



Career  
Service



# WORKING DURING YOUR STUDIES

Information for International Students at  
Goethe University

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# WORKING A STUDENT JOB - EARN MONEY – CAREER ORIENTATION

International students are allowed to take up a student job in Germany. There are certain rules and conditions, however. In addition, different rules apply depending on whether you are from an EU or a non-EU country.

By working a student job you can earn some extra money, but usually it cannot finance your entire studies. Try to work especially during the semester breaks so that your studies are not unnecessarily prolonged. During the semester, students should work no more than 10-15 hours per week so that there is sufficient time for studying left.

If possible, wait until the end of your first semester in Germany before looking for a job. This way, you will be able to estimate more precisely how many hours of work per week you can manage alongside your studies.

Your jobs should get more demanding over the course of your studies and be related to your field of study. Be proactive and ask companies or institutions for whom you may later want to work whether they offer student jobs or internships.

Student activities at the institutes, libraries or other facilities of the university are an ideal and sought-after supplement to one's studies. Such work can be complementary to your studies and your intended profession and offer two further advantages – you earn extra money and at the same time acquire skills and experience for your later career and job hunt. Employers appreciate it when students gain experience in a relevant area of work during their studies, and you are more likely to be invited to a job interview with this background.

# 01

## WORK PERMIT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

### WHAT RULES APPLY TO NON-EU STUDENTS?

You are allowed to work for up to 120 full days or 240 half days in one calendar year (1 January – 31 December). Paid or unpaid vacation and sick leave days are not counted in. All working days on which you work 4 hours or less are considered as half days. Days on which you work more than 4 hours are considered full days if the company has a 40-hour working week. However, if the company has, for example, a 35-hour week on a regular basis, then a full day would correspond to 7 hours and half a day to 3.5 hours or less of working time.

**Tip:** If possible, choose a convenient distribution of your working hours. For example, with a 12-hour week distributed over 5 working days, you would use up 5 half days (2.4 hours of work per day). However, with a more favourable distribution, you would need only 1 full day (8 hours) and 1 half day (4 hours). Therefore, it is advisable to arrange the distribution of working hours with the employer in such a way that you get the maximum number of working days allowed. It is recommended to have this distribution specified in the employment contract.

### In the following exceptions, the 120/240-day annual working-limit may be exceeded:

**STUDENT ASSISTANT JOBS:** Students can take part-time jobs such as a student or research assistant or as a tutor at the university or another academic institution without being limited by the rule of 120 full days or 240 half days.

This includes working as a student assistant for organisations that may be outside of your academic department but are still somehow connected to the university (e.g. Studentenwerk, student bodies or committees), provided that the work is related to the field of study.

**Please note:** Nonetheless, the Ausländerbehörde should still be informed, as they decide in each case whether and to what extent a particular job is actually a student/academic job within the terms of this regulation.

**STUDY-SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT:** The Ausländerbehörde can issue a permit to work more than 120 full days or 240 half days in the current calendar year. In order to receive such a permit, you have to submit a certificate from the university stating that your work is complementary to your studies and a draft of the employment contract to the Ausländerbehörde. In most cases, the approval of the Federal Employment Agency is also required; however, the request to the Employment Agency is made by the Ausländerbehörde.

**MANDATORY INTERSHIPS** that are prescribed in the student's program regulations are not affected by the limit on the number of work days per year.

**THESIS WITHIN A COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION** is considered part of the study program and is not affected by the 120 full-day/240 half-day rule.

### Other special features that you should definitely pay attention to:

**STUDIENKOLLEG AND LANGUAGE COURSES:** If you are taking a language course, or are enrolled in the Studienkolleg (preparatory college) in order to pass the Feststellungsprüfung (entrance examination), there are particularly strict rules: You may work only during the semester breaks in the first year of preparatory studies AND only if both the Ausländerbehörde and the Federal Employment Agency give permission.

**VOLUNTARY INTERSHIPS** The 120 full-day/240 half-day rule applies. For example, you would already use 60 working days for a three-month full-time internship. If the internship is expected to exceed the number of allowed working days per year, then you need the approval of the Ausländerbehörde.

**HONORARY EMPLOYEE, SO-CALLED „WORK CONTRACTS“ (WERKVERTRAG), AND FREELANCE OR SELF-EMPLOYED ACTIVITIES**

**Please note:** International students (according to §16b AufenthG) who do not come from the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA) are generally not allowed to work as self-employed workers! A self-employment permission must be requested at the Ausländerbehörde!

Exceptions can be granted if the activity is beneficial for the studies.

In the case of scholarship holders, it must also be clarified whether the scholarship provider agrees to self-employment. In most cases, there are maximum monthly limits in this regard.

If you work on a freelance basis, your employer or client will usually ask you to submit an invoice, or you will agree to work for them on the basis of a „work“ contract (Werkvertrag). Income that you earn in this way is not taxed for the time being. However, at the end of the year you must report this income to the tax office and file an income tax return. Inform yourself thoroughly regarding the regulations, guidelines and procedures relating to self-employed activities!

**Please always keep in mind that in the case of exemptions you should first find a job, then submit your petition to the Ausländerbehörde and only start working after your petition has been approved!**

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#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

- Deutsches Studentenwerk: Brochure on residence law and social law for international students (as of 2021)  
[www.studentenwerke.de/de/content/residency-and-social-security-law](http://www.studentenwerke.de/de/content/residency-and-social-security-law)
- Deutsches Studentenwerk: Working during your studies  
[www.internationale-studierende.de/en/during\\_your\\_studies/jobbing](http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en/during_your_studies/jobbing)
- DAAD: The part-time job  
[www.daad.de/deutschland/in-deutschland/arbeit/en/9148-earning-money/](http://www.daad.de/deutschland/in-deutschland/arbeit/en/9148-earning-money/)
- Studying in Germany: Earning money during your studies  
[www.study-in.de/en/plan-your-stay/job-and-career/part-time-job\\_26928.php](http://www.study-in.de/en/plan-your-stay/job-and-career/part-time-job_26928.php)

## 02 IMPORTANT TO KNOW

In Germany, taxes and various social security contributions are automatically deducted from your pay. However, the regulations regarding students are quite generous – you pay either nothing or only little.

### **How many hours am I allowed to work per week?**

As a general rule, no student in Germany is allowed to work more than 20 hours per week during the semester and still be classified as a „student“ under social security law. If you work more than 20 hours per week during the semester, then you are considered an „employee“ under social security laws and have to make contributions to health, pension and unemployment insurance. Also, having the social security status of an employee can lead to the loss of your student residence permit if the amount of work interferes with the success of your studies.

Exceptions to this can be found below under [PRIVILEGES FOR WORKING STUDENTS](#).

### **What is a Tax number (Steuernummer) and when do I need it?**

As a rule, if you work in Germany, you need a Steuernummer, which is used to administer all tax-related issues. The Finanzamt (tax office) of your place of residence assigns your Steuernummer to you.

### **Income Tax**

The amount of your taxes depends on how much you earn and on your tax bracket. The taxes deducted over the course of a year are considered advance tax payment. At the beginning of the following year you are required to report your income to the tax office by filing an income tax return at the start of the year for the income you earned in the previous year; the tax office checks this and then decides whether you are reimbursed for some of the taxes already paid or whether you have to pay some more.

**TAX ALLOWANCE:** If you do not earn more than 9.744 EUR (as of 2021) over the course of the year, you do not pay taxes, or, in case you have paid taxes, the tax office will reimburse you after checking your tax return.

**Note:** If you have a student job, you often do not have to pay any taxes. Usually these are so-called mini jobs / 450-Euro jobs, for which no taxes are to be paid.

**TAX BRACKETS:** In Germany, there are several different tax brackets. Your tax bracket is determined based on your marital / family status and, for example, the number of jobs you hold.

### **Pension Insurance**

Every employee in Germany who is subject to mandatory social security contributions must pay part of their income to the state pension insurance scheme. Normally, this amounts to 9.3% (as of 2021) of the income.

Mini jobs with an income of no more than 450 EUR are exempt from these contributions provided that an exemption has been applied for. Otherwise, 3.6% (as of 2021) the gross income is due (reduced rate). Reduced rates also apply if you earn between 450 EUR and 850 EUR per month and work less than 20 hours per week. In this case, though, you cannot apply for an exemption. For students who plan to stay in Germany, paying into the pension insurance is, however, recommended.

### **What do I earn in a Part-time Job or internship?**

In Germany, a minimum wage of 9.60 EUR/hour applies (since 1.7.2021).

In addition, the pay for a part-time job depends very much on your knowledge, the branch and the job market in the region in which you are studying. If you already have a degree, for example, you will be paid at a higher rate if you work at a university than if you do not have a degree.

Pay can also vary if a different minimum wage has been set for a certain sector or if an employer is bound by collective agreements. Please always inform yourself about the pay in advance!

The minimum wage also applies to voluntary study-related internships of more than 3 months. Mandatory internships, no matter how long they last, and voluntary internships of less than 3 months do not have to be paid. This rule applies regardless of whether the internship is full-time or part-time.

### **What is a Mini Job?**

Most jobs for students in Germany are offered as so-called Minijobs / 450-Euro-Jobs / geringfügige Beschäftigung (minor employment). This refers to an employment relationship in which you are not allowed to earn more than 450 EUR per month.

Under German law, no payment into health insurance, nursing-care insurance and unemployment insurance is due for someone with a "minor employment" job. It is possible to get an exemption from the pension insurance.

**Note:** You are permitted to have several mini jobs at the same time, but you should inform your employers about this, and your income may not exceed 450 EUR per month. For further information regarding mini jobs: [www.minijob-zentrale.de](http://www.minijob-zentrale.de)

### **What is a Werkstudent/Werkstudentin (Working Student)?**

Working-students are full-time students who also work for an employer but not in a mini job. The rule for working-students is that neither the student nor the employer pay social security contributions, no matter how much money the student trainee earns. Only the contributions to the pension-insurance scheme have to be paid. The amount of time a student trainee is permitted to work is limited to 20 hours per week – with a few important exceptions, which are privileges of the working-student status.

### **Privileges for Working-Students**

**WORK DURING THE SEMESTER BREAKS, ON WEEKENDS OR AT NIGHT:** During the semester breaks as well as on weekends and in the evening and night hours there are no limits to the amount of time working-students may work, irrespective of whether they do this work in addition to a regular job of up to 20 hours per week or exclusively in their capacity as working-student. The prerequisite for this is that the majority of the working-student's time is still devoted to studies. However, the 20-hour limit may not be exceeded for an unlimited amount of time. Working students may only work more than 20 hours per week for up to 26 weeks (182 calendar days) in the course of any 12-month period (not in the calendar year).

**TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT FOR A MAXIMUM OF THREE MONTHS:** Working-students can also work more than 20 hours per week if it is agreed upfront that the job is limited to a maximum period of three months. In this case, your activity is considered minor employment and is therefore exempt from social security contributions.

## Health Insurance

As a rule, even if you work, you are insured as a student, not as an employee. That means that you pay the student rate offered by your health insurance (applies to students up to the age of 30).

However, if you work more than 20 hours per week, you may be subject to a different health insurance rate. Clarify this with your employer! If you are not sure, contact your health insurance company to ask for advice before accepting a job.

For more information, see the „Insurance & Health“ brochure.

## Unemployment insurance

As a rule, students do not have to pay unemployment insurance for their work in a minor-employment/mini job or for their work as a working-student. However, this also means that they cannot claim unemployment benefits.

## Self Employment, contracts for work and Labour, Freelance Work

**Please note:** International students who are not from an EU or EEA member state are, as a rule, not permitted to engage in self-employed work in Germany! Exceptions may be granted if the work is complementary your studies, your financial subsistence is already secured, there are no concerns regarding deportation and a valid passport is available.

If you are working as a freelancer, your customer or principal usually asks for an invoice, and/or you agree on a contract for work and labour. Money thus earned is not taxed in advance. However, you are required to report your income to the tax office at the beginning of the following year for the previous year and must file an income tax return.

Examples of freelance work include translations, conducting workshops and training sessions, individual research or scientific contributions and IT services for a variety of different clients.

Please inform yourself thoroughly regarding the regulations, guidelines and procedures relating to self-employment or freelance work!

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## FURTHER INFORMATION AND LINKS:

- Deutsches Studentenwerk: Brochure Residence and Social Law for International Students (as of 12/2020)  
[www.studentenwerke.de/sites/default/files/210309\\_dsw\\_sik-frings\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.studentenwerke.de/sites/default/files/210309_dsw_sik-frings_en_web.pdf)
- Deutsches Studentenwerk: Employment contracts  
[www.internationale-studierende.de/en/during\\_your\\_studies/jobbing/taxes\\_and\\_contributions/](http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en/during_your_studies/jobbing/taxes_and_contributions/)
- Deutsches Studentenwerk: Taxes and contributions  
[www.internationale-studierende.de/en/during\\_your\\_studies/jobbing/taxes\\_and\\_contributions/](http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en/during_your_studies/jobbing/taxes_and_contributions/)
- Minijob- Zentrale (mini- job centre):  
[www.minijob-zentrale.de](http://www.minijob-zentrale.de)

# 03

## HOW TO FIND STUDENT JOBS

### You can find Job offers for Students for example...

- At the job agency of the Studentenwerk [stellenmarkt.studentenwerkfrankfurt.de](https://stellenmarkt.studentenwerkfrankfurt.de)
- At the Campus Service Career Center: [www.careercenter-jobs.de](http://www.careercenter-jobs.de) of Goethe University. It is advisable to search for „Teilzeitjob“ or “Nebenjob”.
- On notice boards on the campus; here you may also find offers from organisations or private persons external to the university, and you can also put up your own notice if you have a special skill to offer (piano lessons, language lessons, etc.)
- Via online job boards (some of them are especially for student jobs). You can find more information on this in the brochure „Application tips for international students“.
- In the classified sections of local and regional newspapers and magazines such as Frankfurter Rundschau, Frizz, Frankfurter Neue Presse and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. These publications usually also have an online presence. You can also place your own advertisement or job-seeking post; however, you might have to pay a fee.
- Via newsletters, mailing lists, websites and Facebook pages of institutes and departments of the university; here you will find job ads for student assistants and tutors.
- In the Goethe University job newsletter “Stellen aktuell” with job offers from various academic and administrative departments of the university <https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/47549099/Stellenangebote>

You can also send an unsolicited application (an application that is not prompted by a specific job ad) to the company of your choice. Give it a try!

# 04

## SERVICES OFFERED BY GOETHE UNIVERSITY

Goethe University offers a wide range of advisory services related to work and career questions. Even if you are currently considering only a part-time job during your studies or an internship, you should take advantage of these offers.

### Career Service

Here you will find counselling on job orientation and career design for all students: individual consulting (career coaching, checking your job application, coaching for tests) as well as workshops (talks from professionals in the field, job orientation, training for job applications, qualifications for specific professional areas, seminars on work/life balance, future skills, etc.).

Further information: [www.uni-frankfurt.de/94784790/International\\_Career](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/94784790/International_Career)

### Career Center and Arbeitsagentur (Federal Employment Agency)

The Career Center is part of the Campus Service of Goethe University. Its services include job placement for students and graduates as well as establishing and maintaining cooperations with external employers.

Further information:

[https://careerservice.campuservice.de/de\\_de/startseite.html](https://careerservice.campuservice.de/de_de/startseite.html)

In cooperation with the Federal German Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit), counselling on career orientation and the job market is also offered.

Further information: [www.uni-frankfurt.de/94952450/Beratungskalender](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/94952450/Beratungskalender)

### General Advice Services offered by the AStA Frankfurt and the DGB Jugend

The AStA of Goethe University offers an initial counselling session on employment law to all students at the AStA Counseling Center.

Email: [campusoffice@asta-frankfurt.de](mailto:campusoffice@asta-frankfurt.de)

Website: [asta-frankfurt.de/angebote/beratung-hilfe/campusoffice](http://asta-frankfurt.de/angebote/beratung-hilfe/campusoffice)



[www.career.uni-frankfurt.de](http://www.career.uni-frankfurt.de)