limited for the top 10% of students to apply. In that case, students have to present their academic transcripts according to the German system and then go through a very competitive application process.
I want to study Music. Any advice?	What instrument do you play? What do you want to do? You have to already very good at two instruments when applying. It is demanding and competitive, but it will be a very fruitful experience.
I want to study Environmental Studies. Any advice?	There are various focuses: science-based vs political science point of view. It is a very advanced field in Germany. Many different programmes with different focuses are available.
I want to study Education. Any advice?	A teaching degree in Germany (usually a Bachelor/Master degree) is for people who want to stay in Germany and be a school teacher in Germany.