

Findings of the DAAD Snapshot Survey on enrolment figures of international students in the winter semester 2020/21

Executive Summary

- According to the DAAD Snapshot Survey and the projection based on it, the **total number of international students in the winter semester 2020/21** will increase from approximately 319,000 students in the winter semester 2019/20 to approximately 330,000 students (cf. also the methodological notes at the end of the report). This corresponds to an increase of around three percent.
- According to DAAD extrapolation, the **number of international first-semester students** will decrease slightly by around one percent to approximately 78,000 students. This is the result of a significant decrease in the number of newly enrolled guest and exchange students by almost 12,000 students or 54 percent and a significant increase in the number of newly enrolled degree-seeking students by almost 10,000 students or 17 percent. For comparison: In the previous year, the increase in the total number of newly enrolled degree-seeking students from abroad was only around three percent.
- The fact that there was an increase in the total number of international students in Germany, despite a slight decrease in new enrolments, is **most likely due to the fact that fewer international students left the German study system than in previous years**. For example, because there were delays in the course of study due to the pandemic-related changes or because - contrary to the original plan - a Master's programme was directly followed by a Bachelor's programme.
- There are **significant differences in the development of the number of international first-semester students between individual universities and the various university clusters**. Large universities, for example, most frequently report significant declines in the number of regular and exchange students, while small universities of applied sciences and colleges of art and music are least likely to do so. Universities also seem to be somewhat more affected by the declines than universities of applied sciences.
- According to DAAD projections, almost 40 per cent of the higher education institutions that can make a statement on this assumes that **90 to 100 percent of the newly enrolled international students are already on site at the university location**. Only 15 percent of the HEIs estimate that this applies to less than half of the international first-year students. Here, too, there are in part significant differences between the university clusters; particularly high rates are reported above all by the colleges of art and music, while particularly low rates are reported by the technical universities.
- At the time of the survey, a good three-quarters of the universities practised a mixed model of digital distance learning and face-to-face teaching, according to DAAD projections. At technical universities (92%) and colleges of art and music (100%), these proportions are well above average. It should be noted that many universities have switched from the mixed model to purely digital distance learning during the semester due to the current pandemic. Due to the new Corona protection regulations from mid-December, it can be assumed that the other universities will also change their teaching mode accordingly in the near future.

Table 1: Extrapolation of the total number of international students

Bezugsgruppe	WS 2019/20	WS 2020/21 (extrapolation)	Change
All newly enrolled international students (total)	78.670	78.000	-1%
Newly enrolled international guest/exchange students (non-degree)	21.524	10.000	-54%
Newly enrolled international degree-seeking students	57.146	67.000	+17%
All international students	319.463	330.000	+3%

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

HEI cluster	Significant decrease (>10%)	Some decrease (5-10%)	Hardly any change (+/-4%)	Significant increase (>4%)
Small universities(≤20,000stud.)	30	7	48	15
Large universities(> 20,000stud.)	52	22	17	9
Small UAS(≤5,000stud.)	14	26	45	14
Large UAS(>5,000stud.)	27	20	33	20
Technical universites	33	25	17	25
Colleges of art and music	24	19	48	10
Total (extrapolation)	27	19	38	16

Table 3: Development of the number of newly enrolled international guest/exchange students (non-degree), according to information from the HEIs surveyed (in %)

HEI cluster	Significant decrease (>10%)	Some decrease (5-10%)	Hardly any change (+/-4%)	Significant increase (>4%)
Small universities(≤20,000stud.)	86	7	7	0
Large universities(> 20,000stud.)	95	0	0	5
Small UAS(≤5,000stud.)	70	7	17	7
Large UAS(>5,000stud.)	86	0	10	5
Technical universites	75	8	17	0
Colleges of art and music	64	5	27	5
Total (extrapolation)	79	5	14	2

Table 4: Estimation of the proportion of newly enrolled international students who are already on campus at the university location (N = 131, in %)

HEI cluster	0-49%	50-74%	75-89%	90-100%
Small universities(≤20,000stud.)	22	22	26	30
Large universities(> 20,000stud.)	10	35	25	30
Small UAS(≤5,000stud.)	20	24	20	36
Large UAS(>5,000stud.)	11	30	22	38
Technical universities	25	38	25	13
Colleges of art and music	0	11	22	67
Total (extrapolation)	15	24	22	38

Table 5: Currently practised teaching mode (in %)

HEI cluster	Digital distance learning only	Mixed model of classroom and distance learning
Small universities(≤20,000stud.)	32	68
Large universities(> 20,000stud.)	14	86
Small UAS(≤5,000stud.)	30	70
Large UAS(>5,000stud.)	16	84
Technical universities	8	92
Colleges of art and music	0	100
Total (extrapolation)	23	77

Methodology

- The figures presented here are **based on a Snapshot Survey conducted by the DAAD** among the heads of the International Offices of the 270 HRK member HEIs between 2 and 11 December 2020. 161 HEIs took part in this survey, at which a total of approximately 60 percent of all international students in Germany are enrolled.
- International students are defined here as **students with foreign citizenship and a higher education entrance qualification from abroad**. In German usage, these are often also referred to as "Bildungsausländer".
- 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.
- **Important:** Since this is extrapolation data, it cannot be ruled out that there may be deviations from the final enrolment figures (that will probably be published in September 2021).