STUDYING TODAY

The economic and social situation of students in Germany

The most important findings of the 21st Social Survey by Deutsches Studentenwerk

www.studentenwerke.de

2017

An information brochure of the Deutsches Studentenwerk
«Social Survey – We crunch numbers so that you count»

«We do the maths so that you count» was our slogan when we invited students in the summer of 2016 to take part in the 21st Social Survey and to provide information on their economic and social situation. We were able to analyse questionnaires from more than 55,000 students – so thank you very much!

"We", that’s the three institutions which conducted the 21st Social Survey as a team. Together with us, the Deutsches Studentenwerk, these are the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), which funds the Social Survey, and the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW), which conducts the interviews on a scientific basis. These partners deserve our deepest gratitude.

The 21st Social Survey presents an accurate picture of the social profile of students in German higher education. And it is an important empirical base for policy and the development of higher education in Germany.

This information brochure will provide you with the most important results.

Enjoy reading!

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Social profile of students in Germany

Generally, the typical student:

She:
- is 24.5 years old
- studies cultural sciences (25%)
- has 909 Euro a month at her disposal
- eats at the Mensa once or twice a week (40%)
- holds a qualifying secondary school degree ("Abitur" in German, 95%)
- is studying for a bachelor’s degree (46%)
- spends 9 hours a week on his or her studies
- earns a part-time job (21%)
- lives in accommodation of his or her own (38%)
- has an academic family background (62%, this means at least one parent holds an academic degree)
- spends 523 Euro on his or her rent
- lives in a solid relationship (46%)

He:
- is 25 years old
- studies engineering (31%)
- has 927 Euro at his disposal
- eats at the Mensa* at least 3 times a week (39%)
- spends 1136 Euro a month at his disposal
- earns a part-time job (36%)
- lives in accommodation of his or her own (38%)
- has an academic family background (52%, this means at least one parent holds an academic degree)
- spends 523 Euro on his or her rent
- lives in a solid relationship (46%)

Which degrees studied most frequently?

- 26% engineering
- 18% languages and cultural sciences
- 9% natural sciences
- 8% law and economics
- 6% social sciences, psychology
- 5% health sciences
- 4% mathematics
- 3% economics
- 3% other subjects

How do students finance their studies?

- 67% with parental support or average 541 Euro
- 6% of students work in non-academic jobs on average 532 Euro
- 4% receive vocational training
- 3% receive an academic scholarship
- 2% receive Bafög (financial support under the Federal Training Assistance Act)
- 1% receive a scholarship
- 1% receive another form of financial aid

What do students pay on accommodation?

- Education and travel: 62% Bachelor degrees
- 25% Master degrees
- 13% regulated state examinations ("Staatsexamen", mostly law and medical schools)
- 3% Magister, "Diplom", others

Domestic student mobility:

- 86% with parental support: an average 541 Euro
- 61% of students work to earn an additional income: an average 385 Euro
- 28% have already been abroad: an average 435 Euro
- 5% receive scholarships: an average 423 Euro
- 20% have an immigration background, 12% of whom have Polish, 12% Turkish and 9% Russian roots
- 11% of students have disabilities or suffer from chronic diseases, 4% of whom have health insurance
- 8% have strong academic disabilities

Immigration background

- 28% have already been abroad when they are studying in higher semesters
- 50% are the children of international students or refugees
- 11% of students have disabilities or suffer from chronic diseases
- 4% of whom have health insurance

International mobility

- 50% have an immigration background
- 25% of whom have Polish, 12% Turkish and 9% Russian roots

Students with children:

- 6% of students have children, on average, student parents are 35 years old, eleven years older than students without children
- 9% of students have one child
- 5% have two children
- 1/4 have three or more children

Pursued degrees:

- 6% Bachelor degrees
- 23% Master degrees
- 13% regulated state examinations ("Staatsexamen", mostly law and medical schools)
- 2% Magister, "Diplom", others

International student mobility:

- 20% have an immigration background, 12% of whom have Polish, 12% Turkish and 9% Russian roots
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How much money do students spend on average on:

- accommodation: 323 Euro
- food and drinks: 211 Euro
- transport: 94 Euro
- clothes: 42 Euro
- learning material: 20 Euro

19% barely manage to make ends meet on their income
The Social Dimension of Higher Education in Germany

Studying today 21st Social Survey by Deutsches Studentenwerk

BAföG (financial support under the Federal Training and Assistance Act) for 18% of students averaging at 435 euro per month; 79% of those supported would be unable to study without BAföG.

79% of students say that sideline jobs are needed for a living. 68% with sideline jobs 9 hours a week.

12% of students live in a student residence hall; type cheapest of accommodation alongside their parents’ home; the Studentenwerke provide accommodation for 191,000 students*

73% of students use dining services; 32% are regular customers: 960 student restaurants (»Mensa«), coffee bars, cafeterias are run by the Studentenwerke*.

61% of students require counselling. Main topics: financing studies, organising studies, personal problems; student services with social and psychological counselling*.

6% of students have children: more than 131,000 children; 8,750 places for children in 222 day-care facilities operated by the Studentenwerke*.

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Commuting between home and the higher education institution takes 33 minutes using local public transport.

26% international mobility: Bachelor students 17%, Master students 31%.
Economic pressure on Students is growing

Professor Dieter Timmermann, President of Deutsches Studentenwerk, on the most important results of the 21st Social Survey

**TO SAY ABOUT BAföG?**

"Well, you have to bear in mind that the 21st Social Survey was conducted in the summer of 2016, and it was only afterwards, during the 2016/2017 winter semester, that the most recent increase in BAföG support took effect. So the 21st Social Survey shows how things were in the summer of 2016 - and they weren't exactly good as far as BAföG is concerned. Just 18% per cent of all students received BAföG at the time. Whether the rate of supported students has significantly increased (thanks to the raising of the parental allowance levels by 6% coming into effect as of the 2016/2017 winter semester, as announced by the Federal Government), will have to be ascertained by the coming, 22nd Social Survey. I am sceptical in this respect. But if you take a look at the discrepancy between average incomes, which are at 916 Euro, and the current BAföG maximum rate of 735 Euro, it is obvious that there is an urgent need for action regarding BAföG.

And what I am worried about is that 37% of the students from the “low” social group of origin who do not apply for BAföG that they don’t because they do not want to run into debt - in spite of the fact that the BAföG loan share has a ceiling of a maximum 10,000 Euro and repayment is wholly socially acceptable. This shows that BAföG and its fair conditions must be much more advertised!

**YOU MENTIONED RISING RENT LEVELS. IS THIS A PROBLEM FOR STUDENTS?**

"It certainly is. At an average 325 Euro per month, rent remains the highest share of expenditure. In university cities with ever diminishing affordable housing, such as Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg or Berlin, students pay significantly more on rent. All in all, we urgently need more government-supported housing for students. In many Federal States, the Studentenwerke or student services organisations are building new residence halls for students, but this is not enough. Students coming from less affluent households in particular heavily depend on accommodation in publicly founded student residence halls. 41% of the students living there belong to the lower income quartile. Almost the same number of students have no money left at all at the end of the month. This shows how important the Studentenwerke’s services are for students.

**WHAT HAS CHANGED COMPARED TO THE 20TH SOCIAL SURVEY FOUR YEARS AGO?**

"There are two things that I’ve noticed. First, since 2012, the employment rate has risen by six percentage points, from 62% to 68% of all students. What surprises me is that today even more students are working part-time alongside their studies and one fifth receive BAföG. Students supported by their parents, while more than two thirds have sideline jobs alongside their studies. And secondly, the share of BAföG recipients has increased significantly.

**WHAT DOES THE 21ST SOCIAL SURVEY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT Studentenwerke?**

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The "Sozialerhebung" or social survey of Deutsches Studentenwerk on the social dimension of higher education in Germany is the most important, nationally representative, study on the social and economic conditions of student life in German higher education.

Deutsches Studentenwerk - DSW (German National Association for Student Affairs) is the umbrella organisation of the 58 local or regional Studentenwerke, the student service organisations in Germany. The Studentenwerke are service-providers for students and institutions of higher education that ensure the social dimension of higher education in Germany. They promote the social, economic, financial, cultural, and health-related concerns of all students at German institutions of higher education. The Studentenwerke operate student residence halls and dining services, they provide social and psychological counselling, administrate the student financing (BAföG) and assist German and international students on an equal basis.