
Findings of the DAAD Snapshot Survey on enrolment figures of international students in the 2021/22 winter semester

(December 2021)

Summary of the most important findings

- According to the DAAD forecast, the number of **newly enrolled international students** increased from around 64,000 in the 2020/21 winter semester to around 72,000 to 80,000 students in the 2021/22 winter semester. This corresponds to a relative increase of around 13 to 26 percent. This is the result of several factors: On the one hand, there has been a very rapid recovery in the numbers of guest and exchange students (non-degree) at most German HEIs after the significant slump in the previous year. Additionally, universities in particular are recording significant increases in the number of international degree-seeking students in Master's programmes.
- According to the DAAD forecast, the **total number of international students** in the 2021/22 winter semester increased from around 325,000 in the 2020/21 winter semester to around 330,000 to 350,000 students (see also methodological notes at the end of the report). That corresponds to a relative increase of around two to eight percent. This development can be explained not only by the significantly higher number of newly enrolled students, but also – as in the previous year – by an above-average number of international students who were already enrolled in Germany and remained in the higher education system, e.g. by directly starting with a Master's programme after finishing a Bachelor's degree in Germany.
- There are **some significant differences in the development of the number of newly enrolled students** between individual universities and the various HEI clusters. For example, more universities and colleges of art and music report increases than decreases in the number of degree-seeking international students, whereas the opposite is true for universities of applied sciences (UAS). Among international guest and exchange students (non-degree), on the other hand, there are more increases than decreases in all HEI clusters except the colleges of art and music. Here, too, this finding is particularly clear at the universities.
- It is also striking that the **number of international regular students recovers significantly faster in Master's programmes than in Bachelor's programmes**. This applies to all types and sizes of HEIs. One important reason for this is probably that the travel restrictions in the previous year have now resulted in a shortfall in preparatory courses at the so-called “Studienkollegs”, i.e. presumably far fewer first-year students are now heading from these Studienkollegs to the HEIs than in previous years. (Since the DAAD survey actually only asked about students in their first semester of higher education, the increase in Master's students cannot actually be explained by students who have already spent their Bachelor's studies in Germany. These are then in their first programme semester, but not in their first university semester).
- A **look at the ten most important countries of origin** also shows clear differences in the development of newly enrolled international students: the surveyed HEIs reported an increase in

newly enrolled students, especially with regard to Turkey, Iran, India, Italy and France. On the other hand, decreases in the numbers of newly enrolled students from China, Syria and Cameroon were reported.

- Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of the HEIs that can make a statement in this regard assume that almost all (90 to 100 percent) of the **newly enrolled international students have already been able to enter Germany**. Only seven percent of the HEIs estimate that this applies to less than half of the international first-year students (previous year: 15 percent). Here, too, there are in part significant differences between the HEI clusters; as in the previous year, the universities of art and music report particularly high attendance rates, while the technical universities report particularly low rates.
- **At the time of the survey, four out of five HEIs (80 percent) practiced a mixed model of digital distance learning and in-person teaching.** At 61 percent, this proportion is significantly lower only at small UAS, where an above-average 30 percent report purely digital distance learning. It should be noted that many HEIs have switched from purely in-person teaching to a mixture of in-person and digital distance teaching during the semester due to the current pandemic development. At the beginning of the semester (in October), for example, the proportion of HEIs that relied exclusively on in-person teaching was still 30 percent, but at the time of the survey (in the first half of December) this proportion had fallen to seven percent. At the same time, the proportion of HEIs that relied exclusively on digital distance learning rose from only one percent at the beginning of the winter semester to 14 percent at the time of the survey.

Table 1: Extrapolation of the total number of international students

Reference group	WS 2020/21	WS 2021/22 (fo-recast)	Change
Newly enrolled international Students (1st university semester)	63.699	72.000-80.000	+13 to +26%
International students in total	324.729	330.000-350.000	+2 to +8%

Table 2: Development of the number of newly enrolled international degree-seeking students according to the universities surveyed (in %)

HEI cluster	Decline		Stable	Increase	
	over 10%	5 to 10%	-4 to +4%	5 to 10%	over 10%
Small universities ($\leq 20,000$ stu.)	13	4	38	25	21
Large universities ($> 20,000$ stu.)	12	16	24	16	32
Small UAS/HAW ($\leq 5,000$ stu.)	25	13	34	16	13
Large FH/HAW ($> 5,000$ stu.)	22	22	42	5	10
Technical universities	17	8	33	25	17
Colleges of art and music	6	0	65	12	18
Total (projection)	18	11	39	15	16

Table 3: Development of the number of newly enrolled international degree-seeking students in Bachelor's programmes according to the universities surveyed (in %)

HEI cluster	Decline		Stable	Increase	
	over 10%	5 to 10%	-4 to +4%	5 to 10%	over 10%
Small universities ($\leq 20,000$ stu.)	29	5	52	10	5
Large universities ($> 20,000$ stu.)	32	8	32	16	12
Small UAS/HAW ($\leq 5,000$ stu.)	36	10	39	7	10
Large FH/HAW ($> 5,000$ stu.)	46	8	36	5	5
Technical universities	25	25	33	0	17
Colleges of art and music	6	0	88	6	0
Total (projection)	32	8	46	7	7

Table 4: Development of the number of newly enrolled international degree-seeking students in Master's programmes according to the universities surveyed (in %)

HEI cluster	Decline		Stable	Increase	
	over 10%	5 to 10%	-4 to +4%	5 to 10%	over 10%
Small universities ($\leq 20,000$ stu.)	13	4	29	17	38
Large universities ($> 20,000$ stu.)	16	4	24	24	32
Small UAS/HAW ($\leq 5,000$ stu.)	26	3	48	7	16
Large FH/HAW ($> 5,000$ stu.)	21	10	36	5	28
Technical universities	8	8	50	17	17
Colleges of art and music	6	6	69	6	13
Total (projection)	18	5	43	10	23

Table 5: Development of the number of newly enrolled international guest/exchange students (non-degree) according to information from the universities surveyed (in %)

HEI cluster	Decline		Stable	Increase	
	over 10%	5 to 10%	-4 to +4%	5 to 10%	over 10%
Small universities ($\leq 20,000$ stu.)	17	8	8	0	67
Large universities ($> 20,000$ stu.)	4	8	0	8	80
Small UAS/HAW ($\leq 5,000$ stu.)	19	13	32	7	29
Large FH/HAW ($> 5,000$ stu.)	15	10	17	10	49
Technical universities	0	17	33	8	42
Colleges of art and music	6	22	61	11	0
Total (projection)	14	13	26	7	40

Table 6: Development of the number of all newly enrolled international students regarding the most important countries of origin according to the universities surveyed (in %)

Country of origin	Decline		Stable	Increase	
	over 10%	5 to 10%	-4 to +4%	5 to 10%	over 10%
China	34	6	42	4	14
India	18	8	35	10	29
Syria	36	5	37	10	12
Austria	19	5	59	3	13
Russia	17	7	43	9	24
Turkey	10	8	28	11	43
Italy	13	3	46	5	33
Iran	15	11	34	11	30
Cameroon	26	8	45	5	15
France	11	5	47	7	31

Table 7: Assessment of the proportion of newly enrolled international students who are already on site at the university location (in %, n = 133)

HEI cluster	0-49%	50-74%	75-89%	90-100%
Small universities ($\leq 20,000$ stu.)	4	17	13	65
Large universities ($> 20,000$ stu.)	16	11	21	53
Small UAS/HAW ($\leq 5,000$ stu.)	10	10	14	66
Large FH/HAW ($> 5,000$ stu.)	8	19	22	51
Technical universities	0	22	44	33
Colleges of art and music	0	6	13	81
Total (projection)	7	13	17	63

Table 8: Teaching mode at the beginning of the winter semester 2021/22 (figures in %)

HEI cluster	Exclusively in-person teaching	Exclusively (digital) distance learning	Mixture of in-person and (digital) distance learning
Small universities ($\leq 20,000$ stu.)	13	0	88
Large universities ($> 20,000$ stu.)	24	4	72
Small UAS/HAW ($\leq 5,000$ stu.)	30	0	70
Large FH/HAW ($> 5,000$ stu.)	33	2	64
Technical universities	25	0	75
Colleges of art and music	61	0	39
Total (projection)	31	1	68

Table 9: Teaching mode at the time of the survey (first half of December) (data in %)

Higher education cluster	Exclusively in-person teaching	Exclusively (digital) distance learning	Mixture of in-person and (digital) distance learning
Small universities ($\leq 20,000$ stu.)	4	0	96
Large universities ($> 20,000$ stu.)	4	4	92
Small UAS/HAW ($\leq 5,000$ stu.)	9	30	61
Large FH/HAW ($> 5,000$ stu.)	5	10	86
Technical universities	0	0	100
Colleges of art and music	11	0	89
Total (projection)	7	14	80

Methodology

- **The figures presented here are** based on a snapshot survey conducted by the DAAD among the heads of the International Offices of the 268 Rector’s conference (HRK) member HEIs between 1 and 15 December 2021. 158 universities took part in this survey (gross response rate: 59 percent), at which a total of approximately 65 percent of all international students in Germany are enrolled. 155 of the 158 questionnaires were usable for the analysis (net response rate: 58 percent).
- International students are defined here as **students with foreign citizenship and a higher education entrance qualification from abroad**. These are usually referred to by the Federal Statistical Office and other statistical authorities in Germany as “Bildungsauslaender”.
- For the **extrapolation of the survey data to the whole of Germany**, the HEIs surveyed were divided into six HEI clusters. Their shares in the population of all 387 (state-recognised) HEIs recorded in the higher education statistics (with the exception of universities of theology and universities of administrative sciences, at which hardly any international students are enrolled) served as weights for extrapolating the cluster values from the survey and the forecasts for the absolute number of students.
- **Important:** As these are projection and forecast data, it cannot be ruled out that there will be deviations from the final enrolment figures.