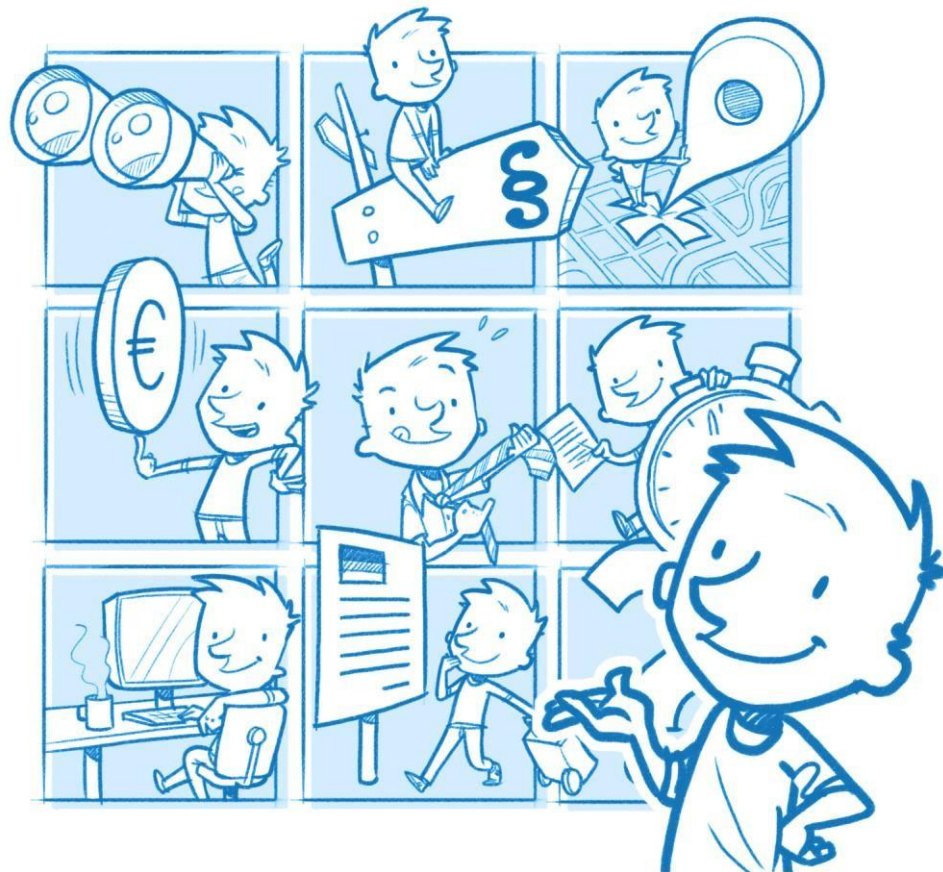




STUDENT UND ARBEITSMARKT
Career Service der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München



STUDENT JOBS IN GERMANY

Practical guide with information on internships and
part-time jobs for students in Germany

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1. Before you start reading...



...a brief note on who this guide is written for, and what information it contains.


Are you a student or graduate, and thinking of doing an internship in Germany during your time at university? Or is an internship perhaps a mandatory part of your study or examination regulations? Are you looking – voluntarily or out of necessity – to take on a part-time job alongside your studies, and you'd like to know more about student jobs? Do you have questions regarding finding an internship, applying for a job, or concerning employment law? Are you coming to Germany from abroad, and would like general information on internships and student jobs in Germany.

This guide is for you if you are:


- A German student at the LMU, and would like to do an internship in Germany or work part-time alongside your studies
- An international student enrolled full-time at the LMU, and would like to do an internship in Germany or work part-time alongside your studies
- An international student enrolled part-time at the LMU, and would like to do an internship in Germany or work part-time alongside your studies
- An international student enrolled at a university abroad, and would like to do an internship in Germany
- A German and/or international graduate and would like to do an internship in Germany

International students in particular have to clarify and organize several important points before beginning an internship or a part-time job in Germany. However, it is also helpful for German students to know what to expect and which legal requirements need to be observed.

This guide will help you understand the process. It covers all the important topics – from finding an internship or student job, to applying for a work permit, to internship/job references – that you need to know about if you’re planning on doing an internship or working part-time in Germany.

 **This guide is not exhaustive**, particularly with regard to legal requirements or specific information on the situation in other countries. Although we have researched thoroughly for this guide, we cannot guarantee that all information is correct or complete. It would be impossible to consider every single case scenario in one brochure. So please do also contact the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Federal Employment Office), the Kreisverwaltungsreferat (Regional Administrative Office), your local Citizen Service Center or your local Immigration Office.

Now, let’s begin... We start with the topic “General information for international students”. This covers issues such as immigration requirements and visas. If you’re an international student, you will need to understand these requirements before you read the rest of the brochure. Here we describe the most basic requirements for students who want to come to Germany for an internship and/or a student job. That’s why we clarify these points right at the start. We’ll then move on to a chapter about “Internships”.

 If you’re a German student, you don’t need to read the following section, of course! You can skip straight to chapter 3 “Internships”, where we describe what internships actually are – and what they are not.

2. General information for international students and graduates



As you will need to enter Germany before you can actually do an internship here and/or get a student job, we begin by explaining immigration requirements.

2.1. Which immigration laws apply to me?

In order to enter the country, most students and graduates will require a **visa**. A visa is an endorsement in your passport which authorizes you to enter Germany and stay here for up to three months. There are two types of visa: a Schengen visa and a national visa.

- A **Schengen visa** is a short-term residency permit for up to three months within one half-year period. It is primarily issued to internationals visiting friends or family, to business travelers or to tourists, and entitles the holder to travel freely throughout all countries in the Schengen area (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Finland, Greece, Italy, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary). It can only be extended in exceptional cases. You can **apply** to the German Embassy in your home country for this visa.
- A **national visa** is issued for those who wish to stay longer than three months, e.g., for studying at university or working in Germany (including internships). This allows you to stay for three months up to one year, but is valid only in Germany. In order to travel to Germany, this visa entitles you to pass once through other Schengen countries (taking a maximum of five days). You can **apply** to the German Embassy in your home country for this visa.

Please note that it is illegal to enter Germany without a visa if you are legally obliged to obtain a visa first. If you need a visa, but want to stay in Germany **for longer than three months**, you need to apply for a **residency permit** (the term “residency status”¹ is also used here). You will be granted a **residency permit** if you want to **study or do an internship** in Germany, for example. If you want to study, you will be granted a residency permit for a maximum of two years. On expiry this can be extended for another two years. If you want to work part-time alongside your degree course, you will be doing so during your course of study in Germany. So your residency permit will be granted on the basis of your degree course. In general, an internship may last no longer than twelve months.



Naturally, you first need to know whether or not you require a visa. This depends on your country of origin.

- If you come from one of the following countries, you **do not need a visa** in order to stay or work in Germany. Generally, a valid passport will suffice.
 - **EU:** Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, Cyprus. If you come from one of these countries, you only need valid ID or a passport in order to enter Germany.
 - **Switzerland**
 - Members of the **European Economic Area (EEA):** Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway. Similarly, you only need valid ID or a passport in order to enter Germany
 - **Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea and United States of America.** If you are a national of one of the countries listed above, you will need a residency permit but can apply for this after entering the country.

¹ The word “Aufenthaltstitel” (residency status) has been used in German residency law since 01/01/2005. This word is a blanket term for visas (in the main) and (temporary) residency permits. Residency status may include a work permit. For more information, please contact your local immigration office.

- The same applies to nationals of **Andorra, Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Monaco and San Marino**, so long as you have no intention of working during or after your course of study.

Please note that if you enter Germany without a visa, you cannot extend your visa once the three months have expired. You will have to leave the country after three months.

Also, if you would like to stay in Germany for longer than three months, or you would like to work in a field which requires approval, you must obtain a national visa before entering Germany. This is compulsory.

- All other students and graduates who would like to work alongside their studies or do an internship in Germany will require **a visa**.

Basically, these are the immigration laws. We'll now take a look at whether you can work unrestrictedly in gainful employment once you enter Germany, and whether you will need a work permit.

2.2. Can I work in Germany as much as I like, and do I need a work permit?

German law no longer speaks of “work permits”.

This term was abolished on 01/01/2005². Instead, foreign nationals are permitted to work in gainful employment if they fulfil the criteria detailed in German Residency Law, or if their residency status expressly includes permission to do so. Student jobs and internships are generally classed as gainful employment.



However: some **internships and work arrangements** (i.e., jobs) **are not classed as gainful employment**, if they are not practiced for more than three months within a twelve month period. This means that you do not require permission from the Federal Employment Agency for such internships or jobs – regardless of which country you come from, and regardless of whether you are a student or graduate.

These internships and jobs include:

²For the sake of simplicity, we will continue to use this term nonetheless.

- Internships in programs which are funded by the EU (e.g. Erasmus, Socrates, Tempus).
- Internships which last no longer than 12 months and which have been organized by an international exchange program of a public institution or student organization (e.g., DAAD, AIESEC, IAAS, InWEnt, ZVA) in agreement with the Federal Employment Office.
- Government internships which are funded by the German state, by the EU or by international intergovernmental organizations.
- Holiday jobs lasting up to a maximum of 3 months within a 12-month period, if the employee in question is a student enrolled at an international university and the job was procured via the Federal Employment Office.

If you want to make sure you do not need approval for your proposed internship or job, or check whether this approval is included in your residency permit, contact your local immigration office or the immigration office nearest to your internship or job.

In addition, the following conditions also apply.

2.2.1. Students from the EU, EEA and Switzerland

In general, students who are nationals of countries within the EU, EEA or are from Switzerland, do not need a work permit in order to find a student job or do a voluntary internship. They have the same access to the job market as German nationals, and do not need permission from the Federal Employment Office in order to work in gainful employment. They may also work in Germany for as long as they choose.

2.2.2. Graduates from the EU, EEA and Switzerland



The same applies as for students from the EU, EEA and Switzerland. Please read chapter 2.2.1.

2.2.3. Students from non-member countries

For students who are nationals of non-member countries, a distinction is drawn between those who are enrolled at a university in

Germany (such as LMU) and those who are enrolled at a university abroad.

2.2.3.1. Students who are enrolled at a university in Germany

If you come from a non-member country (in other words, a country which is not in the EU, EEA or Switzerland) and you are enrolled at a university in Germany (such as LMU), you do not need approval from the immigration office in order to work in gainful employment if you do so within certain boundaries (e.g., as a placement student³ or in a voluntary internship).

A distinction is drawn between work which is “approval-free” and that which is “subject to approval”.

2.2.3.1.1. Approval-free work

The following work does not require approval:

- **Part-time jobs practiced for no more than 120 days or 240 half days**

International students who are enrolled at a university in Germany do not require approval for salaried employment or internships in any institution or company if they do not work for more than 120 full days or 240 half days per calendar year. A “half day” is classed as four or five hours of work per day, depending on how long a normal working day is for other employees in the same company. If the other employees regularly work eight hours per day, a half day is calculated as being four hours per day. If the other employees regularly work ten hours per day, a half day is calculated as five hours per day. As soon as you have worked for the number of days detailed above,

³ See chapter 4.1.1.

you will need permission from your employment authority and local immigration office in order to continue working.

- **Working as a student assistant**

In addition to the 120 full days or 240 half days of approval-free work detailed above, you may work for as many hours as you like as a student assistant. No approval is required for this. Working as a student assistant is restricted to activities which are related to your course of study and to your university (e.g., tutorials). Although this work is approval-free, you must still inform your local immigration office, as they are responsible for deciding on a case-by-case basis whether a job can be classed as a “student assistant” job. Contact the university if any difficulties arise in this respect.

- **Internships**

If you would like to do an internship, you first need to distinguish between a **mandatory internship** (see chapter 3.1.1.1 for a definition) and a **voluntary internship** (see chapter 3.1.1.2 for a definition).

Mandatory internships are required components of a degree course. In accordance with Section 15, Paragraph

1 BeschV (Regulation for the Employment of Foreign Nationals), no official approval is required. This means that if you have the time, you can work in a part-time job up to the complete 120 full days or 240 half days in addition to your internship.

This is not the case for **voluntary internships**. These are not mandatory components of a degree course, and are subject to approval. So here you will need to contact your local immigration office.

2.2.3.1.2. Jobs which are subject to approval

Any job which does not fit into any of the categories detailed in the last chapter for approval-free work is subject to approval. In short, this covers any employment or

voluntary internship which involves working more than 120 full or 240 half days per calendar year. Even if you are working as a “student assistant” (in a university, e.g., for a professorial chair), you must contact the immigration office, which is responsible for deciding whether the position in question can be classed as a student assistant job or not.

2.2.3.2. Students who are enrolled at a university abroad

If you come from a non-member country and are enrolled at a university abroad, you may consider doing an internship in Germany. As mentioned above, internships are approval-free in the following cases:

- Internships in programs which are funded by the EU (e.g. Erasmus, Socrates, Tempus).
- Internships which last no longer than 12 months and which have been organized by an international exchange program of a public institution or student organization (e.g., DAAD, AIESEC, IAAS, InWEnt, ZVA) in agreement with the Federal Employment Office.

If you are not involved in one of the above programs for your internship, please ask your local immigration office whether your internship is approval-free or subject to approval.

2.2.4. Graduates from non-member countries

If you are a graduate from a non-member country and you would like to do an internship in Germany, the following applies: You **do not need a residency permit**, i.e., approval from the immigration office (for descriptions of approval-free and subject-to-approval work, please read chapters 2.2.3.1.1 and 2.2.3.1.2), if you wish to embark on an **internship** which will not last longer than three months in a twelve month period, and which meets the following requirements:

- Internships in programs which are funded by the EU (e.g. Erasmus, Socrates, Tempus).

- Internships which last up to one year as part of an international exchange program. These are internships offered by organizations or public institutions.
- Government internships which are funded by the German state, by the EU or by international intergovernmental organizations.

If you want to make sure you do not need approval for your internship, please contact your local immigration office.

In all other cases, you will require approval. Please contact the immigration office in charge.

If you are an international student, these are the general immigration and work regulations you will need to observe.



Important: As this booklet cannot cover all legal eventualities, it is very important that you contact your local immigration office or the Federal Employment Office. Special regulations may apply in each individual case, and this booklet is unable to cover all scenarios.

In the following chapter we turn our attention to the subject of “Internships”. We’ll begin by explaining exactly what an internship is, the different types of internship, and how to apply.

3. Internships



3.1. What exactly is an internship?

Broadly speaking, an internship is work which forms part of academic or vocational training, and aims to provide practical experience in a future occupation. In other words, it's all about putting acquired theory into practice and gaining new knowledge through hands-on experience in a company. Employers who are looking for an intern generally use the word “internship” when they advertise the position, e.g., “internship in marketing”. But there's more to an internship. If you've ever looked in your study regulations or read about internships, you may have noticed that a distinction is made between “mandatory internships” and “voluntary internships”. So what's the difference? We explain this next.

3.1.1. Types of internship

3.1.1.1. Mandatory internships

Some degree courses require students to complete a mandatory internship. This means that the internship is a prescribed component of the study or examination regulations. Here you are not free to decide whether or not you would like to do an internship; you have to do so. It is a prescribed requirement and you can't graduate without it. Have a look at the study or examination regulations for your degree course (generally you can find these online on your faculty website) to find out whether your degree course includes a mandatory internship. If it does, it will normally also detail various requirements which your internship needs to fulfill. These requirements can vary greatly depending on the degree course in question. Sometimes internships need to be completed during a particular semester, e.g., in the 5th semester.

Regulations regarding the content and duration can also vary. One degree course may require you to complete a two-month internship in a place and company of your choice, whilst another might require a longer internship where the content is closely connected to your degree course. Sometimes the regulations dictate that your internship include certain tasks in order to be accredited by the examination board. One example of this is the so-called “Famulatur” (clinical elective) required of medical and pharmacy students. This mandatory internship gives medical students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with patient care, whilst pharmacy students are introduced to the organization, processes and legal requirements for pharmacies. You will also generally be required to draw up an internship report detailing all that you have learned. The required length of this report can vary greatly. In some degree courses a few pages may suffice, whilst in others it is classed as a type of “seminar paper”, typically 15-20 pages in length.

As you can see, there are many aspects to mandatory internships. So make sure you find out all you need to know well in advance. Read your study regulations or ask your tutor which regulations apply to your particular degree course. Then you won’t miss any important deadlines or have to rearrange your study plan!



And one more word of advice: if your mandatory internship is scheduled during the semester, you can generally take leave of absence for the semester in question. Your student office can tell you all you need to know about applying for leave of absence.



In this connection, please also make sure you read the regulations on **minimum wages** for mandatory internships in chapter 3.2.1.

3.1.1.2. Voluntary internships

A voluntary internship is just what it says in the name – it is not mandatory, and you can decide for yourself whether or not to do the internship. We’ll be looking at three different types of voluntary internship: those completed during a degree course, those completed after graduation, and those completed during a so-called gap year between a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree. Please also make sure you read the regulations on minimum wages for voluntary internships in chapter 3.2.1.

a) During a degree course



Even if an internship is not a prescribed component in your study or examination regulations, you may choose to embark on one or more voluntary internships at any time during the course of your studies. **For students**, this is **highly recommended** for a variety of reasons:

- An internship is the ideal way to gain initial and important experience in a job, which will in turn help you gain your professional qualifications.
- Hands-on experience in a company will help you to better understand your own professional skills and preferences. This could also help you pinpoint your own preferred career if you're not yet sure of the exact area in which you'd like to work.
- An internship has a positive effect on your degree. Hands-on experience will not only increase your level of motivation in your studies, but will also help you focus your priorities in your degree. It might even help you to apply new and more effective methods of working.
- Internships are also very important in your curriculum vitae. Employers are always impressed if you can list one or more qualified internships, and will be more likely to recruit you than if you have never had any work experience.
- Roughly one third of all graduates find their first job through contacts made in internships. So make the most of this opportunity of getting to know potential employers, and of demonstrating how hard you can work!



For all the above reasons, it is well worth completing a voluntary internship during your degree course. By the way – if you do a voluntary internship during your degree course, you can take leave of absence for the semester in question. For more information on leave of absence, please read chapter 3.5.1. Please also read the regulations on **minimum wages** in chapter 3.2.1

b) After graduation

The situation is different if you decide to do an internship once you've **completed your degree**. Many graduates believe that a voluntary internship after graduation will increase their chances of being taken on by the company.

However, statistics show that only some 22% actually get temporary or permanent contracts once the internship is over. You should also bear in mind that graduate internships frequently destroy jobs – possibly even your own potential job. This is because graduate interns are often deployed in the same way as regular employees. They do the same work – the only difference being that they’re far cheaper. Remember that as a graduate, you’re fully qualified. If you engage in a long series of voluntary internships after graduating, potential employers might think you lack confidence. This overshadows your true worth, and won’t help you when you apply for a real job. If you’re a graduate, it’s wiser to avoid voluntary internships and bridge any gaps with a trainee program, a “Volontariat” (voluntary traineeship) (see chapter 3.1.3 for definitions of trainee programs and voluntary traineeships) or a temporary job which receives a fair salary. All of these will also help you to gain professional experience.

Please also note that the new law on **minimum wages**, introduced on 01/01/2015, has made it considerably harder to do an internship when you’re no longer in higher education. For more information, please see chapter 3.2.1.

c) Gap year between a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree

You can do a voluntary internship to bridge a gap between your Bachelor’s and Master’s degree. This doesn’t always have to last a full year; sometimes you’ll only have a few months between completing the first and embarking on the second. Voluntary internships during a gap year are recommended for the same reasons as voluntary internships during your degree course. They give you an opportunity to spend your time in a meaningful manner and target your education – particularly if you never found the time during your Bachelor’s degree to do any work experience. If you really want or need to fill a full twelve months, you could even do more than one internship – several different three-month internships, for example. Nowadays, some companies even offer special gap year internship programs. During a gap year, German students also have the opportunity to travel abroad for one or more internships (to find out more about international internships, please refer to the Guide for International Internships published by Student und Arbeitsmarkt, www.s-a.lmu.de/auslandspraktikum).



Even if some people criticize gap years, many companies will be glad to see that you have gained practical insights and professional experience through internships. And you yourself will probably be much clearer about the direction in which you're heading. So voluntary internships during a gap year will normally be in your favor when you apply for a job. Unlike internships during a degree course, Bachelor graduates who want to fill a gap year must remember that if they lose their student status – i.e., because the gap between the Bachelor's and the Master's degree is so long that you can't stay enrolled at the university – then you will be treated as a graduate intern. You can read more about the legal regulations which apply here (on minimum wages, insurance etc.) in chapter 3.2.3.2. If you are a German student with a Bachelor's degree and you would like to do an internship abroad, but you no longer have student status, you will need to find out whether you are actually allowed to do so in the country of your choice. In some countries (France, for example), internships are illegal in such cases due to minimum wage laws.

Again, please also note that the new law on **minimum wages**, introduced on 01/01/2015, has made it considerably harder to do an internship when you're no longer in higher education. For more information, please see chapter 3.2.1.

Now that we've touched on the relative value of voluntary internships during and after your degree and during gap years, we'd like to recap by stating that there are different types of internship. On top of this, the content of an internship can also vary greatly. This is the subject of the next chapter.

3.1.2. Differences with regard to content

Irrespective of whether you're embarking on a mandatory internship or a voluntary internship, There will be differences with regard to content. A basic distinction is made between **general internships** and **specialized internships**.

A **general internship** serves to introduce you to an institution or company and the work processes involved. Here, the focus is primarily on gaining first work experiences and a broad overview of the professional environment. It's completely up to you to decide what to learn and where to do the internship.

A **specialized internship**, however, is a different matter. This focuses on gaining specific insights into a predefined area. Basically, there are three types of specialized internship:

- specialized work shadowing
- specialized internships
- project-based internships

Specialized work shadowing is generally prescribed by the study regulations for teacher training and medicine degrees. However, they can also be found in other examination regulations. So normally these will be mandatory internships. Here you'll be watching a professional teacher or doctor at work in order to learn something about how they do their job. This gives you the opportunity to observe their techniques, in a school lesson or in the way they deal with their patients, for example.

Specialized internships are also closely linked to your degree course. Here you'll be completing an internship in a profession which is linked to your degree – a literature student might go to a publishing company, for example. Here you'll learn specific work techniques and processes in the industry which predominantly employs graduates from your degree course. Compared to specialized work shadowing, you'll be more actively involved in work processes. In other words, you're not just an observer on the sidelines, but will actually be given tasks to complete during your internship. Most specialized internships are mandatory.

In a **project-based internship**, you'll be involved in an actual project. This will give you insights into a specific subject area or department. Often you'll be given the opportunity to get actively involved in the whole process, from project planning through to delivery. Given that many companies organize their day-to-day work on a project basis, this type of internship will not only give you specialist knowledge, but will also provide valuable insights into how projects are developed and implemented.

Besides the differences between types and content, we also need to define what sets an internship apart from other work. We'll look at this aspect next.

3.1.3. Differences to other forms of work

The term “internship” does not cover all activities which aim to provide practical experience. An internship differs from other employment arrangements and contracts. It’s not the same, for example, as a student placement, a trainee program or a voluntary traineeship. Here are the differences:



In an **internship**, you work in a company for a certain period of time (normally 2-6 months). Generally speaking, you’ll be employed full-time, working 30-40 hours per week. Sometimes you’ll be given the opportunity to work in a variety of departments or areas. Unlike a student job, the primary focus is on gaining expertise and skills, not on performance. So you won’t always be entitled to receive wages (for more information on this subject, please read chapter 3.2). Normally, internships are completed in semester holidays (i.e., during lecture-free periods). However, you can also apply to the student office for leave of absence so that you can complete an internship during the semester. Your student office will tell you which documents you need to apply for leave of absence.



Unlike internships, **student placements** and **student jobs** run through the semester concurrently to your degree course. Here, you can work up to 20 hours per week during the semester, and more during semester holidays (this difference is primarily dictated by health insurance policy; for more information, please read chapter 4.2.1.1). Hence these placements and jobs are generally not short-term, i.e., just for a few months. Depending on the contract, some may last for several years. Unlike an internship, the focus is on performance. It stands to reason that a student job will generally have some connection with your degree course, so that you can not only earn money, but also gain experience in an area which interests you. If you have a student job, your company may allow you to use your work for your final dissertation. Some companies may also offer full-time employment after graduation.



Trainee programs also differ from internships. These programs are a form of induction into a company after graduation.

As a trainee, you'll be working for a company for a prescribed length of time – normally one or two years – after you graduate. During the course of this time, you complete a clearly defined program which gives you insights into different departments and processes within the company. The aim is to train graduates in all fields of work in the company so that they can afterwards be deployed in a meaningful manner. For this reason, trainee programs are not designed for undergraduates.

It is **important** to note that the term “trainee” is synonymous with “intern” in US English. Hence on an international level, you may find internships advertised as trainee positions. Not until you look more closely at the tasks involved and the qualifications required will you discover whether it's actually an internship or a trainee program. So be sure to read the advertisement carefully. If you're unsure, ask whether they're looking for an intern or a trainee according to the above definitions.



Voluntary traineeships (“Volontariat”) are similar to trainee programs. Again, these are not internships that you complete during your degree course. Voluntary traineeships are something you can opt to do after graduating. Voluntary traineeships are primarily offered in journalism, editorial offices and public relations. Graduates work for up to two years in one of the above areas to familiarize themselves with the writing techniques and work processes specific to the industry in question. This makes it easier for them to find employment in one of these areas, and may even lead to full-time employment for the company in question.

This, then, is a general overview of “internships”.

As different legal regulations apply to each of the different types of internship, we'll look at these next in the chapter “Legal regulations”.

3.2. Legal regulations

There is no special law governing the rights and responsibilities of interns in Germany. But there are a number of other laws which govern your status as an intern.



Your rights and responsibilities as an intern differ greatly according to whether you are completing a mandatory internship or a voluntary internship. Basic rights and responsibilities apply to all students, whether you are from Germany, the EU/EEA, or from anywhere else in the world. We'll look at these basic rights and responsibilities first. Then we'll go on to look at special regulations, particularly those which apply to international students. Please note that this information is based on the status quo in the winter of 2018.

3.2.1. Minimum wages and internships

In Germany, a law prescribing a minimum wage of €9.19 per hour came into force on 01/01/2019. This wage will be adjusted once every two years. If an employer fails to pay the minimum wage, he or she may be fined up to €500,000 by the FKS (Federal Customs Service's Execution Agency for Illegal Employment).

But special rules and regulations apply which define whether or not a minimum wage has to be paid for an internship. The exceptions for minimum wages are regulated in Section 22 of the MiLoG (Minimum Wage Act). We'll now look briefly at the conditions which dictate whether or not you receive a minimum wage in your internship.

a) **Voluntary internships for career orientation** before beginning vocational training or a degree course

Employers are not obliged to pay a minimum wage if the internship doesn't last longer than three months. After that, the employer must pay a minimum wage of €9.19, counting from day one of the internship.

b) **Voluntary vocational training internships or course-related internships**

If the internship lasts longer than three months, the employer must pay the minimum wage from day one. If it is shorter than three months, but the intern has previously completed an internship for the same employer, the minimum wage must also be paid from day one.

c) **Mandatory internships prescribed by education law**, university regulations or vocational training regulations, or an internship prescribed by a university of cooperative education:

No minimum wage has to be paid.

d) Internships which form part of **introductory training** in accordance with Section 54a of the SGB III (German Social Code) or **preparatory steps for vocational training** in accordance with Sections 68 to 70 of the Vocational Training Act

For such internships, **no** minimum wage has to be paid.

For **introductory training** lasting between six and twelve months, the following groups of persons are eligible for support:

- Persons who are registered with an Employment Agency as candidates for vocational training but who, for individual reasons, have limited recruitment prospects and have been unable to find a trainee position despite nationwide follow-up recruitment efforts
- Persons who are looking for a trainee position but who do not yet have the maturity for vocational training
- Persons who are looking for a trainee position but who have learning difficulties or are socially disadvantaged.

Vocational training grants are aimed at persons who have learning difficulties or are socially disadvantaged, or who are deemed not yet mature enough to successfully complete vocational training in a recognized occupation.

Please note here that once you graduate (with either a Bachelor's or a Master's degree), the orientation phase is regarded as completed. This means that for **gap year internships** (between Bachelor and Master), your employer will be legally required to pay you a **minimum wage** if you are no longer enrolled in higher education.

For all other internships, employers are legally required to pay a minimum wage.

If you are **job shadowing**, e.g., for television or in a theatre, you need to take a close look at what is involved. If you are learning "hands-on", you're effectively completing an internship, and must be paid €9.19 per hour – if you work for longer than three months. If you primarily learn through "observation", your employer does not have to pay you a minimum wage.

If you are **completing your dissertation in a company**, the minimum wage only applies if you have also completed an internship in the same company for which the minimum wage was applicable.

Please refer to the comments on completing **two internships for the same employer**. It is possible to complete one mandatory internship and one voluntary internship (lasting no longer than three months) for the same employer without being entitled to receive a minimum wage. But as soon as you complete more than one voluntary internship for the same employer, the minimum wage applies – regardless of how far apart they are in time. In other words, you can only complete one job orientation internship for any given employer without being paid the minimum wage.

Please note that if you're completing an **internship abroad** (assuming it's not mandatory and lasts longer than three months), and your work contract is drawn up in accordance with German law, your employer must pay you the minimum wage.

For this, the preconditions for payment of the minimum wage must be met from the start of the internship. For example, if you begin an internship and then drop out of university, you won't be paid the minimum wage retrospectively.

For more information, please see <http://www.der-mindestlohn-gilt.de> or call the minimum wage hotline on +49 (0)30 - 60 28 00 28. Here you can also receive legal advice – for example, if your employer refuses to pay you the minimum wage even though you are legally entitled to receive it.

3.2.2. Mandatory internships: General rights and obligations of students

Basically, your rights and responsibilities in a mandatory internship during your degree course are as follows:

- The **duration of the internship** is dictated by the respective examination and study regulations. For example, if the regulations dictate that you have to complete an eight-week internship, you won't normally be able to shorten this time period. Conversely, nor do you need to work for longer than the prescribed period.

- In a mandatory internship, you are not legally **entitled to receive remuneration**. Naturally, your employer is at liberty to pay you if he or she is pleased with your work or if you negotiate such payment in advance.
- Nor are you entitled to any **holiday leave**. As with remuneration, any holidays must be negotiated and explicitly agreed in advance. Please note that if you negotiate holidays, you will still need to complete the prescribed number of working days – otherwise the university might refuse to accredit the internship!
- If you receive remuneration, your employer is not obliged to pay you for any days you are unable to work due to **sickness**. However, you can negotiate continued remuneration.
- A **written internship contract** is generally not required. But it is strongly recommended, because it provides clarity and structure for the internship. For example, a contract could include working hours, days and any negotiated remuneration. It should also include a description of your tasks and activities. Then if you're assigned completely different tasks, you can refer directly to your contract. The internship contract should be signed by you and your employer. This commits both parties to keeping the terms of the written agreement. If your employer fails to keep to his or her side of the bargain, you can refer to the contract. Naturally this also works the other way around – your employer can also cite the contract. So unlike a verbal internship agreement, a written contract gives you everything in black and white – and nobody can make false claims about what was agreed.

The contract should include the following:

- Name and address of the contract partners
- Dates on which the internship begins and ends
- Location of the internship
- Description of the internship (describing tasks and work activities in as much detail as possible)
- Wage per hour (if you have negotiated a wage)
- Working hours (i.e., weekly and daily working hours, which days of the week, etc.)
- Duration of holiday leave (if you have negotiated holiday)



-
- Period of notice (in the event that the internship becomes untenable for you for good cause)

You will find an example for such a contract (which may have to be adapted) on the Student und Arbeitsmarkt website. You can also attend a course on this subject. Student und Arbeitsmarkt collaborates with renowned lawyers to offer regular courses on the subject of “Employment and Internship Contracts”. Please visit <http://www.s-a.lmu.de> for details. The dates of these courses are listed on the website under “Events”. Or register at www.s-a.lmu.de/newsletter for our newsletter – this will update you regularly on our latest seminars and courses.

- If you complete a mandatory internship, your employer must issue you a **certificate of attendance**. This is very brief, and simply certifies that you actually completed the internship during the prescribed period and in the prescribed field of work. This certificate verifies your internship for the university.
- You do not have to submit a **reference** for your internship. However, we highly recommend that you ask for a reference. Unlike a certificate of attendance, a reference not only confirms that you actually completed the internship, but also assesses your performance and your conduct towards your superiors, colleagues and customers. References from internships are very important when you come to applying for a job. They can often say a lot more about your work abilities and team spirit than a school or university report. So do talk to your employer at the end of your internship and ask them to write you a reference. It’s also important to check the wording in a reference, because this basically tells you what “grade” you achieved. As not everyone is aware of this grading system, you should check on the Internet in advance to see which wording reflects a grade 1, 2 or 3 (A, B and C). You might also consider attending a course on this subject: Student und Arbeitsmarkt offers regular courses on the subject of “Employment and Internship References”. You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de



3.2.2.1. Special notes for German students

a) Social insurance contributions

Social insurance is divided into different areas. The major areas here are statutory pension funds, statutory health insurance and statutory accident insurance.

Basically, mandatory internships are not classed as normal work relationships but as part of your degree course. So if you receive remuneration for your internship (regardless of the amount!), you won't have to pay social insurance contributions. Naturally, this also applies if you don't receive remuneration.

With regard to health insurance, however, you need to know and observe the following:

- **Health insurance contributions**

The amount you pay for your health insurance is not influenced by the **number of hours you work per week** in a mandatory internship. In this respect, a mandatory internship differs from a student job. If you are a working student, you must be careful not to work more than 20 hours per week during the semester.

If you do, you could lose your student status – and be liable to pay the high health insurance premiums that any normal employee has to pay. If you are completing a mandatory internship, however, you can work more than 20 hours per week. You keep your student status even if you're working 30-40 hours per week, and don't have to pay the premiums that normal employees have to pay.



Beware, however, if you receive **wages!** If you do, different regulations apply depending on whether or not you are covered by family insurance.

- If you receive a wage for your internship and you are **covered by family insurance**, you must observe the following:
 - **Up until you reach the age of 25** (i.e., up until your 25th birthday), students can be included in their parents' family health insurance policy. This means that as a family member, you are insured free of charge via your

parents, and do not have to pay your own health insurance contributions (see Section 10 of the Fifth Book of the SGB, (German Social Code)). However, this only applies if your regular income does not exceed €445 per month (this is the limit as of January 2019, but is subject to change. Ask your health insurance provider what the current income limit is.) If you exceed this limit, you are no longer covered by family insurance and you will need to insure yourself as a student. However, if you don't work for more than two months in a year, your income may exceed €445 in each of these months, Because this is not classed as regular income. In practice, this means that: If your mandatory internship will not last longer than two months and you negotiate a wage, you may (currently) earn more than €445 per month. If your mandatory internship lasts longer than two months and you receive a wage, you must not earn more than €445 per month. If you do, you will be liable to pay health insurance contributions. These are the basic regulations, but please do contact your health insurance provider to check what applies to your specific situation!

Please also note that special regulations apply to marginal employment arrangements: if total earnings exceed €445 but do not exceed the €450 limit, you are still covered by family insurance.

- If you are **25 years or over, married** and co-insured via your spouse, the same regulations apply.
- **Note:** If your study regulations prescribe a mandatory internship lasting eight weeks, but you actually complete a 10-week internship, the above regulations apply only to the first eight weeks. The remaining two weeks are classed as a voluntary internship during your degree course, and the regulations differ accordingly (see chapter 3.2.3.1).

- If you are **not covered by family insurance**, please ask your health insurance provider whether there is an upper limit to what you can earn.

- **Accident insurance**

With regard to statutory accident insurance, the following applies: You are covered by your employer's accident insurance if you have an accident during working hours, or



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on your way to or from your internship. Only on the event that your internship was an

organizational part of your degree course, and the LMU was directly responsible for the organization, might you be covered by the State Accident Insurance Fund. If you're unsure, ask your employer or the LMU how you are covered in the event of an accident.

b) Employer's liability insurance

Please note the following with regard to liability insurance for any damages caused by you: If you are an intern and, during the course of your work, you cause damage to a third party (i.e., not to the company in which you are completing the internship!), such damage is covered by your employer's liability insurance, not your private liability insurance (which is something everyone should have – including international students and graduates!). In other words: if you flood the office, for example, your private liability insurance provider is not liable to compensate the landlord for the damage caused to the premises. Rather, such damage is covered by the company where you are completing your internship, i.e., your employer's liability insurance. If you cause damage and the company where you are doing your internship demands compensation, please seek legal advice.



c) More income limits

If you receive remuneration for a mandatory internship, please bear in mind that more income limits apply. Such remuneration is counted as income for the purpose of income tax, (half) orphan's allowances and possibly even housing benefits. So please make sure you find out how much you are allowed to earn for each of these. To do so, contact the respective offices (tax office for income tax; the pension insurance provider for (half) orphan's allowances; your local authorities or social welfare office for housing benefits). If you receive a BAföG student grant, any remuneration is credited 1:1 to any BAföG payments. Personal allowances for gainful employment do not apply here.

3.2.2.2. Special information for students from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland

a) Social insurance contributions

- **Accident insurance and pension funds**

With regard to statutory accident insurance and pension funds, the same regulations apply as for German students (please see chapter 3.2.2.1 a)). However, please note the following with regard to health insurance.

- **Health insurance**

Regardless of whether you are enrolled full-time or part-time at the LMU, or whether you are enrolled solely at a university abroad, citizens of the EU/EEA and Switzerland are legally obliged to have health insurance cover when completing an internship in Germany.

Before we take a closer look at this subject, here is one **important note**: Ask your health insurance provider in your home country, and also ask a German health insurance provider (e.g., Techniker Krankenkasse, AOK) about the extent to which you are already covered by your health insurance policy, or whether it would be better to take out additional health insurance cover for your time in Germany. There are huge differences here from country to country, so you will need to check for your own individual case about what is covered by your policy and what is not. Whether you are enrolled at the LMU or at your home university may, for example, make a difference, as may your registered place of residence. Also, ask your internship employer whether additional health insurance premiums need to be paid.

We'll now give you a brief overview of health insurance in Germany

- If you are covered by **national health insurance in your home country**, most German health insurance providers will accept this so long as you bring a European Health Insurance Card.

This is issued by your national health insurance provider in your home country. In general, this will suffice and you won't need additional health insurance cover in Germany.

- If you have **private health insurance in your home country**, this should cover you for your time in Germany. However, you will have to pay all doctor's bills up front and then submit them in order to be refunded.
- Both the above regulations apply to students under the age of 30, who have not been studying for more than 14 semesters. If you have been studying for more than 14 semesters or are over the age of 30, you will need private health insurance in Germany. Unlike statutory health insurance, the premiums for private health insurance are not standardized. They differ according to age, gender and state of health. You can look online to compare the various private health insurance providers in Germany.

If you are married to a German national who has statutory German health insurance cover, you can be co-insured free of charge. This is what is called "family insurance" in Germany. If you are covered by family insurance, please note that you may not earn more than €445 per month (upper limit in January 2019) if your internship lasts longer than two months (see chapter 3.2.2.1). If you do, you are no longer covered by your family insurance and will be liable to pay health insurance contributions.

- If you are covered by a health insurance policy in your home country, ask your insurance provider whether there are limits to the number of hours you can work or the amount you can earn per month in an internship.

b) Employer's liability insurance

Please read the section on "Employer's liability insurance" in chapter 3.2.2.1.

c) Income tax

If you receive a wage for your internship, ask your local tax office whether you are liable to pay income tax in Germany (this will depend, amongst other things, on your gross income) and whether you need a tax number. As German – and international – tax laws are complex, we are unable to provide more specific information here.

However, in accordance with Section 3, no. 44 of EStG (German Income Tax Law), you will not be liable to pay tax in Germany on **grants** which come from public funds or from intergovernmental or supranational institutions of which Germany is a member (e.g., European Union). So if, for example, you receive a grant from the European Union – such as an Erasmus grant – you won't have to pay income tax on it. In general, any payments you receive from your home country are also tax-exempt.

Please note that Germany has a so-called “**double tax agreement**” with many countries (particularly EU member states). This is to prevent you from having to pay tax twice over, in Germany and in your home country (e.g., because you are still registered as principally resident in your home country.) Most of these treaties stipulate that you only have to pay income tax in the country where you earned the money (which would be Germany in this case). You will find a list of the countries with whom Germany has such a treaty, and the regulations agreed with these countries, at www.bundesfinanzministerium.de. However, do still contact your local tax office to find out which regulations apply to your particular case – not least because these often change!

3.2.2.3. Special information for students from non-member countries

a) Social insurance contributions


- **Accident insurance and pension funds**

With regard to statutory accident insurance and pension funds, the same regulations apply as for German students (please see chapter 3.2.2.1 a)).

However, please note the following with regard to health insurance.

- **Health insurance**


As for all other students, it is mandatory for students from non-member countries to have health insurance cover. So if you are a student from a non-member country, you must take out cover from a public or private health insurance provider in Germany – regardless of whether you are enrolled at the LMU full-time or part-time, or whether you are enrolled at a university in a different country



Please also note the following: Ask your health insurance provider in your home country, and also ask a German health insurance provider (e.g., Techniker Krankenkasse, AOK) about the extent to which you are already covered by your health insurance policy, or whether it would be better to take out additional health insurance cover for your time in Germany. There are huge differences here from country to country, so you will need to check for your own individual case about what is covered by your policy and what is not. Also, ask your internship employer whether additional health insurance premiums need to be paid.

With regard to the subject of “health insurance in Germany”, the following applies:

If you are insured via a German health insurance provider, you may – in contrast to a student job – work **during the semester for more than 20 hours per week if you are completing a mandatory internship**. Even if you receive a **wage**, this will not affect your health insurance contributions.



By the way – the law on working **120 full days or 240 half days** in Germany **does not apply to mandatory internships**. So a mandatory internship can be longer.

b) Employer’s liability insurance

Please read the section on “Employer’s liability insurance” in chapter 3.2.2.1.

c) Income tax

Please read chapter 3.2.2.2 c).

3.2.3. Voluntary internships

3.2.3.1. General rights and obligations of students in voluntary internships during a degree course

Basically, your rights and responsibilities in a voluntary internship are as follows:

- **The duration of the internship:** A voluntary internship can last as long as you like. However, it is not advisable to work longer than 6-12 months. After all, you want to finish your degree as well! Which you can't if you're completing a full-time internship, because you won't be able to attend seminars and lectures, so you won't be able to sit the necessary exams. You should also bear in mind that some companies exploit their (qualified) interns as cheap or even free manpower. If an internship lasts longer than six months, you're highly likely to be repeating the same tasks and not learning anything new after a while. So do be cautious here, and ask in advance about the conditions for the internship.
- If you're completing a voluntary internship, you are **entitled** – unlike in a mandatory internship – **to receive a reasonable wage**. This is regulated by Section 26 in conjunction with Section 17 I 1 of the BBiG (German Vocational Training Act). “Reasonable” means the wage must help cover your living costs. In this context, please read chapter 3.2.1 on minimum wages.
- Unlike in a mandatory internship, you are also entitled to the minimum holiday leave (see Sections 26, 10 II BBiG in conjunction with Sections 1 and 3 of the BUrlG (Federal Leave Act)). In all cases, you are not entitled to full holiday leave until you have worked for the company in question for six months (see Section 4 BUrlG). Before this, you are entitled to 1/12 of the annual leave for every month

you work. However, if your internship is very short (less than one month), you will not be entitled to any holiday leave.

- In the event that you take **sick leave**, you are entitled to continued remuneration (see Sections 26, 10 II BBiG in conjunction with Section 3 of the EntgFG (Continued Remuneration Act)).
- As with a mandatory internship, a **written internship contract** is not required. So a verbal agreement is still considered binding. However, we strongly recommend that you draw up an internship agreement in writing and that this is signed by both yourself and your employer. Because in case of doubt, you can only actually establish and prove what was agreed if you have it in black and white. For more information on what the internship contract should include, please read chapter 3.2.2, "Written internship contracts".
- With regard to **terminating** an internship contract, please note the following (these regulations are detailed in Sections 26 and 22 of the German Vocational Training Act): An employer may only terminate an internship with due cause. As an intern, however, you may terminate the internship contract at any time without notice for due cause (e.g., if you do not receive the agreed wages, if you are sexually harassed or physically attacked), or terminate the contract without due cause but with four weeks' notice (i.e., you must continue to work for four weeks after giving notice). The contract must be terminated in writing (not via email!).
- On termination of the internship, you are **entitled to receive a reference** in accordance with Sections 26 and 16 of the German Vocational Training Act. Do remember to request a reference (in paper form, not as an email, and signed by your employer!), because this will be very important when you later come to apply for a job. Remember also to check the wording in your reference, because this basically tells you what "grade" you achieved. As not everyone is aware of this grading system, you should check on the Internet in advance to see which wording reflects a grade 1, 2 or 3 (A, B and C). You might also consider attending a course on this subject: Student und Arbeitsmarkt offers regular courses on the subject of "Employment and Internship References". You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de.




3.2.3.1.1. Special notes for German students

a) Social insurance contributions

For students, voluntary internships are classed as normal working relationships. With regard to pension contributions, health insurance and accident insurance, the following applies:

- **Pension funds**

If you receive a wage for your internship, you will have to pay pension contributions. These currently (summer 2015) total 18.7% of your gross income. Half of this amount is automatically deducted from your gross wage, and your employer pays the other half.



However, please note that pension contributions have been mandatory for marginal and short-term employment since January 2013 (resulting from amendments to the law on marginal employment). You are classed as “marginally employed” if you earn up to €450 per month. Employment is regarded as short-term if it is clear from the start that the work in question will not last longer than three months, or 70 days in a calendar year.

If you are marginally or temporarily employed, your employer will register you for pension fund contributions. In the case of marginal employment, your employer pays a fixed pension fund contribution of 15%. You pay the remaining 3.7% to make this sum up to the statutory 18.7%⁴. These contributions are not mandatory for short-term employment. Here you have the option of seeking exemption from pension contributions. For more information here, please read 4.1.1.1.

⁴ Please note that the above regulations apply to €450 jobs in the business sector. Other regulations apply for €450 jobs in private households (see 4.1.1.1).

- **Health insurance**

If you receive wages and are covered by your family insurance (detailed information on “Family insurance” is provided in chapter 3.2.2.1 a)), you must not earn more than €450 per month (date: summer 2015). If you earn more, you will no longer be covered by your family insurance (please contact your health insurance provider for more details). This means you will have to take out and pay for personal health insurance cover. The following also applies: if you are completing a **voluntary internship during the semester holidays**, you do not have to pay health insurance contributions – even if you work for more than 20 hours per week (see the 20-hour regulation in chapter 3.2.2.1 a)). However, please note the following for **voluntary internships during the semester**: If you work more than 20 hours per week in a voluntary internship during the semester, you will have to pay income-related contributions to health insurance and nursing insurance as soon as the income from your internship exceeds €450 (gross) per month.

- **Unemployment insurance**

The same applies to unemployment insurance: If you work more than 20 hours per week for longer than two months in a voluntary internship during the semester, you will have to pay income-related contributions to unemployment insurance as soon as the income from your internship exceeds €450 (gross) per month.

- **Accident insurance**

Regardless of whether or not you receive a wage for your internship, you are automatically covered by the company’s accident insurance policy when you complete a voluntary internship.

b) Employer’s liability insurance

Please read the section on “Employer’s liability insurance” in chapter 3.2.2.1.

c) Other income limits

If you receive a wage for your internship, it will be counted as income when calculating BAföG, income tax, (half) orphan's allowances and housing benefits. So please find out how much you are allowed to earn for each of these. To do so, contact the respective offices (tax office for income tax; the pension insurance provider for (half) orphan's allowances; your local authorities/social welfare office for housing benefits). You may also lose your entitlement to child benefit if you take leave of absence from university for an internship in which the focus is not on the acquisition of knowledge. For more information, please see [here](#).

3.2.3.1.2. Special information for students from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland

a) Social insurance contributions

- **Accident insurance and pension funds**

With regard to statutory accident insurance and pension funds, the same basic regulations apply as for German students (please see chapter 3.2.3.1.1 a)). If you receive a wage for a voluntary internship and have to pay pension contributions, you may be interested in reading the regulations on claiming back pension contributions in Germany:

- International interns from other EU/EEA countries, Switzerland, or other countries with whom Germany has an according social security agreement, cannot claim back pension contributions (for a list of countries with whom Germany has an agreement, please see www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de). Citizens of these countries can apply to add any pension contributions paid in Germany to their pension in their home country.
- If Germany does not have such an agreement with your home country, however, you can claim back your pension contributions. To do so, you will need to apply to Deutsche Rentenversicherung (the statutory pension insurance scheme in Germany).

However, you have to wait at least two years after returning to your home country. In such cases, only the contributions made by you personally will be refunded. Employer contributions will not be refunded.

For more information, please contact Deutsche Rentenversicherung.

- **Health insurance**

Please read chapter 3.2.2.2 a). Please note the **important reminder** to find out what cover you actually have or is recommended. Please also read the paragraph on “Health insurance” in chapter 3.2.3.1.1 a), which also applies to students from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland.

b) Employer’s liability insurance

Please read the section on “Employer’s liability insurance” in chapter 3.2.3.1.

c) Income tax

Please read chapter 3.2.3.1.1 c).

3.2.3.1.3. Special information for students from non-member countries

a) Social insurance contributions

- **Accident insurance and pension funds**

Please read the sections on “Accident insurance and pension funds” in chapter 3.2.3.1.2 a), which also applies to students from non-member countries.

- **Health insurance**

As with a mandatory internship, students from non-member countries who come to Germany to complete a voluntary internship must have health insurance. So if you are a student from a non-member country, you must take out cover from a public or private health insurance provider in Germany – regardless of whether you are enrolled at the LMU full-time or part-time, or whether you are enrolled at a university in a different country.

Once again, remember to ask your health insurance provider in your home country, and also ask a German health insurance provider (e.g., Techniker Krankenkasse, AOK) about the extent to which you are already covered by your health insurance policy, or whether it would be better to take out additional health insurance cover for your time in Germany. There are huge differences here from country to country, so you will need to check for your own individual case about what is covered by your policy and what is not. Also, ask your internship employer whether additional health insurance premiums need to be paid.

Please note the following general regulations on health insurance for students, which differ to those for mandatory internships:

If you work more than 20 hours per week in a **voluntary internship during the semester**, you will have to pay income-related contributions to health insurance and nursing insurance as soon as the income from your internship exceeds €450 (gross) per month. Please ask your employer for more information.

However, if you are completing a **voluntary internship during the semester holidays**, you do not have to pay health insurance contributions – even if you work for more than 20 hours per week.

But you may only work in Germany for 120 full days or 240 half days. If you would like to work more than 120 full days or 240 half days, you will need approval from your local employment agency and immigration office.

b) Employer's liability insurance

Please read the section on "Employer's liability insurance" in chapter 3.2.3.1.

c) Income tax

Please read chapter 3.2.3.1.1 c)

3.2.3.2. General rights and obligations of graduates in voluntary internships following completion of a degree course

Graduates have the same rights and responsibilities as students who complete a voluntary internship during their degree course. Please refer to chapter 3.2.3.1. Please note in particular that in accordance with Section 26 of the German Vocational Training Act, further important regulations from the German Vocational Training Act apply to voluntary internships. These include, for example, Section 10 II, which dictates that employment contract regulations (such as employment laws on working hours) also apply to internships. Please also be sure to read the information on **minimum wages** in chapter 3.2.1.

3.2.3.2.1. Special notes for German graduates

a) Social insurance contributions

Voluntary internships after graduation are classed as normal working relationships. As a minimum wage must be paid for these, as detailed in chapter 3.2.1, social insurance contributions will also have to be paid. However, exceptions may apply for marginal and short-term employment. With regard to pension funds and health insurance contributions, the following applies:

- **Pension funds**

If you receive a wage for your internship, you will have to pay pension contributions. This currently totals 18.7% of your gross income (date: summer 2015). Half of this amount is automatically deducted from your gross wage, and your employer pays the other half.

However, please note that pension contributions have been mandatory for marginal and short-term employment since January 2013 (resulting from amendments to the law on marginal employment). You are classed as “marginally employed” if you earn less than €450 per month. Employment is regarded as short-term if it is clear from the start that the work in question will not last longer than three months, or 70 days in a calendar year (date: Summer 2015).

If you are in marginal or short-term employment, your employer will register you for pension fund contributions. In the case of marginal employment, your employer pays a fixed pension fund contribution of 15%. You pay the remaining 3.7% to make this sum up to the statutory 18.7%⁵. These contributions are not mandatory for short-term employment. Here you have the option of seeking exemption from pension contributions. For more information here, please read 4.1.1.1.

- **Health insurance**

If you do not receive a wage or you earn less than €450, you are exempt from statutory health insurance. However, you do need to be covered by some form of health insurance. Please contact your health insurance provider to find a suitable package.

If you receive wages and are covered by your family insurance (detailed information on “Family insurance” is provided in chapter 3.2.2.1 a)), you will have to observe



⁵ Please note that the above regulations apply to €450 jobs in the business sector. Other regulations apply for €450 jobs in private households (see 4.1.1.1).

the income limit of €445 or €450 per month respectively (if you also have a mini job). If you earn more in your voluntary internship, you will no longer be covered by your family insurance (please contact your health insurance provider for more details). If you are not covered by family insurance, your health insurance provider will be able to tell you whether an income limit applies to your specific case

With regard to accident insurance, the following applies:

- **Accident insurance**

Regardless of whether or not you receive a wage for your internship, you are automatically covered by the company's accident insurance policy when you complete a voluntary internship.

b) Employer's liability insurance

Please read the section on "Employer's liability insurance" in chapter 3.2.2.1.

c) More income limits



For the purpose of income tax, (half) orphan's pensions, housing benefits and unemployment benefits, internship salaries are classed as income. So please find out how much you are allowed to earn for each of these. To do so, contact the respective offices (tax office for income tax; the pension insurance provider for (half) orphan's allowances; your local authorities/social welfare office for housing benefits; your local employment agency or the Federal Employment Office for unemployment benefits). If you begin an internship as a graduate, you may lose your entitlement to child benefits. This happens anyway when you reach the age of 25, But will also apply if the internship does not focus on acquiring knowledge, skills and experience that are related to your chosen profession.

3.2.3.2.2. Special information for graduates from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland

a) Work permits and entry requirements

Citizens of EU/EEA countries and Switzerland have a basic right to work where they like in Germany. In other words, they do not require a work permit in order to complete a voluntary internship here.

For entry requirements, please read chapter 2.1

b) Social insurance contributions

With regard to social insurance, chapter 3.2.3.2.1 a) applies. If you do not receive a wage or you earn less than €450, you are exempt from statutory health insurance, but you will still need some form of health insurance cover. If you have health insurance in your home country, you can receive medical treatment in Germany with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The scope and duration of any such medical treatment is governed by German laws. Nonetheless, talk to your health insurance provider in your home country and also contact a German provider (e.g., Techniker Krankenkasse, AOK) to work out which cover you need. If you are covered by family health insurance in your home country, you will need to contact the provider and ask whether any income limits apply.

c) Employer's liability insurance

Please read the section on "Employer's liability insurance" in chapter 3.2.2.1.

d) Income tax

Please read chapter 3.2.2.2 c).

3.2.3.2.3. Special information for graduates from non-member countries

a) Work permits and entry requirements

For information on work permits, please read chapter 2.2. For information on entry requirements, please refer to chapter 2.1. Graduates from non-member countries should also know about so-called “further education internships” in accordance with Sections 17 and 39 of the German Residency Act. If you have successfully completed a degree course at a university in Germany or another country, an internship may in certain circumstances be continued as a “further education internship”. Once your individual case has been considered, you could then be awarded residency status. Please contact the Federal Employment Office for more information.

b) Social insurance contributions

With regard to social insurance, chapter 3.2.3.2.1 a) applies. If you do not receive a wage or you earn less than €450, you are exempt from statutory health insurance, but you will still need some form of health insurance cover. You will then have to take out cover from a German health insurance provider (e.g., Techniker Krankenkasse, AOK). Find out which package best meets your needs.

c) Employer’s liability insurance

Please read the section on “Employer’s liability insurance” in chapter 3.2.2.1.

d) Income tax

Please read chapter 3.2.2.2 c).

3.2.3.3. General rights and responsibilities for voluntary internships in a gap year between a Bachelor's and Master's degree and important notes

a) General rights and obligations


If you complete a voluntary internship in a gap year, you have the same rights and responsibilities as students and graduates who complete a voluntary internship. Please read chapter 3.2.3.1.

b) Important notes

- **Beginning a Master's degree directly after a Bachelor's degree**

If you embark on a Master's degree immediately after completing a Bachelor's degree, you retain your student status. So for German students, the information provided in chapter 3.2.3.1.1 on social insurance contributions and income limits continues to apply. If you are a student from an EU/EEA country or Switzerland, please read chapter 3.2.3.1.2. Students from non-member countries should please refer to chapter 3.2.3.1.3. If you have any questions regarding your status (am I still enrolled or not?), please contact the student office.

- **Taking a break between a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree**



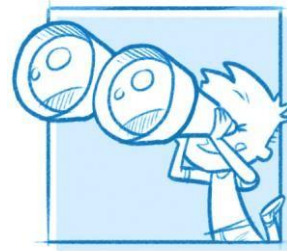
If your Master's degree does not follow straight on from your Bachelor's degree, and if you lose your student status for the intermediate period (e.g., because you are temporarily no longer enrolled at the university), you will be classed as a graduate. This means that the **minimum wage** will apply. For German students, the information provided in chapter 3.2.3.2.1 on social insurance contributions and income limits also continues to apply. If you are a student from an EU/EEA country or Switzerland, please read chapter 3.2.3.2.2. Students from non-member countries should please refer to chapter 3.2.3.2.3. If you have any questions regarding your status (am I still enrolled or not?), please contact the student office.

By the way: If you would like to do a voluntary internship, you can take leave of absence from the LMU even in the first semester of your Master's degree. What's the point of this? Either it means that you don't lose your student status after completing your Bachelor and before beginning your Master's degree, or you may be able to recover your student status and officially complete your internship as a student. In other words, you can enrol for your Master's degree, immediately apply for leave of absence for a semester, and use the time to complete a voluntary internship – with all the relevant legal benefits.

Now that we've discussed the different types of internship and the various legal regulations you will need to observe, you will probably be asking yourself how to actually go about finding a placement for an internship. And how does one apply? We'll be turning our attention to these questions in the following chapter.

3.3. Finding an internship

Before you plunge in and start searching for an internship, you should ask yourself two very important questions – particularly if you're interested in completing a voluntary internship. First: what field do I want to work in? And secondly: how much time will I need to invest in the search?



3.3.1. What field do I want to work in?

This question is closely linked to your expectations of the internship. Particularly when it comes to internships which are not prescribed by your study regulations, you will need to have at least a rough idea of what you want and what purpose the internship should serve. Only then will you be able to target your search and talk to your potential employer about which area you could work in. So take the time to think about your aim in the internship.

Try to answer the following important questions: Do you want to...

- find out more about a particular field of work in which you have already previously completed an internship?
- find out about a new field of work?

- complete a research internship?
- use the internship for your final dissertation?

Once you've thought about these questions, you'll be able to narrow down whether a company or an organization, association or society would be the best place for you.



A word on the subject of companies: Naturally, there are lots of big, well-known companies where many students would love to complete an internship because it will look good on their CV. But remember that there's lots of competition for internships in such companies, so it's often not easy to get a place. Also, you could find that people don't tend to pay you a great deal of attention in a big company, as you'll frequently be working unnoticed on mundane tasks. Smaller, lesser known companies, on the other hand, will often give you the opportunity to get actively involved with interesting projects, sometimes even enabling you to work in a range of areas and make a positive contribution to the company. Naturally, this also gives you the chance to gain lots of hands-on experience.

On the negative side, smaller companies don't always have the resources for narrowing down a field of work. In other words, employees have to understand all the different aspects of work in the company and pitch in as and when they're needed. So you may well have to be very flexible if you're working in such an environment. Conversely, this has the advantage of introducing you to different fields of work.

3.3.2. How much time will I need to invest in the search?

Naturally, there's no single correct answer to the question of how long it will take to find a work placement. But as a rule of thumb, applications within Germany require less time than if you're applying from abroad. If you are an **international student or graduate** applying to a German company from abroad, you will have to plan in time for things such as work permits, residency permits, visas, insurance, etc. where relevant. You should begin making preparations 6-8 months before you plan to start the internship in order to

complete the necessary steps. If you plan well in advance, this will also give you time to polish up your German language skills by attending a language course. International students and graduates who are already in Germany when they apply for an internship have already completed many of the above steps, so will only need to focus on finding an actual placement.

In general, you yourself will be responsible for **finding an internship**. There is a point to this; the search itself is a valuable learning experience, because it teaches you strategies for researching into and applying for jobs, and also gives you an overview of the job market and possible future employers. You should begin looking for an internship as early as possible, partly because the application process can be lengthy in some companies, and partly because many companies plan and fill their vacancies well in advance. So it's best to start researching four to six months in advance – after all, you want to get a good place! But don't necessarily focus all your energy and attention on companies with global renown. If you manage to get a place in such a company, it will certainly look good on your CV; however, there are normally many applicants for these internships, and they won't necessarily give you as much insight into company work processes as an internship in a small or medium-sized company (see 3.3.1.).

Sometimes you'll find a company looking for an intern at very short notice because another candidate has pulled out at the last moment. If this is the case, you could be offered a place very quickly. But don't rely on this; it's better to start searching well in advance.

So far, so good. But now you might be asking:


3.3.3. How do I actually go about finding an internship?

There are various methods here. We suggest the following:

a) Internet

The Internet is a very fertile source. There are numerous search machines and forums for internships and jobs, and many German companies advertise vacancies via such platforms. Companies will also frequently advertise vacancies directly on their websites.

Take a look at the following websites:

- 
- www.s-a.lmu.de (Student und Arbeitsmarkt job and internship market)
 - www.praktikum.de/german (internship forum)
 - www.unicum.de/beruf/praktikum/search.php (internship forum)
 - www.berufsstart.stepstone.de (internship forum)
 - www.jobrapido.de (meta search engine which scans various forums)
 - www.c2n.de (job exchange)
 - www.prabo.de (internships in societies, associations, foundations)
 - www.kulturmanagement.net/stellenmarkt/prm/43/pd_1/index.html (internship forum for the cultural sector)

b) Contact the company directly

Naturally, you can also contact a German company directly. Once you've worked out which industry, which field and which city you want to work in, you can use Internet search engines to find out which companies work in your chosen field and region. Then you can either browse the websites of the companies you've singled out to see whether they advertise any vacancies, or you can take the initiative and ask directly whether it would be possible to complete an internship. This is best done by telephone, because then you can find out the name of the right contact person in the company and to whom you should address your written application if the company is interested. Before you make a call, read the website carefully and find out as much as you can about the company in question so that you sound knowledgeable on the phone. Sell yourself properly by showing a deep interest in the company, and by stating reasons why an internship would benefit both you and the

company itself.

For international students and graduates, making a call of this nature requires a great deal of courage – and linguistic skill. Here, it's a good idea to practice making phone calls in German first. Try calling a friend or relative who speaks German, for example. But it's definitely worth finding the courage to call the company directly, as this is the best way to find an internship which really meets your expectations. In addition, You can then refer to the phone call when you send in your written application (do remember to write down the name of the person you talked to!), which will be another point in your favor.

To help you with this approach, the university team of the Federal Employment Office regularly offers seminars on making first contact with potential employers (for dates, please see www.s-a.lmu.de).

c) Visiting trade fairs

Unlike purely written applications, trade fairs have the advantage of enabling you to make personal contact and chat individually to people from the company. This helps enormously with finding an internship. Here you can make use of events organized by the LMU. Student und Arbeitsmarkt regularly organizes *Meet-ups* for various industries and branches in the courtyard of the main building (see www.s-a.lmu.de) for upcoming events).

www.s-a.lmu.de). And don't forget to take your application folder with you!

d) Internship reports

There are various websites (e.g., www.meinpraktikum.de where you can read reports from other students who have already completed an internship. These reports not only tell you where other students have completed their internships – they'll also give you lots of useful, first-hand information.



e) Personal connections

You know somebody who works in a company that interests you? Then ask them whether their company is looking for an intern! Personal connections are often worth their weight in gold, and open doors within companies and other institutions. If you're an international student and have completed a student placement in your home country, you could ask whether the company in question has a branch in Germany – or whether they regularly collaborate with any German companies which offer internships. And talk to family, friends, acquaintances, other students and your tutors. Because connections really do open doors.

f) Networks

Use social networks on the Internet. In their personal profiles, users have a box where they can enter details about their employer or their relationships. There are also different groups for different cities, where members can contact each other. You never know where it could lead...

g) Important notes on a gap year between a Bachelor's and Master's degree

Some companies – particularly larger and better known companies – now offer special gap-year internship programs. Simply ask whether the company has such a program, and what requirements you need to fulfill in order to apply.

For more information on finding an internship, try www.s-a.lmu.de – All about internships



3.3.4. Written applications

Once you've found an interesting internship vacancy, or you've successfully made contact with a company by phone, you will need to proceed to the next important step: your application. A written application for an internship is basically the same as for a "real" job.

In general, you'll need to include a **cover letter**, your **CV in tabular form** and various **certificates** (e.g., advanced school leaving certificate, university certificates and especially work references). Before you apply, it's important to find out whether the company prefers a full or abbreviated application, and whether they'd like to receive it by post, email or online (by uploading your documents to a company website). If you send your application via email or online, make sure the files are not too big. Some companies dictate that files should not be bigger than 2 MB.



International students and graduates should note that applications in Germany will not necessarily be the same as in your home country. Depending on which country you come from, it may be customary not to include a photo or your date of birth in your application; in some countries CVs are written by hand. This is not the case in Germany. Here, your CV should include a photo and your date of birth, and you are expected to write it on a computer.

To give you an idea of what is expected when applying to a German company, you will find a **sample CV** in **Appendix 1** and a **sample cover letter** in **Appendix 2**. You can also find useful tips for your application at <http://www.online-bewerbung.org> and <http://karriere-journal.monster.de>. Also, if you leave a deposit of €20 and your address in the Student und Arbeitsmarkt office (Ludwigstrasse 27/1st floor), you can borrow a set of books to help you with your application. Do plan in **sufficient time** for putting together your application. In particular, make sure your CV and the cover letter – which should describe your motivation, experience and skills – are well-presented and thorough. Because these are how you “showcase” yourself, and will often weigh the balance for or against you. International students and graduates should definitely ask a native German speaker to check their documents. A native speaker knows the customary idioms and will also find any last mistakes.



3.3.5. The interview

a) The invitation

It normally takes a while for an employer to get back to you once you've submitted your written application. If you haven't heard anything after two weeks, you could ring and ask about the status of your application.

If the prospective employer is interested, he or she will **invite you to an interview**. **International students and graduates** who can't personally attend an interview (e.g., it would be far too expensive to travel to Germany from Brazil just for an interview) can either be "interviewed" via email, or a date for a telephone interview might be arranged. As with "Contacting the company directly" described in 3.3.3. b), you'll need good German language skills for this. So the same applies here: polish up your German if necessary by attending a language course, and practice the telephone interview first with a relative or friend.

b) The interview

Before we take a closer look at the interview itself, a word of caution to **international students and graduates**: As with the written application, you should bear in mind that interview conventions in Germany may differ from those in your home country. In some countries you might greet somebody by bowing; in Germany it is customary to shake hands. In some countries it's not customary to ask questions, whereas in Germany it's positively expected of you. By asking questions, you display an interest in the company and your future work. To prepare yourself for these and other questions, you could visit a seminar for interview techniques in your home country (e.g., at your university). Find out whether there are any suitable courses on offer. If you're already in Germany, you could attend a course at the LMU. Student und Arbeitsmarkt regularly teams up with the Employment Office to offer training courses for interview techniques. You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de or in the Student und Arbeitsmarkt newsletter.

Subscribe to the newsletter at [www.s- a.lmu.de/newsletter](http://www.s-a.lmu.de/newsletter).

We've compiled the following list of tips and useful information for all **prospective interns**:

1. Preparatory steps

As soon as you receive an invitation to an interview, you've already successfully crossed the first hurdle in the application procedure. Now all you need to do is prepare carefully for the interview in order to convince your potential employer that you're the right candidate for the internship. One of the most important preparatory steps is finding out as much as you possibly can about the company from their website. This is important, because it's an area where questions are often asked. "Why did you apply to our company?", for example, or "What attracted you to our company, and what do you know about us?" Preparing thoroughly also includes thinking about how to showcase yourself. Briefly describe your career to date, and why you want to do this internship. You should also prepare a couple of questions about the company and the internship itself – because this signals an interest in the employer and the vacancy. Such questions might include, for example, areas of responsibility (e.g., Which tasks would I be assigned?, What are the most important tasks?), the company (e.g., Which projects is the department currently working on?) and work methods (e.g., How much initiative is expected of me?). It's a good idea to practice the interview situation first with friends or family – particularly if this is the first time you've ever been invited to an interview

2. The interview

No two interviews are ever the same, of course. In most cases, however, the interview will be conducted on the company premises, often in a conference room, or in an office. Sometimes applicants are given a tour of the company, during which

they chat in a less formal setting. The number of persons present at the interview can also vary. Sometimes you'll just be talking to one member of staff from HR; sometimes there will be more people present at the interview (e.g., the head of the department in which you wish to complete the internship, or even the managing director if it's a small company). Basically, an interview is likely to include the following elements:

- Greeting
- Small talk
- The interviewer describes the company, the department and the vacancy in question
- The applicant briefly introduces himself/herself
- The interviewer asks the applicant specialist questions connected to the internship
- The applicant is given an opportunity to ask questions
- Brief evaluation and discussion of the next steps

3. Handling questions asked by the interviewer

During an interview, you'll normally be asked various questions. Besides questions relating to the internship and the company, these could include questions on your character (e.g., What would you say are your good character traits?, What would you like to change about your personality?, What are your strengths?, What are your weaknesses?), on your training (e.g., Why did you choose this degree course?) and on teamwork (e.g., How important is teamwork for you?). You might even be asked some awkward questions. If you're a graduate applying for an internship, for example, you may be asked whether you don't feel up to the challenge of a permanent position.

When you answer questions, remember that there's not necessarily a "right" and a "wrong" answer. Instead, it's about radiating authenticity, and showing that you are a unique person. A word of advice here on the popular question regarding your



strengths and weaknesses: select strengths which are pertinent to the internship. and weaknesses which could possibly even be turned to advantage in the position. If you're an outgoing person, for example, mention your communication skills if you'll be having lots of customer contact. And if you're someone who always leaves things until the last moment, this doesn't necessarily have to be negative. It could actually indicate that you work well under pressure – which, depending on the internship in question, could be an advantage. So have a think before the interview about which strengths and weaknesses to “reveal”.

4. Points you will need to clarify


In order to actually gain practical experience – and not just be relegated to brewing coffee or photocopying – you need to clarify in advance whether you'll be given a mentor, and whether you can be actively involved, for instance be given a particular project. For this, you'll need to have at least a general idea of the area in which you'd like to work. Look at the company website to see what sort of work might be involved in the internship offered, or what you could consider asking to do if you're submitting an unsolicited application.

With regard to remuneration: if your potential employer doesn't mention it, you should feel free to raise the subject. You are legally entitled to remuneration only if the internship is voluntary, not mandatory (Section 26 in conjunction with Section 17 I 1 of the German Vocational Training Act). However, there's nothing to prevent you from asking about remuneration, even in a mandatory internship! You could also ask whether the company offers rent allowances, meal vouchers or – for international students and graduates – can help you to find accommodation. It costs nothing to ask – and might even turn out to your advantage! In this connection, please read the information on minimum wages in chapter 3.2.1.

In addition to the information above, remember that Student und Arbeitsmarkt regularly collaborates with the Employment Office to provide interview technique seminars.

Here you can even practice individual interview scenarios. You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de or in the Student und Arbeitsmarkt newsletter. Subscribe to the newsletter at www.s-a.lmu.de/newsletter . Also, if you leave a deposit of €20 and your address in the Student und Arbeitsmarkt office (Ludwigstrasse 27/1st floor), you can borrow a set of books to help you with your interview.

3.3.6. What comes next after receiving formal acceptance?



You've been formally accepted? Great! Now you need a written contract – even if you're not receiving a wage for your internship. In theory, verbal agreements are also binding. But a written contract is not only important from the point of view of getting a definite commitment from your employer – it's also important for university accreditation purposes (if you've taken leave of absence for a semester). And if you're an international student or graduate, you will need it if you're applying for a grant or other funding (see chapter 3.4).

The **internship contract** should contain the following information:

- Duration of the internship (international students and graduates should pay attention to the minimum duration of an internship if they're applying for a grant or a visa! See chapters 3.4 and 2.2 for more information).
- Working hours (if you're applying for a grant, or have taken leave of absence, the internship has to be full-time, i.e., at least 30 hours per week).
- Exact description of your tasks (particularly important if you're applying for a grant or taking leave of absence)
- Any agreed Remuneration (please refer here to the information given in chapter 3.2.1 on minimum wages)
- Holiday leave (duration and any agreement on continued remuneration)

If you are an international student or graduate and are applying for a grant, your scholarship scheme may have a special contract template which they require you to use. Here it's easiest to ask how the contract is usually handled.

If you want to know more about internship contracts, you can attend a seminar run jointly by Student und Arbeitsmarkt in cooperation with lawyers. You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de.

3.4. Financing

You will not always receive remuneration for an internship – and even if you do, it may not always suffice to meet your living costs (see chapter 3.2.1 on minimum wages). So you should plan in advance and consider how you will pay your rent and other living costs. International students and graduates will also have to think about travel expenses, living costs, visa costs and language courses – possibly even on top of paying rent in their home country. We'd now like to look at some of your options.



3.4.1. If you're still studying

Unlike graduates, students have the advantage of possibly still qualifying for BAföG, retaining their student status for health insurance purposes, and qualifying for benefits and discounts in a range of other areas. Nonetheless, living costs are high – particularly in Munich. Many students who earn little or nothing in their internship think they can simply take a part-time job to earn some extra cash. But remember that if you're working 30 or 40 hours a week in an internship, you just won't have the time. So you'll need to find another way of covering your living costs. You have the following options:

- If possible, regularly put aside money at an early date so that you can fall back on **savings** to support yourself during the internship.
- Consider asking your **parents for financial support**
- International students who are enrolled at a university in their home country could ask whether they can take leave of absence for a semester to avoid paying **tuition costs**.
- **Child benefits** can also help fund your living expenses. In order for you or your parents to receive child benefits during a voluntary or mandatory internship, you need to make sure you are acquiring knowledge or skills which are necessary for the profession of your choice. Only then will the internship be classed as “vocational training”, which is a statutory requirement for the continued payment of child benefits up until the age of 25. For more information – including possible upper limits to the amount you can earn – please contact your Familienkasse (social services).
- If you receive **BAföG**, please note the following with regard to this important source of income:
 - you will continue to qualify for BAföG if you are completing a mandatory internship during the semester or in the semester holidays. However, if you receive a wage for your internship, this will be taken into account when your BAföG is calculated. In practice, this means that you will receive less BAföG money during a paid, mandatory internship.
 - This also applies to mandatory internships which are prerequisites for beginning a degree course (i.e., before you have enrolled at a university). In such cases, you can apply for BAföG even if you do not have student status.
 - If you complete a voluntary internship during a semester or in the semester holidays, you can still receive BAföG. However, this will be taken into account when calculating the payments.
 - You do not qualify for BAföG if you take leave of absence in order to complete a voluntary internship.

- **Important:** Always check with your local grant authority to find out whether you are still entitled to BAföG!
- If you are an **international student**, and enrolled at a university in your home country, apply for a **grant or sponsorship!** Even if this does not cover your entire stay in Germany, it can be a useful source of income.

One of the best-known grants for international students is ErasmusIntern, funded by the Erasmus+ program. This offers grants to students who are completing a voluntary or mandatory internship, lasting between two and 12 months, in a company or business in another European country (e.g., Germany!). Institutions which receive EU funding are excluded from this program. Depending on the country in question, the grants range between €10 and €20 per day. The following countries currently participate in the Erasmus+ program: All EU countries, Turkey, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Macedonia. If you are enrolled at a university in one of these countries, you could qualify for a grant in this program – regardless of your nationality.

But **remember** that for this program, you will need to apply to your home university, not the LMU!

Contact your home university to find out whether any other grants might be available for an internship in Germany.

Unfortunately, **German students** do not qualify if they are completing their internship in Germany.

- Both for **German students** and **international students**, it may be worth considering taking out a **student loan**. These can be granted for internships, even within Germany, if they are connected to your degree course in some way. You will need confirmation from your university in order to qualify. You can receive such confirmation even if you have taken a semester out to complete the internship, so long as you have formally applied for leave of absence. These loans are granted at favourable terms for a limited period of time. To qualify, you must be under 36 Years of age, and have studied at university for fewer than 12 semesters. The maximum amount of a student loan is €7,200. Applications should be made to the Bundesverwaltungsamt (Federal Administrative Office). Alongside BAföG,



this can be an additional source of income, as it is not tied to parental income. You will have to start repaying the loan four years after receiving the first instalment. If you receive a grant, this does not affect your student loan. Under certain conditions, international students may also qualify for a student loan:

- if your permanent residence is registered as being in Germany
- if a parent or a spouse is a German national
- if you are the child of a German/EU parent who has a permanent right of residence
- if the trainee is a legitimate asylum seeker, refugee or is stateless

Other foreign nationals will generally be granted an education loan if they or at least one of their parents have been in salaried employment in Germany for at least five or three years respectively prior to the course. For more information on student loans, please contact the Federal Administrative Office.



If you are an international student but do not fit into any of the above categories, find out whether you qualify for a student loan in your home country.

3.4.2. If you have completed your degree

Graduates will also need to find a way to finance an internship. Since the introduction of the minimum wage on 01/01/2017, graduates must be paid at least €9.19 (date: January 2019) per hour during an internship. But because they are no longer enrolled at a university, they won't be entitled to BAföG or many of the student subsidies. Graduates will also need to take health insurance contributions into account. Because once they graduate, they no longer qualify for the reduced student premiums. If you earn more than €450 in your voluntary internship, you will need statutory health insurance cover and your employer will have to pay a percentage of the monthly contributions. If you earn less than €450, you'll have to bite the bullet and take out voluntary health insurance cover (unless you are covered by family insurance; see the paragraph on "health insurance contributions" in chapter 3.2.2.1).




So if you're a graduate, it's often better to look for an **alternative** to an internship. If you want to gain professional experience and make contacts, a part-time job with a fair wage is just as good as an internship. Or you could ask the company where you'd like to work for a temporary contract – which, if you receive a fair wage, would also cover your living expenses. You could also think of beginning your professional career as a temp. If you work as a temp, you are employed by a temping agency, who “hires” you out to various companies where you remain for as long as you are needed. Then you get moved on to the next company. Temporary work has many advantages, both for the employer and the temp. Many companies use temping agencies as a way to gain highly qualified staff for specific projects spanning several years, with the option of recruiting the temps as permanent employees at some stage in the future. As a graduate, you will be offered a permanent position and the opportunity to gain experience and meet potential employers in a range of industries and companies. In particular, career starters can benefit from this opportunity to assess their personal preferences and career goals. If you have a contract with a temping agency, you're not tied to a company. So you can be flexible without putting obstacles in the way of a permanent position. So long as you have a contract with the agency, you have the same employee rights and social insurance rights as all other employees – to health insurance, accident insurance, unemployment cover, nursing care insurance, and paid holidays. You'll also be protected by general employment laws, occupational safety laws, employment protection legislation, continued remuneration laws and maternity protection laws, etc. Naturally, temping work can have disadvantages. For example, the salary may be lower. So in order not to punch beneath your weight in the long-term, you should view temping work simply as bridging a gap, not as a permanent fixture.

If, despite the above recommendations, you decide to embark on an **internship**, you might consider the following financing options:

- Regularly put aside money at an early date so that you can fall back on **savings** to support yourself during the internship.

-
- Consider asking your **parents for financial support** – obviously this will only work if they have the necessary resources.
 - You could also consider **state benefits** to cover your living costs. In some cases, you may be entitled to housing benefits or type II unemployment benefits. Housing benefits are allowances made to tenants or house-owners on a low income. So in order to qualify for housing benefits, you do need to have some form of income. In practical terms, you will need to earn enough during your internship to cover your basic living costs. If housing benefits suffice to cover your needs, you obviously won't be entitled to type II unemployment benefits. If you earn nothing as an intern, or so little that even housing benefits don't suffice to help you cover your living costs, you can apply for type II unemployment benefits instead of housing benefits.



Important: As the regulations for type II unemployment benefits and housing benefits are extremely complicated and dependant on a number of factors (the number and ages of all persons living in your household, their total income, the region in which you live etc...), you will need to ask and find out whether you personally qualify for state benefits. Please discuss this with your local job agency.

- **International graduates** may also consider applying for a graduate **grant**. **Erasmus internships**, for example, are very popular. These are for graduates who wish to complete an internship in a country which is neither your country of origin nor the country in which you completed your degree (e.g., graduates from universities outside of Germany can complete an internship in Germany). Internships may not be completed in companies which benefit from other EU subsidy programs. Such internships must involve full-time work (generally a 30-hour week) and last for between two and twelve months maximum. Please note, however, that you will need to apply whilst you are still enrolled in higher education. The following countries currently participate in the Erasmus internship program: All EU countries; Turkey; Iceland; Liechtenstein; Norway and Macedonia. So this program is on offer in the above countries. Regardless of your nationality, you can apply for an Erasmus grant if your principal residence is in one of these countries.

But **remember** that for this program, you will need to apply to your home university, not the LMU! Also, your home university needs to participate in this program. You will need to apply **whilst you are still enrolled in higher education! Please also note that** if you receive a wage for your internship, this will be taken into account and you will receive less money from the grant. So find out in advance whether there is a limit to how much you can earn before your grant is reduced or even cut completely. For more information on this program, please ask your home university.

Further grants are available, e.g., from international exchange programs. One example here is the International Parliament Scholarship. This allows graduates from Central, East and South East Europe, France, Israel and the USA to work for five months in parliament in Germany (for more information, please see <https://www.bundestag.de/ips>). Grants are also available from some international organizations if you would like to work in one of these. The “Young Professionals Programs” run by the World Bank, IWF or UNICEF are examples here. The World Bank “Young Professionals Program” is targeted towards graduates and postgraduates who have studied science, environmental science, economics or engineering. To qualify, you must be under the age of 32 and have 3 years professional experience. The program runs for 24 months and offers insights into various activities of the World Bank. You will complete two 1-year “on-the-job” courses which cover a variety of fields of work.

Contact your home university to find out whether any other grants might be available. Unfortunately, **German graduates** do not qualify if they are completing their internship in Germany.



3.5. Preparing for your internship

3.5.1. Preparations concerning the university



- **General information**

If the internship is a part of your degree course, it is customary to tell your internship tutor where you will be completing your internship, and hand in a written report at the end. If you are enrolled on a Bachelor or Master's degree, you should also ask how many credit points you need to get during your internship. To find out who is responsible for supervising internships in your department, how long your internship needs to be, and how mandatory and voluntary internships are credited, contact your department office. If your department does not have a tutor specially for internships, you should find information in your study or examination regulations. In case of doubt, ask in the secretary's office.

- **Applying for leave of absence**

Students who wish to complete an internship during the semester can apply for leave of absence. Please note that if you take leave of absence for a semester, you will still have to pay the base rate (currently €62) plus €67.40 for a semester ticket (as of WS 18/19) (date: winter 2019).

Applications for leave of absence for a semester must be submitted to the **Student Office in subject area 2**. Please note that deadlines apply when submitting an application for leave of absence. Generally you must apply by the end of October for a winter semester, and by the end of April for the summer semester. For exact dates, please see:



http://www.uni-muenchen.de/studium/administratives/abc_auswahl/beurlaubung/index.html.

In general, you can take leave of absence for up to two semesters. Currently (summer 2015), you are required to submit to the student office the following documents:

- Application form (download at: http://www.uni-muenchen.de/studium/administratives/formulare/antr_beurlaubung.pdf)

- Your student ID
- For mandatory internships: Certificate (original) from the relevant examination or internship board, stating that the internship is a prescribed part of the study and examination regulations.

Voluntary internships: As you will see in the application form you receive from the student office, you will need a written report from your academic adviser, head of department or the Student und Arbeitsmarkt office, as well as your internship contract (the original plus a copy). This means that if you want to complete a **voluntary internship which is related to your field of study**, your academic adviser will need to draw up a written report for you. If your **voluntary internship is not related to your field of study**, the Student und Arbeitsmarkt office will need to assess whether or not it can be classed as preparation for your professional career. In such cases, please come to the Student und Arbeitsmarkt office in Ludwigstrasse 27 (office hours: www.s-a.lmu.de/sprechstunde_praktikum_praktikum). Very important: don't forget to bring a copy of your internship contract with you (written confirmation is not sufficient!) which includes the points listed in point 3.3.6 "What comes next after receiving formal acceptance?". In particular, the contract must detail your area of responsibility. Without an internship contract, it will not be possible to draw up a written report!

International students who are enrolled abroad should ask their home university whether they can take leave of absence for a semester.

For detailed information on leave of absence, please see http://www.uni-muenchen.de/studium/administratives/abc_auswahl/beurlaubung/index.html.

3.5.2. Information about your host country Germany

For **international students and graduates**, coming to Germany is an adventure. You'll be immersing yourself in a new culture and a new way of life. If you'd like to find out more about Germany and the region where you will be completing your internship before you arrive, you have the following options:

- Buy yourself a comprehensive travel guide for Germany, that covers the region where you will be completing your internship (city guides are available for all major cities in Germany, including Munich!) A travel guide will not only list information on recreational activities, but also give you insights into the culture and provide insider tips.
- As German culture will differ from that in your home country, we recommend you attend a cross-cultural competence course. Not only will this prepare you for cultural differences in your host country and future colleagues, but it will also teach you how to deal with intercultural challenges. Ask at your home university whether they offer cross-cultural competence courses.
- Read reports written by former interns who have already completed an internship in Germany, or Munich specifically. Here you'll often find valuable "insider tips" on the country and the people.
- Find out about the property market in the area where you wish to complete the internship.

Normally it's wise to find an apartment or room close to where you'll be working. You'll probably also want to live as centrally as possible so that you don't have to travel long distances to cultural institutions, bars, restaurants, clubs, etc. However, if you're completing an internship in Munich, you might consider living in one of the peripheral districts (e.g., Laim, Berg am Laim, Moosach, Fürstenried, Pasing) or even in the outskirts of Munich (e.g. Poing, Fürstenfeldbruck). This is because it's extremely difficult to get a short-term rental contract for a furnished room or apartment in the centre of Munich – not to mention extremely expensive. As Munich is a popular place to live, you will need to start looking for accommodation at an early date. If you have the time and money, you should set aside several days or even weeks to come to Munich in person and find accommodation. If this is not possible, search online in advance. You can find rooms and apartments here:

- In various **daily newspapers**. The "Süddeutsche Zeitung", for example, has an extensive property section where landlords and estate agents advertise their properties. You can also find apartments and rooms online:

- <http://immobilienmarkt.sueddeutsche.de> (advertisements appear Wednesdays and Fridays)
- <http://immobilien.merkur.de> (advertisements appear Thursdays and Saturdays)
- On the **Internet**. Try one of these sites:
 - www.immobiliemarkt.de
 - www.immobilienscout.de
 - www.immobilo.de
 - www.immowelt.de
 - www.wohnung-jetzt.de
 - www.quoka.de
 - www.kurzfuendig.de
 - <http://kleinanzeigen.ebay.de/>
- **Halls of residence** are generally less expensive than the free market.

However, if you are an international student coming to Munich for an internship, you'll only be able to live in a hall of residence if someone sublets their room to you. For more information, please contact

- the student union halls of residence (<http://www.studentenwerk-muenchen.de/wohnen/>)
- the ESG (Protestant Student Union) Munich (www.esg.uni-muenchen.de)
- the Catholic halls of residence (<http://www.katholische-studentenwohnheime-muenchen.de/>)
- In **shared accommodation (WGs)**. Shared accommodation is generally the simplest and cheapest option in Munich. As soon as a room becomes vacant in a shared apartment, the remaining occupants will generally advertise the fact in the Internet or by pinning a note to one of the notice boards in the cafeteria (e.g., the large cafeteria in Leopoldstrasse 13 a). Take a look at the following websites:
 - www.wg-gesucht.de
 - www.easy-wg.de
 - www.wg-welt.de

- www.wohngemeinschaft.de
- www.studenten-wg.de
- www.studenten-wohnung.de

You could also try looking at groups in social networks where rooms are advertised. These generally have names such as “Wohnungssuche München” (Munich apartment search).

- **Mitwohnzentrale (agency for short-term accommodation) and private tenement agencies** might also be a solution. These agencies specialize in subletting rooms and apartments for residents of Munich who are away from home for a certain period of time. However, this option is not always cheap, as you will have to pay a fee to the agency.

For short-term tenancy agreements, try:

- <http://elodge.de/>
 - www.mwz-munich.de
- Look at the notice board in the cafeterias (for the addresses of the cafeterias, please see: [www.studentenwerk- muenchen.de/mensa](http://www.studentenwerk-muenchen.de/mensa)). Sometimes notices are even pinned to lampposts around the city – or you could try **pinning up your own “seeking accommodation” notice**. Simply write a notice saying when and in which district you need a furnished room, and how much you’re willing or able to pay. Maybe someone will get in touch...
 - For more information about finding accommodation in Munich, please see: <http://www.jiz-muenchen.de/> (Munich Information Centre for Young People)
 - Find the contact details of your consulate in Germany. If you lose your passport or have questions about your visa or your stay in Germany, your consulate will be able to help you.

3.5.3. Important documents



For **international students and graduates**, getting together all the required documents is one of the most important steps in the preparatory phase. Make sure you g

- **Visa, residency permit, work permit**

Depending on your country of origin and the duration of your stay in Germany, you may need a visa, a residency permit and a work permit. For more information, please refer to chapter 2. However, you should also definitely ask the responsible authorities which regulations apply to you personally! Find out well in advance whether you'll need the above documents, and where you need to apply in order to obtain them. Not only will you need to budget in the cost of obtaining these documents, but also sufficient time – because sometimes it can take months to process an application.

- **Valid passport/ID**

A valid passport/ID is absolutely vital for travelling to Germany. Check well in advance to make sure your passport is in date, and will remain in date for the duration of your stay. If you're travelling to Germany from outside the EU, you will definitely need a passport. If you're from an EU country, your ID card will normally suffice. However, it's a good idea to apply for passport, even if you're travelling within the EU.

- **Insurance**

It's also important to ensure you have sufficient insurance cover. Because if anything goes wrong, it could cost you a fortune! So plan well in advance to make sure you have health insurance, accident insurance and liability insurance which will cover you completely during your internship. For more information on health insurance and accident insurance, please refer to chapter 3.2. This describes in detail how health insurance and accident insurance are regulated for the various types of internship.

- **Credit cards**

As your bank card may not work in Germany, you should apply for a credit card. This will not only be of use when shopping (though credit cards are not accepted in all shops!), but can also be helpful if you have to see a doctor or go to hospital. Various banks in Germany will charge you for withdrawing cash unless you do so with a credit card. Your home bank may possibly “cooperate” with a particular bank in Germany so that you don’t have to pay fees.

- **International student ID**

Apply for an international student ID card to save money in museums, cinemas, youth hostels, etc. Most German institutions will not accept student ID cards from other countries.

- **Make copies of all important documents in case they get lost!**

3.5.4. Other preparations

The list of possible preparations is, of course, endless. But here are a few examples of things you’ll need to do:

- Sublet your room/apartment during your absence if you’re coming from abroad or from a different region
- **For international students and graduates:**
 - Compile a list of all your contact details before departure
 - Share your contact details in Germany – assuming you already have these – with your friends and family (not just for the purpose of staying in contact, but also for emergencies!)
- And so on....

3.6. At your destination

3.6.1. Traveling

The following applies to **international students and graduates**: Try to arrive a few days before your internship begins. This will give you time to get to know the surrounding area, practice your daily journey to work, and deal with any organizational issues.



Depending on when you intend to travel, you should buy your plane/bus/train ticket well in advance. If you're flying, find out how much luggage you're allowed to bring – this varies from country to country, and from airline to airline. In general, you'll be allowed to bring more luggage with you on a standard flight than on a cheap flight.

Before you leave, find out how to get from the airport/station to your accommodation. Here you could contact your landlord and/or concierge – and take the opportunity to agree on where to pick up your keys.

Before you leave, you should also ask your employer for advice on getting to your place of work from your accommodation. Because once you arrive, it may take a while before your Internet and telephone are up and running. And not everywhere will you find an Internet café around the next corner.

3.6.2. On arrival

If you're moving from a different town or country, the first thing you will do on arrival is move into your new accommodation. **International students and graduates** will then need to make their first trips to the

local authorities. First you'll need to register your address (and the duration of your stay) at your local citizen's office, and apply for a tax number if this is required by your employer and the tax office (international students and graduates should refer to chapter 3.2.2.2 c)). Open a bank account as quickly as possible if you are receiving a wage for your internship. Many employers won't transfer wages to bank accounts in other countries. In general, international students and graduates should not face any difficulties in opening a bank account. But do arrange an appointment at the bank of your choice, and ask which documents you'll need to bring in order to open an account. You could also ask your bank in your home country whether they cooperate with a particular bank in Germany. That can simplify matters greatly.

You should also find out in advance about purchasing a **weekly or monthly public transport ticket**. If you're completing a mandatory internship in Munich, you can buy a reduced price (Ausbildungstarif II) weekly or monthly ticket from the MVG (Munich Transport Company) to cover the journeys between your accommodation and your workplace. For this, you will need to apply for a special customer card. Your employer will need to confirm the internship in this application. You can apply for a customer card online, by post or in the customer service centre (e.g., at the main railway station in Munich).

For more information, please see <http://www.mvv-muenchen.de/de/tickets-preise/tickets/schule-ausbildung-und-studium/ausbildungstarif/>.



If you come from abroad, you'll obviously need a **mobile phone**. In Germany, mobile phones are generally not too expensive. We recommend you buy a prepaid card from a discounter supermarket (Aldi, Lidl, Netto, etc.) rather than entering into a mobile phone contract. This is generally the cheapest and simplest option for making phone calls and using the Internet (assuming you have a smartphone).

3.7. In the company



Life gets exciting, of course, once you actually start your internship. Try and act professionally right from the start. Because first impressions count – and may well influence how you are perceived and treated throughout the rest of the internship.

3.7.1. Rules and conventions – recognizing and preparing properly

“Act professionally” – what does that actually entail?

Ideally, you’ll already have gained initial experience from other internships or student jobs, and will know how to conduct yourself towards your superiors and colleagues, and how to strategically plan your contacts. However, remember that expectations and behavior can differ from company to company. Each company has its own corporate culture. Expectations and behavior also differ from country to country. So **international students and graduates** should bear in mind that conventions will not necessarily be the same as in their home country.



As a rough guide, we now list some general rules and conventional practices in German companies:

- In general, you are expected to work **autonomously**. German companies generally value employees who take initiative and work independently, who play their role and take responsibility for making decisions within certain boundaries. Unclear issues and problems are generally resolved through dialogue.
- Another key principle is that of **objectivity**. “Objective” conduct is regarded as professional. Under “conducting yourself objectively”, people generally mean keeping emotion under control and arguing your case with facts, in a goal-oriented manner. Objectivity also means that the status

of the discussion partners (e.g., employees and their superiors) becomes secondary so that matters can be discussed objectively and on an equal footing.

- Another important factor in Germany is **time management**. Punctuality and effective time management are very important. If you keep to agreed appointments and schedules, you will be regarded as reliable, committed and professional. If you're repeatedly late, you won't. If you don't turn up for appointments, you'll disrupt workflows – and this can easily lead to irritation. This applies not only to work appointments, by the way – it's also true of private meet-ups.
- Another important aspect is the **boundary between work and private life**. You work at your place of employment, and spend the lunch breaks with your colleagues. After work, you spend your time either alone or with friends and family. In general, colleagues don't go out together for a drink after work, nor do they tend to spend their weekends together. Nor do colleagues talk much at work about their private lives. And an employer or supervisor would never try to interfere in personal concerns.
- In general, Germans have a very **direct style of communication** in comparison to other cultures. Whilst it is customary in some countries to “beat around the bush”, the Germans come straight to the point – and this is not regarded as impolite. In other words, important issues are addressed directly and explicitly, and facts and situations described frankly and openly. Personal opinions are also voiced openly and honestly. If you come from a culture where such a style of communication is unusual, you may well feel hurt by this approach. But bear in mind that your conversation partner is not trying to hurt or insult you. Communicating in a direct manner is simply part of the German culture.

In addition to the above information, there are guides which you can read to tell you how to conduct yourself in German workplaces. Perhaps you could borrow one from the library at your home university. You can also learn more about German rules and conventions in a cross-cultural competence course. Ask at your home university whether they offer such courses.



Regardless of how well you prepare yourself in advance, the reality can of course look very different. So it's essential to observe how people interact in your company right from the start so that you don't "put your foot in it" on day one and make life difficult for yourself. If you've ever had a student job or completed an internship in the past, you'll probably have noticed that not all differences can be attributed to foreign culture. Sometimes it's simply the internal corporate culture, or unwritten rules which colleagues have built up over the years to structure their working lives. In some companies, for example, colleagues will shake hands with each other every morning when they enter the office. Sometimes, the first employee to arrive will make coffee for everyone. So interns should pay special attention to the following points to see what is customary at their workplace, and adapt their behavior accordingly:

- Greeting
- Personal space
- Are colleagues addressed by first name or surname?
- Duration and times of breaks
- Sharing food and drink
- Cleaning up

If you're an **international student or graduate** and you make a faux pas, try to keep your sense of humour and explain the situation to your colleagues. Most German employees will understand and not hold it against you – particularly if you explain that you're just not used to many of the practices and conventions. And if you're unsure about certain codes of conduct, then ask your colleagues! This shows that you're interested and willing to learn.

3.7.2. When problems arise...

...don't panic! In virtually every internship, something will go wrong at some stage. You won't be the first intern ever to displease a supervisor! In such cases, it's important to talk about what has happened and what you could do

differently next time. Sometimes it takes a second attempt to complete a task to your supervisor's satisfaction. Don't be afraid to ask if you haven't quite understood a task or if you're unsure about some of the work processes you need in order to complete your work. Supervisors don't always remember to explain everything, because some things have become so matter of course for them.

Problems arise, naturally, if you feel that the tasks you are given are not relevant to the aims which were actually agreed, or if you feel you're being exploited as "cheap labor" and just being made to do photocopying or filing all day long. Despite the fact that this is an unpleasant situation, you need to voice your concerns objectively and courteously to your supervisor. Discussing such issues frankly is far better than wasting valuable time, and it opens the door to finding a solution that everyone is happy with. In this context, you should also contact the university tutor who is supervising your internship (assuming you have one!), and explain what you're not happy about. They will often be able to give you helpful advice about how to handle the situation.



In general, you should request regular feedback on your work and stifle any potential difficulties by asking questions and openly discussing any unclear issues. If you follow this advice, your internship is sure to be successful!

3.8. After the internship

You've completed your internship? We hope you gained lots of useful experience, perhaps even made new friends, and – if you've come from abroad – have enjoyed an unforgettable time in Germany! We'd now like to list a few things you need to do once you've finished your internship.



- As your internship draws to an end, you should ask your employer to write you a **reference**. A reference is an important document because it proves that you actually completed the internship. It also assesses your performance and your conduct

towards your colleagues and superiors. In this respect, it's extremely important when you later come to applying for a job. Because like a work reference, it says a lot more about your "qualities" as an employee than your school or university reports. It's also very important when it comes to having your internship accredited by the university – particularly in the case of a mandatory internship. Also, if you've been awarded a grant for the internship, you'll need to hand in the reference as proof that it was completed. Unfortunately, there is an increasing trend for employers to save themselves time by asking interns to write their own references, to which they simply add their signature. However, this is not at all advisable, as wording can be critical. It takes skill and experience to write a good reference. If you word a sentence badly, it can make you appear in a completely wrong light. So it's better to ask your employer to write the reference. Naturally, this does not prevent you from checking that it covers all important aspects, and whether they have assessed your performance realistically. In order to make a sound judgement, we recommend you sign up for the two-hour "Work references" seminar which is held regularly by Student und Arbeitsmarkt in conjunction with local lawyers (see our website for upcoming seminars). Here you'll learn about the accepted turns of phrase used in work and internship references.

- As soon as you have completed a mandatory internship, you'll normally need to write an **internship report** and submit this to your department or tutor. If you received a grant, you'll also need to write a report and submit this to the supervisor of the grant program at your university. This report should describe your field of work, professional or cross-cultural experiences you have gained, practical information (e.g., how to find accommodation or the best mobile phone packages) and other useful tips about what to do and what to avoid. Before you start writing, ask what needs to be included in the report. Your department may have special guidelines which you will need to follow. If you're free to write as you choose, you can use the Student und Arbeitsmarkt website for inspiration: (www.s-a.lmu.de).

Here'll you'll find internship reports from other student interns.

- If you can get **ECTS points** for your internship, make sure they are accredited to you!
- Finally, stay in contact with your place of work – particularly if you can envisage working there at some stage in the future! Staying in contact may also enable you to forge contacts for friends who want to complete a similar internship.

3.9. Checklist



To cover all salient points, we've drawn up a checklist. You'll find this in Appendix III: Internship checklist. Not everything may apply to you personally. Conversely, additional aspects may play a role in your particular case. So the list is merely intended as a starting point. Print it out and get ticking!

4. Student jobs

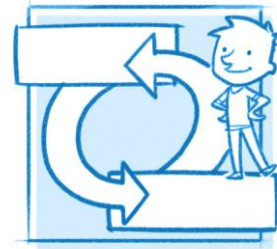
Many students have to – or choose to – work alongside their studies in order to finance their higher education. Even though it can be hard to fit in a student job between lectures and seminars, there are several advantages in so doing. Besides the extra income, you'll gain professional experience – which looks good when you later come to applying for a job. Nor does it particularly matter what sort of work you do. Even if your job has nothing to do with your degree course, employers know the value of practical experience, and your willingness to work demonstrates your capabilities and commitment. Nonetheless, it's a good idea to find a job which is related to your degree course if at all possible. This will not only enable you to put theory straight into practice, but will also give you a good idea of whether you actually enjoy the profession you have chosen. It also gives you an opportunity to get to know potential employers – because students are not infrequently offered full-time contracts. For international students, student jobs are a good way of getting to know more about the working world in Germany. This is ideal, of course, if you want to work in Germany later. But quite apart from this, work experience in a different country will be a huge point in your favor when you later apply for a job in your home country.

Despite these advantages, you do need to be aware that working on top of your degree course can be stressful. So choose a job which will still allow you enough time to attend your courses and lectures and write your dissertations.

You'll probably have lots of questions about student jobs. What types of job are available? Which legal regulations do I have to observe? In addition, And, of course – where can I find a student job? We'll be turning our attention to these questions in the following chapter of this brochure.



Once again, **remember** always to obtain additional information, particularly with regard to legal regulations (insurance, tax, health insurance etc.)! We can't cover every single individual case in this brochure!



4.1. What are the different types of employment arrangements?

A basic distinction is made between **salaried employment and self-employment/freelance work**.

In salaried employment, you work to the orders of your employer, in other words, to the account of a third party. €450 mini jobs are the classic example here, where you work in a company for, say, ten hours a week.

If you're self-employed, on the other hand, you work to your own account and are responsible for your own work. This might be the case, for example, if you're a graphic designer or you're giving private lessons, charging your clients directly for your work.

Let's first take a look at **salaried employment**.

4.1.1. Self-employment

Students in salaried employment work in a company during the semester, for no more than 20 hours per week,⁶ on the basis of an employment contract. During the semester holidays, they may work for up to 40 hours per week. If the job in question is related to your degree course, you may be classed as a **placement student**.

Salaried employment includes €450 "mini jobs" (marginal employment), €850 midi jobs, short-term employment and regular student jobs (in which you earn more than €850 per month).

⁶The 20-hour week regulation is explained in more detail in point 4.2.1.1.

4.1.1.1. €450 job (mini job)

a) €450 mini jobs in a company

If you earn up to €450 (gross) per month, this is classed as “marginal employment”. Such jobs are commonly called “mini jobs” or “€450 jobs”. To fall into this category, you may not earn more than €450 (gross) per month – including any bonuses (e.g., a Christmas bonus). This amount is calculated by adding up your annual earnings and dividing by twelve.

Special regulations apply to mini jobs with regard to social insurance and tax. These special regulations aim to ensure that the net earnings of the employee are virtually the same as their gross earnings – i.e., with no major deductions. With regard to social insurance: If you have a mini job, you do not have to pay extra health insurance, nursing care or unemployment contributions. However, you are still legally required to have health insurance cover in Germany! The only social insurance contributions to be deducted from your wages are pension contributions. On top of this, your employer pays a fixed amount to social security. With regard to tax, your employer also pays a fixed sum. People with mini jobs are generally not liable to pay income tax. So you won't normally have to give your employer a tax number. The fixed rates paid by the employer don't affect the employee's health insurance contributions or the amount of wages they receive.

For more information on pension contributions for people with mini jobs, please see 4.2.1.3 paragraph b) on pension contributions.

Naturally, you can take on other work in addition to a €450 job. However, you must observe the following:

- If you take on **additional marginal employment** for another employer (this includes a second €450 job, but also voluntary internships and temporary employment in which you earn under €450 per month), you will only be exempt from social insurance contributions and tax if the grand total of your earnings does



not exceed €450 per month. So if you earn €200 per month in one mini job and €100 per month in a second mini job, your earnings total €300 per month and you won't have to pay social insurance contributions. But if you earn €450 per month in one mini job and €100 per month in a second mini job, your earnings total €550 per month. In this case, you are on the “sliding pay-scale” (earning between €450.01 and €850) as described in chapter 4.1.1.2. If you're on the sliding pay-scale, social insurance contributions will be deducted from your wages (see chapter 4.1.1.2).

If you are a **regular student**, i.e., are enrolled at a university, have not taken leave of absence and are not working for more than 20 hours per week during the semester, you will enjoy so-called “placement student privileges” and only have to pay pension contributions. But you'll also have to pay tax.

There is, however, one small **exception**: you will not be penalised for occasionally and unforeseeably exceeding the €450 limit. If this happens in up to 3 months in one year, it is deemed “occasional” (as of summer 2015). But a word of caution: This only applies if the limit is exceeded for unforeseeable reasons. This would be the case, for example, if you have to stand in for a colleague who is off sick, and this takes you over the €450 limit in that particular month. In such cases, your mini job remains exempt from social insurance contributions. The same exception applies, by the way, if you only have one €450 job.

- If, **in addition to your mini job, you have a job for another employer where you have to pay social insurance contributions** (a regular student job, in other words), you do not have to pay social insurance contributions for the €450 job. In general, income tax is only payable on jobs for which social insurance contributions have to be paid.
- If you **work on a freelance basis on top of your €450 job**, you will have to pay tax on your freelance work, but not social insurance contributions.

The same labor laws apply no matter whether you are in marginal or full-time employment. People with mini jobs have the same rights and responsibilities as full-time employees. You have a right to paid holiday leave, to continued remuneration in the event of sickness, to protection against unlawful dismissal, to company benefits and to maternity leave.



b) €450 jobs in private households

If you're engaged in household activities such as cooking, laundry, ironing, gardening, or looking after children, elderly persons or persons in need of nursing care, and you earn up to €450 per month, the same rules apply as for regular €450 jobs. The only difference is for the employer, who has to pay a lower fixed rate for social insurance contributions than for standard €450 jobs. There is also a further difference with regard to the new law on pension contributions for mini jobs in private households. This is covered in 4.2.1.3.

4.1.1.2. Jobs on the sliding pay-scale / midi jobs (earning €450.01 – €850 per month)

If you have a student job in which you earn between €450 and €850 (gross) per month, this is classed as a low-income job on the “sliding pay-scale”. Unlike with mini jobs, both the employer and the employee have to pay social insurance contributions.

According to the sliding pay-scale regulations, the employee pays a reduced social insurance contribution. Depending on the monthly wage, this is 15-20% (but please check this figure with your health insurance provider!). With regard to health insurance, Employers pay the general rate of 7.3% (date: summer 2015 until summer 2019). In addition, health insurance providers may levy additional monthly fees based on your income. Please note that there is one **exception** here: Sliding pay-scale regulations do not apply to short-term employment (see chapter 4.1.1.3) in which you earn €450.01 to €850 per month. Such employment remains exempt from social insurance contributions.

If you earn more than €450 per month, you will need to provide your employer with a tax number. Employees in low-income jobs have to pay income tax, in other words.

But in contrast to mini jobs, low-income jobs have definite **advantages for employees**. If you are in a low-income job, you have full social insurance cover. If you lose your job after working for more than 12 months, this means you'll be entitled to unemployment benefits. In a low-income job, you're also automatically in the statutory pension scheme



(in this context, compare with the exceptions for mini jobs as explained in 4.2.1.3), which means you can supplement your future pension.

If you are a **regular student** (see definition above in point 4.1.1.1 a)) and you start a midi job, you will **only** have to pay pension contributions. This is called the “placement student privilege”. You will not have to pay contributions towards statutory health or unemployment insurance.

4.1.1.3. Short-term employment

A job is classed as short-term employment if it does not involve working for more than 70 days per year, or 3 consecutive months. Regardless of how much you earn, you do not have to pay social insurance contributions in short-term employment. However, you will have to pay tax. You may be able to claim back some or all of this tax via your annual tax declaration.

Naturally, you are free to have multiple short-term jobs at the same time. If you do so, however, you need to add up the total number of days you have worked in each month. If the sum total for the year exceeds 70 days, you will have to pay social insurance contributions. In principle, you can have a “mini job” and a short-term job at the same time – so long as you are not working for the same employer (see chapter 4.1.1.1). In this case, you do not have to pay social insurance contributions.



Note: Short-term employment may not be performed on a professional basis. In other words, it must not be your sole source of income. This is generally not a problem for students.

4.1.1.4. Other standard student jobs

If you have a student job in which you earn more than €850 per month, you will have to pay social insurance contributions and income tax. Regular students (see definition above in point 4.1.1.1 a)) pay only pension contributions (“placement student privilege”). In other words, they do not have to pay nursing care, unemployment or health insurance contributions. These pension contributions have to be paid in full, because you are no longer on the sliding pay scale if you earn more than €850 per month. If you earn a good wage, note that there is an annual tax-free allowance of €9,168 per annum (date: January 2019).

This is generally amended every year. The planned tax-free allowance for 2016 is €8,652. If you earn more, you are no longer entitled to child benefits (here the upper limit is €8,130 as of summer 2015) or the tax-free allowance. If you receive BAföG money, you can earn up to €5,416.32 (gross amount) in twelve months (date: spring 2018). If you earn more, your income will be taken into account when calculating the amount of BAföG money you receive

4.1.2. Self-employment

If you decide during your degree to work – perhaps even in addition to salaried employment – on a self-employed basis, e.g., giving tuition, doing translations, as a graphic designer etc., bear in mind that you will have to pay tax on income from self-employment. This means that you will need to submit an annual tax return to the tax office. However, in general you will not have to pay social insurance contributions. Please check first with your health insurance provider! If you are self-employed, you are responsible for making your own arrangements with regard to pension schemes and insuring yourself against accidents at work (accident insurance) or liability claims (liability insurance). On top of this, you will need health insurance cover (but generally you will already have this if you are a student). With regard to health insurance, note that you cannot earn more than €445 per month if you want to remain covered by family insurance (please see chapter 3.2.2.1 a) for more information on this subject). You will also need to observe the 20-hour regulation (which we will explain in the next chapter.)

Note that if you are self-employed, you won't have to deal with electronic income tax cards, work contracts or periods of notice. But nor are you entitled to paid holiday leave or continued remuneration if you fall sick. Also, you have to find your own customers – which can be a time-consuming job. On the plus side, you can work where and when you like, and you receive your wages in full – definitely an advantage!

If you regularly work on a self-employed basis, you will need to either register a business or have your work officially classified as “freelance” (depending on your field of work). For a definition of “regular”, please contact your local trade licensing office.

If you are a student and regularly work as a trade fair hostess or distributing leaflets, you will need to apply to your local trade licensing office for a **business license**. Business licenses are typically required for the following fields of work:

- industrial manufacture
- occupations requiring manual skills (artistic professions excepted)
- wholesalers and retailers (basically anything involving the sale of products)
- hotels and restaurants
- basic services (e.g., household-related services such as cleaning or repairs)

Your local trade licensing office can tell you how much a business license costs (mostly this will be between €15 and €65) and what documents you will need for your application. Naturally, you are welcome to register a business even if you come from abroad. To do so, you will require a residency permit in addition to the other documents.

If you have a business license, you have to submit your tax declaration to the tax office by May 31 of the following year. Regardless of how much you earn per year, you will need to draw up a so-called net income account when you fill in your tax return. This lists your income versus your operating expenses. For this purpose you must collect all invoices and receipts connected to your business activities, as you will need to submit these to the tax office together with your tax return. If you earn more than the annual tax-free allowance of €9,168 (date: January 2019), you will have to pay tax proportionally on all profit exceeding this amount. In other words, the tax office will charge you tax. If you earn more than €24,500, you will also have to pay trade tax.

When you apply for a business license, you need to decide whether you would like to be classed as a **small-scale business**.

To qualify as a small-scale business, your turnover must not exceed €17,500 per annum

⁷ Please note the annual tax-free allowance, which is currently €8,472 (date: summer 2015).

the planned tax-free allowance for 2016 is €8,652. If you earn more, you will have to pay income tax! See below for more information.

(date: summer 2015; this amount may change!). If you earn under this amount, you do not have to pay VAT or submit a monthly VAT return to your local tax office. Nor do you have to add VAT to your invoices. Instead, your invoice should include a line stating that “in accordance with Section 19 of UStG (German VAT law), this invoice does not include VAT”. If you earn more than €17,500 per year, you can no longer be classed as a small-scale business, and you will have to charge and pay VAT. So all your invoices will have to include VAT. For more information on the regulations for businesses and small-scale businesses, please contact your local tax office.

Please also note that if your business generates a profit exceeding €5,416.32 per annum (date: spring 2018), you will no longer be entitled to receive BAföG. If your income from BAföG plus other sources exceed €8,130 per annum (date: Summer 2015; this amount is subject to regular change!), you will also lose your entitlement to child benefits. Ask your local grant authority and Familienkasse (social services) for the current income limits. You could also contact the tax office and your health insurance provider for more information.

If you work on a **freelance** basis, you do not need to register a business and nor do you need a business license. Nonetheless, your freelance work needs to be declared to the tax office for tax purposes if you regularly engage in freelance work (see above for a definition of “regular”). Once you’ve informed the tax office you will be given a tax number which then needs to be included on all your invoices.



In practice it is not also easy to differentiate between “freelance work” and work which requires a business license. This is covered by Section 18 of the EStG (German Income Tax Law). The following occupations are classed as freelance:

- Health-care professions: doctors, dentists, vets, alternative practitioners, physiotherapists, midwives, massage therapists, qualified psychologists
- Legal, tax and consulting professions: lawyers, patent attorneys, notaries, accountants, tax consultants, tax agents, business economist consultants, certified auditors
- Scientific / technical professions: surveyors, engineers, industrial chemists, architects, pilots, assessors
- Information transfer / cultural professions: journalists, photojournalists, interpreters, translators (and similar professions), scientists
- Artists, authors, teachers and educators
- And similar professions

If you are unsure whether your work classes as freelance, please ask your local tax office.

If you work on a freelance basis, you must draw up an annual net income account (as with a registered business) when you submit your tax return, regardless of how much you earn. So you will need to keep all receipts and invoices which are connected with your work activities.

Like registered businesses, freelancers do not have to charge or pay VAT on their work in accordance with section 19 of the UStG (German VAT law) if they do not earn more than €17,500 per annum (date: summer 2015). If you work on a freelance basis and earn in excess of this amount, the small-scale business regulation no longer applies – You will then have to add VAT to all your invoices and will have to pay VAT yourself. When you register your freelance work with your local tax office, you will have to decide whether or not you wish to be classed as a small-scale business. You register as a small-scale business at the same time as registering your freelance work.

Freelance work has several advantages over registered businesses. For example, you don't have to pay trade tax. With regard to tax-free allowances, BAföG and child benefits, please read the information provided in connection with business licenses. Your tax office can explain any other differences.

If you are self-employed, you will generally write **invoices** for your work. An invoice must contain the following information:

- your address
- the customer's address
- a consecutive invoice number
- your tax number (as provided by your local tax office)
- the invoice date
- description of the service /scope of service provided
- the amount due
- Depending on your status, a sentence stating that you are not required to charge VAT (e.g., if you are classed as a small-scale business in accordance with Section 19 of German VAT law) or a line detailing the VAT.

This is a general overview of self-employment. Always **check first** with your local authorities to find out which regulations apply to your particular circumstances!

4.2. Which legal regulations do I have to observe?



Although we already covered issues such as social insurance, taxes, BAföG etc. in the previous chapter, we'd like to turn our attention now to some basic legal regulations. This chapter also includes special notes for international students.

4.2.1. Basic regulations

4.2.1.1. 20-hour week regulation

The following basic rule applies to all students with jobs: during the semester, you may not work for more than 20 hours per week. If you work for more than 20 hours per week, your health insurance provider will assume that your job has taken priority over your degree course, and classify you as an employee rather than a student. This means you lose your student status for social insurance purposes, and will have to pay higher contributions (i.e., you lose your so-called placement student privilege, see 4.1.1.4) However, there are **two exceptions** to this rule. Firstly, you may work for more than 20 hours per week, even during the semester, if your working hours are largely outside of regular university hours, i.e., weekends, evenings or nights. However, even here you must reserve sufficient time and energy for your degree course. Secondly, the 20-hour week regulation does not apply during the semester holidays. During these lecture-free periods, you may work for more than 20 hours per week. If you do so on a regular basis, however, you must observe the 26-week rule. If you work more than 20 hours per week for more than 26 weeks per year (182 calendar days), you will be classed as a normal employee and will have to pay social insurance contributions accordingly.

Mandatory internships are not included in this total. Please contact your health insurance provider for more information on the 20-hour regulations.

4.2.1.2. Tax

Whether or not you will have to pay tax for your job has been explained above. If you need to give your employer a **tax number**, you can apply for this to your local tax office. Income tax cards have not been issued in paper form since 01/01/2013. These have been replaced by “ELStAM” (electronic tax deduction characteristics), commonly referred to as digital income tax cards. For more information, please see <http://www.elstam-info.de>.

You must submit an annual **tax return** to your local tax office by May 31 of the following year (i.e., submit a tax return for 2015 by 05/31/2016). If for any reason you are unable to keep this deadline – perhaps because you are studying abroad for a semester – you can apply for an extension up until September 30. Normally you can request an extension by simply writing a letter to your local tax office – but do check first! You can also get all the necessary forms from your tax office, plus help if you have any questions when filling in the paperwork. Most tax offices have a service centre for this purpose. The service centre in Munich, for example, is located in Deroystrasse 6 near to the main railway station. You can also make use of the following **aids** when completing your tax return

- If you can afford it, hire the services of a tax consultant.
- Literature is available on this subject. Your local bookshop can recommend good books.
- Lots of people complete their tax returns with the aid of computer programs (e.g., Data Becker, WISO Sparbuch or [Elster](#), the free regional and national tax administration project). These programs normally “guide” you through the tax return and check it at the end. However, you’ll still obviously need to know what to enter in each field. Although most programs will give you tips and advice here, you should still make sure you have a good overview.
- Alternatively, you could contact a “Lohnsteuerhilfverein” (income tax assistance union).

If you have completed your tax return on a computer, you can normally send it electronically to the tax office. You may also be required to print it out, sign it and return it by post.⁸ Make sure you send your tax return to the correct tax office! In large cities like Munich there are often several addresses, and where you have to send it will depend on the first letter of your surname. For more information, please contact your local tax office.

The **amount of income tax** you will have to pay depends on which tax group you are in. This in turn depends on whether you are single or married, and whether you have children.⁹ “Classic” students – single, no children – will be in income tax group 1. Regardless of which tax group you are in, you will only be liable to pay income tax once your income exceeds a certain level. At present, unmarried and childless students may earn up to €9,168 per annum (the so-called “basic tax-free allowance”; date summer January 2019). This total applies to both salaried employment and self-employment. If you engage in both, it applies to the sum total of both. In addition to this amount, you can offset a fixed rate of €1000 per year for “professional expenses” (date: summer 2015). If your actual expenses are higher (and note that these also include costs relating to your studies, such as university fees, books etc.), the tax-free allowance may be higher, but you will have to furnish evidence for all your expenses. In short: if you add up everything you earn during the year from salaried employment and self-employment, and deduct your expenses, the grand total may not exceed €9,168 if you want to avoid paying income tax. You will then be refunded by the tax office if you have paid too much tax. If you have earned more than €9,168, you will have to pay income tax.



Note: Despite any tax allowances, tax will still be first be deducted from your salary. When you fill out a tax return, you can generally claim back taxes if you have paid too much.

By the way – you can have two different salaried jobs and pay income tax on both. **But caution:** You will be assigned to a different tax group for each. Unmarried, childless students will be assigned tax group 1 for their primary job, and tax group 6 for the second.

⁸ This is not required if you opt for the paperless form with electronic certificate.

⁹ See here for an overview of the various tax groups: www.imacc.de/steuer/steuerklassen/index.html.

www.imacc.de/steuer/steuerklassen/index.html.

The rate of tax payable in tax group 6 is much higher than in tax group 1. So think carefully about which group to assign to which job – i.e., where you are willing to have more tax deducted. Normally it makes sense to assign tax group 6 to the job in which you earn less. With regard to income tax, both jobs will be added together in your tax return, and your tax calculated according to this total amount. If you have not exceeded the annual limit of €9,168 (date: January 2019), you will be refunded for any excess tax you have paid in tax group 6.

4.2.1.3. Social insurance

Social insurance is divided into different branches. These include health insurance, pension funds, nursing care insurance and unemployment insurance. We have already discussed above which types of employment involve paying social insurance contributions. Social insurance contributions are deducted directly from your wages and paid into the various branches listed above. Your employer will also pay part of these contributions. The first time you get a job in Germany, you will be given a national insurance card with a national insurance number which you will then have to quote every time you get a new job.

We'd now like to make a few important comments on the subject of social insurance:

a) Health insurance

Unlike the other social insurance branches, health insurance cover is mandatory for all persons living in Germany. This means that as a student, you must have health insurance cover even if you have a job in which you do not have to pay social insurance contributions. Up until you reach the age of 25, however, you can be insured via your parents, which means you will not have to pay health insurance contributions yourself. This is called “family insurance”. Above this age, you can be insured via your spouse. If you are not covered by family insurance or you are older than 25, you can pay the student rate – but only if you have been studying for fewer than 14 semesters, or until you reach the age of 30. If you are covered by family insurance, you must not earn more than €450 per month (from a mini job), otherwise approx. €445 per month (please ask your health insurance provider

for exact details!). If you earn above these limits, you no longer qualify for family insurance. For more information, please refer to the paragraph on “Health insurance contributions” in chapter 3.2.2.1 a). If you work for more than 20 hours per week during the semester, you will lose your student status and will have to pay higher health insurance contributions. For more information, please read point 4.2.1.1 (20-hour week regulation) and check with your health insurance provider.

For students from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland, the comments in chapter 3.2.2.2 a) apply accordingly. Apply to your health insurance provider for a EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) and check which medical services are covered by this card. Students from non-member countries should please refer to chapter 3.2.2.3 a).

b) Pension contributions

If you pay pension contributions, you are later entitled to receive a pension. Although this might sound absurd to you as a student, it's very important to start thinking about pensions while you're still young. If your job is one in which you have to pay social insurance contributions, you will have to pay pension contributions. Special rules apply to mini jobs. Pension contributions have to be paid in mini jobs. However, up until 12/31/2012, the employer was responsible for paying the entire amount. On 01/01/2013, the income limit for mini jobs was raised from €400 to €450. At the same time, a law was introduced to deduct pension contributions from the employee's wages. The employee now has to pay the difference between the 15% pension contribution paid by the employer (or 5% for mini jobs in private households) and the statutory rate of 18.7%. In other words, the employee has to pay 3.7% (or 13.7% for mini jobs in private households). In return, it counts towards the compulsory contribution period. If you earn €450 per month, you will thus have to pay €16.65 (or €61.65 for mini jobs in private households). If you have a mini job and do not wish to pay pension contributions, you can choose – at any time, so even after having worked for some time – to apply for an exemption from these compulsory pension contributions. To do so, you must submit a written application to your employer.

But you should certainly consider paying pension contributions, because these will entitle you to a pension later on in life. To find out more about the advantages, and for more information on mini jobs and the pension fund regulations which apply to these, please see



www.minijob-zentrale.de.

c) Accident insurance

If you are registered properly by your employer, e.g., in official marginal employment (or in an unpaid internship), he or she will pay your accident insurance premiums. Accident insurance covers the costs incurred if you have an accident at work, or on your journey to or from work. However, accident insurance does not cover freelance work or self-employment. Here you will have to arrange your own cover.



If you have any questions about social insurance, contact your health insurance provider.

4.2.1.4. Employer's liability insurance

For more information on this subject, please read chapter 3.2.2.1 b), which applies to students in salaried jobs

4.2.1.5. Your rights at work

If you are a student in salaried employment, you have various rights and entitlements. Although there are differences between the various forms of employment, you have a basic right to continued remuneration if you take sick leave, and to paid holiday leave. We'll now look at some of your basic rights.



By the way: If you encounter problems with your employer, seek legal advice! The student union in Munich, for example, offers free legal advice to students. For more information, please see www.studentenwerk-muenchen.de/beratungsnetzwerk/rechtsberatung/. Alternatively, you could contact a trade union. As a member of a trade union, you can receive free, competent and comprehensive legal advice on matters related to your employment in the event of a dispute.

See here for an overview of the trade unions in Germany: http://www.uni-protokolle.de/Lexikon/Liste_mit_Gewerkschaften.html.

4.2.1.5.1. Employment contract

An employment relationship begins with the conclusion of an employment contract. In theory, an employment contract can be verbal or written. But it's important to have a written contract so that you have proof in the event of a dispute – then you can point to the agreement in writing. Even if your employer refuses to give you a written employment contract, he is legally required to issue you with a signed, written statement as confirmation of the essential contractual conditions governing the employment relationship (“NachwG”; Law on Notification of Conditions Governing an Employment Relationship). The employer is required to do this within one month of the agreed start of the employment relationship. The points which must be included in this written statement are detailed in Section 2, Paragraphs 1-10 of the NachwG (Law on Notification of Conditions Governing an Employment Relationship).



If you have a written employment contract, make sure it **definitely includes the following:**

- Name and address of the contract partners
- Work location
- Working hours
- Commencement of employment
- For temporary employment: expected duration
- Description of duties
- Remuneration
- Date of payment
- Continued remuneration in the event of sickness
- Holiday entitlements (incl. Duration and holiday pay)
- Period of notice for terminating the employment relationship

In general, no contract is drawn up for self-employed or freelance activities. Here, work is

generally based on a verbal agreement. Naturally, agreements can also be made in writing. In case of doubt, you can then remind your client of what was agreed. If you do not have a written contract, you should certainly clarify in advance the exact type and scope of the service, the deadline for handover and your fee.

If you require more detailed information on employment contracts, you can borrow books on the subject from Student und Arbeitsmarkt. Student und Arbeitsmarkt also regularly hosts a two-hour seminar on the subject of employment contracts, in conjunction with lawyers. You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de or in our newsletter. Subscribe to the newsletter at www.s-a.lmu.de/newsletter.

4.2.1.5.2. Remuneration

When you negotiate your wages, remember that – depending on the type of employment – you will have to pay tax and social insurance. The wage you negotiate will always be the **gross salary**. Taxes and social insurance contributions may be deducted from this (for more information, please refer to chapter 4.1). This leaves you with a **net salary**. You are entitled to receive a regular wage as negotiated. Your employment contract will specify whether this is paid out in the middle of the month or at the end of the month. Employers are not allowed to make irregular payments. This is regulated by Sections 612 and 614 of the BGB (German Civil Code). If you encounter any problems with regard to payment of your wages, please seek legal advice.

In this context, please read chapter 3.2.1 on minimum wages.

4.2.1.5.3. In the event of sickness

If you fall ill at work or on a day when you should be at work, you are entitled to continued payment of your wages – with no deductions. This is regulated by Sections 3 and 4 of the EntgFG (Continued Remuneration Act). If you are ill for an extended period of time, your average earnings will determine how much you receive. In the event of protracted sickness, your employer will pay your full wages for six weeks. After this, your health insurance provider takes over and pays approx. 70% of your usual wage ("sick pay"). However, you



can only receive sick pay for a maximum of 78 weeks over the course of three years for the same illness. Similar rules apply to parents who are unable to work because their children are sick (ask your health insurance provider for more details on so-called “child sickness benefits”). If you are ill, you must inform your employer immediately and hand in a **sick note from your doctor**.

4.2.1.5.4. Holidays, public holidays and breaks

To give you a chance to relax, the Federal Leave Act dictates that employees are entitled to paid **holidays**. You are basically entitled to four days holiday per year for every day of the week that you regularly work. In other words, if you regularly work for two days per week, you can take eight working days off work – and will still be paid. This adds up to four weeks of paid holiday leave. If your working hours vary, you are still entitled to the minimum four weeks paid holiday. However, in accordance with Section 4 of the Federal Leave Act, your full holiday entitlements do not take force until you have been working for the employer for six months. Before this, you are entitled to 1/12 of the annual leave for every month you work. If your wages vary, holiday pay will be based on your average earnings from the previous 13 weeks. So it's worth waiting to take holiday leave until you've been earning well for a couple of months!

With regard to **public holidays**, the following applies: if the day on which you regularly work coincides with a public holiday, you are entitled to continued remuneration in accordance with Section 2 of the EntgFG (Continued Remuneration Act).

And with regard to **breaks** during working hours, the law stipulates that you are entitled to a 30 minute break after six hours. If you work for more than nine hours, you are entitled to a 45 minutes break. This can be divided into shorter breaks (lasting for at least 15 minutes), but you must take another break after no longer than six hours. **Make sure you take your breaks!** Breaks enable you to recover so that you can go back to work with renewed energy and concentration.



If you are self-employed, you are not entitled to paid holiday leave or paid public holidays. You can also have breaks as and when you choose.

4.2.1.5.5. Termination

Employers and employees can both terminate the employment relationship. Termination is regulated by Section 622 ff. of the German Civil Code. Here, a distinction is made between **notice periods and termination without notice**. Giving notice means terminating the agreement in compliance with the statutory notice period. In accordance with Section 622 of the German Civil Code, the period of notice is four weeks to the 15th or end of a calendar month. This period is longer if you have been working for the company for a long time. An employment relationship can also be terminated without notice if there is a compelling reason. This is regulated by Section 626 of the German Civil Code. In the event of a compelling reason, neither side need comply with the above-mentioned periods of notice. Whether or not the reason for termination is “compelling” may have to be adjudged. An employer may terminate an employment relationship without notice, for example, in the event of theft or embezzlement, or if a foreign national fails to inform the employer that his or her residency permit has expired. An employee may terminate the relationship without notice if the employer defaults on payment, or if he or she is sexually harassed in the workplace.



Important: notice of termination may only be given within two weeks of obtaining knowledge of the facts conclusive for the notice of termination.

Please note that employment relationships must always – regardless of whether notice is given or not – be terminated in writing, and signed. If you hand in your notice or receive notice of dismissal electronically (e.g., via email), this is invalid.



By the way: An employment relationship may also end with a **severance agreement**. Here, the two parties agree on a date on which the employment relationship will end. This is then recorded in writing – e.g., that you will leave the company on August 15, 2015. There is then no need for an additional written termination of the contract.

With regard to **temporary employment** (any job where it is agreed from the start that you will not be working for the company for more than two years), the employment relationship ends on the agreed date as per the contract.

In general, notice is not given in writing for **self-employed work**. Either the order ends once the service has been rendered, or a verbal agreement is made.

4.2.1.5.6. Work references

In accordance with Section 630 of the German Civil Code, you are entitled to receive a work reference from your employer if you are in salaried employment. **Make sure your employer issues you with a work reference!** This provides details on your field of responsibility in the company, and can serve as a recommendation to future employers. When you apply for a job, a work reference is often far more valuable than school or university reports because it says something about how you actually work in practice, and also about you conduct yourself towards colleagues and supervisors. In general, people distinguish between a **basic** and a **detailed** work reference. The first simply lists your duties in the company, whilst the second describes the way you work. So it's better to ask for a detailed work reference. Normally, your manager or supervisor – mostly the HR manager – will be responsible for writing your work reference. However, students nowadays are frequently asked to write their own reference, which the HR manager then simply signs. Regardless of who ends up writing the reference, the important thing is to make sure that the content, form and wording (very important!) are correct. Because something which looks positive at first glance might actually couch a negative comment. So it's important to find out which wording corresponds to which grade (excellent, good, satisfactory, sufficient, insufficient). You can find more information and templates for work references in the Internet. Or you might find it helpful to attend a seminar on the subject. Student und Arbeitsmarkt offers regular seminars on the subject of "Work references". You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de or in our newsletter. Subscribe to the newsletter at www.s-a.lmu.de/newsletter.



4.2.1.6. BAföG and child benefits

Please note that income limits apply for BAföG and child benefits. These have been detailed above in the description on employment relationships. Ask the relevant authorities (your local grant authority for BAföG, the Familienkasse for child benefits) how much you can earn before it affects your BAföG or your child benefits.

4.2.2. Special notes for international students

4.2.2.1. Work permits

The German Residence Act regulates the conditions under which foreign nationals are allowed to work in Germany. This is covered in detail in chapter 2.2. We'd now like to summarize the most important points.

4.2.2.1.1. Students from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland

In general, students who are nationals of countries within the EU, EEA or are from Switzerland, do not need a work permit in order to find a student job. They have the same access to the job market as German nationals, and do not need permission from the Federal Employment Office in order to work in gainful employment. They may also work in Germany for as long as they choose. This **applies to both salaried employment and self-employment** (see chapters 4.1.1 and 4.1.2).

4.2.2.1.2. Students from non-member countries

a) Who are enrolled at a German university

International students from non-member countries, who are enrolled at a German university, need residency status in order to work in Germany (see chapter 2.2). You can apply to your embassy in Germany or to your local immigration office for this. You will also normally need approval from the Federal Employment Office if you want to take up a job. If you have residency status, it's important that this is still valid (e.g., that it has not prematurely expired because you no longer fulfill the conditions – if you have dropped out of university, for example). Nor may your proposed job endanger the actual purpose of your stay in Germany (to complete a degree). Whether or not a job endangers your studies is decided on a case-by-case basis.

It is **important** to observe the 120 full days / 240 half days regulations: in accordance with Section 16 of the German Residence Act, students from non-member countries may not work in Germany for more than 120 full days or 240 half days in the course of one



calendar year (i.e., from January 1 to December 31) without approval (for more information, please read chapter 2.2). Only actual working days count here – not holidays or sick leave. You can also combine full days and half days within one calendar year (e.g., 60 full days plus 120 half days). This regulation always applies to **salaried employment** only (see chapter 4.1.1). For more information on “student assistant” jobs, please refer to chapter 2.2.



Please also note that foreign nationals from non-member countries are unfortunately not permitted to be **self-employed** in Germany (see chapter 4.1.2).

b) Enrolled at a university in another country

If you are enrolled at a university in another country, you do not need approval (see chapter 2.2) if you want to take up a holiday job lasting up to a maximum of three months within a 12-month period, if the job was procured via the Federal Employment Office. The job must be in Germany, and fall within the official semester holidays for the university at which you are enrolled. For more information, please see www.zav.de (under the heading “Arbeitsmarktzulassung” (job market approval)).

4.2.2.2. Insurance

a) Social insurance

The types of job in which you will have to pay social insurance contributions (i.e., health insurance contributions and pension fund contributions will be deducted from your wages) and the types of job which are exempt have been detailed in chapter 4.1.

- **Health insurance**

For more information on health insurance, please refer to chapter 4.2.1.3 a). Even if health insurance contributions are not deducted from your wages (because your job is exempt from social insurance contributions), you are still legally required to have health insurance cover whilst in Germany. EU/EEA citizens and Swiss nationals

should read the comments in chapter 3.2.2.2 a), citizens of non-member countries should refer to chapter 3.2.2.3 a).

- **Pension funds**

For more information on pension funds, please refer to chapter 4.2.1.3 b). The regulations on claiming back pension contributions paid in Germany are covered in chapter 3.2.3.1.2 a).

- **Accident insurance**

Please read chapter 4.2.1.3 c).

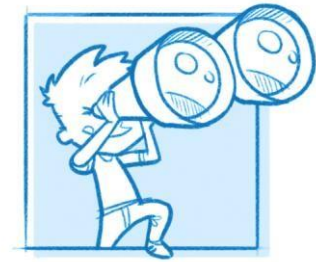
b) Employer's liability insurance

No matter how long you intend to stay in Germany, you should definitely take out liability insurance. This covers any damage you cause to your employer (if you break the computer keyboard or printer, for example). Please note, however, that if you cause damage to a third party in the course of your employment (not to your employer, in other words!), this is not covered by your personal liability insurance, but by the **employer's liability insurance!** For more information here, please read chapter 3.2.2.1 b).

4.2.2.3. Tax

With regard to the subject of taxes, please refer to the paragraph on "c) Income tax" in chapter 3.2.2.2.

4.3. Where can I find a student job?



There are different ways of finding a student job. Perhaps you **know someone** who works in a company that is seeking students. Or you could look on the **notice board** in the student canteen or in your department – sometimes you find advertisements

for jobs posted here. One of the most effective methods, however, is probably the Internet. Here you can browse through numerous **job portals**. These include:

- www.s-a.lmu.de (Student und Arbeitsmarkt career service)
- www.jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de (employment agency job market)
- <http://www.wesser.de>
- <http://www.jobmonitor.com>
- <http://www.jobmensa.de/>
- <http://www.studentenjobs24.de/>

Alternatively, you can **find companies** for whom you would like to work, and then look at their websites to see whether they currently have any vacancies. If they don't, there's nothing to prevent you giving them a call to ask whether they have any student jobs – sometimes a company just hasn't quite got round to advertising a vacancy. You might also consider **advertising your services**. This is particularly interesting, of course, for self-employed jobs where you have to find your own customers. There are numerous Internet portals where you can showcase your services, and where potential clients can then find and contact you. But you can also advertise your services to **attract the notice of potential employers** if you're looking for salaried employment. Various Internet portals (e.g. Monster: <http://www.monster.de/>) allow you to upload your CV and profile so that you can be found and contacted by potential employers. Or visit a **job fair** – companies here are looking not only for graduates, but also for placement students. Student und Arbeitsmarkt organizes various job fairs every year (find upcoming events on www.s-a.lmu.de).

Job fairs enable you to chat with employers in an informal setting. And if you have the necessary documents to hand, you might even find a job right away! You can also use **social networks** such as XING to make contacts and find a good job!

4.4. How do I apply for a job?

4.4.1. Written applications

Once you've found a student job that interests you, you will need to apply for the position in writing. Naturally, this only applies to salaried employment. If you're working on a self-employed or freelance basis, you'll generally contact potential clients via phone or email and verbally agree to an assignment once you've clarified the scope and duration.

A written application for a student job is basically the same as for a "real" job. In other words, it should definitely include a **cover letter** and your **CV**. You won't normally need to include **reports** (e.g., school leaving examination certificates, university reports, work references) when you're applying for a student job, unless these are expressly requested by your potential employer. Before you apply, it's important to find out whether the company prefers a full or abbreviated application, and whether they'd like to receive it by post, email or online (by uploading your documents to a company website). If you send your application via email or online, make sure the files are not too big. Some companies dictate that files should not be bigger than 2 MB.



International students and graduates should note that applications in Germany will not necessarily be the same as in your home country. Depending on which country you come from, it may be customary not to include a photo or your date of birth in your application; in some countries CVs are written by hand. This is not the case in Germany. Here, your CV should include a photo and your date of birth, and you are expected to write it on a computer.

To give you an idea of what is expected when applying to a German company, you will find a **sample CV** in Appendix I: Sample CV and a **sample cover letter** in Appendix IV:



Sample cover letter for student jobs. You can also find useful tips for your application at <http://www.online-bewerbung.org> and <http://karriere-journal.monster.de>. Also, if you leave a deposit of €20 and your address in the Student und Arbeitsmarkt office (Ludwigstrasse 27/1st Floor), you can borrow a set of books to help you with your application.



4.4.2. The interview

a) The invitation

Employers do not always respond to applications immediately.

Sometimes it can be weeks before you hear anything back. And not infrequently, an employer won't respond at all if they're not interested in you. But don't allow this to get you down – given how many students are out there looking for a job, it's normal for it to take a little time to find your niche. So just get on with your next application. If you haven't heard back from an employer after about two weeks, you could always try ringing to ask about the status of your application.

If you are invited to an interview, you're already one big step closer to getting a job. Now you have to sell yourself well during the interview – because you have to come across convincingly if you want to get the job. It's a good idea to practice the interview in advance with friends or family.

b) The interview

For detailed information on the interview, please refer to chapter 3.3.5 b). Consider attending a training course for interview techniques. Student und Arbeitsmarkt has teamed up with HR managers to offer regular interview technique seminars. Here you can even practice individual interview scenarios. You will find the dates of these courses at www.s-a.lmu.de Also, if you leave a deposit of €20 and your address in the Student und Arbeitsmarkt office (Ludwigstrasse 27/1st floor), you can borrow a set of books to help you with your interview.

4.5. What comes next after receiving formal acceptance?

You've been formally accepted? Great! Now all you need is a written **employment contract**. Not only does this bind your employer to the verbal agreement. It also means you have everything in writing if things are later called into question. The points which should be included in an employment contract, and other important things to observe, are detailed in chapter 4.2.1.5.1.



4.6. In the company

If you're working in a (German) company for the first time, you may wonder how to conduct yourself in such an environment. Regardless of your chosen field of work – read chapter 3.7, to get a first idea of what to expect. The information here also applies to student jobs.

4.7. After the employment relationship has ended

If your employment relationship has come to an end (e.g., one party has given notice to the other, as described in chapter 4.2.1.5.5), you should ask your employer for a **work reference** for future job applications. For more information, please read chapter 4.2.1.5.6.



5. Final comments

Organizing an internship might not always be easy – particularly if you are an international student or graduate. Nor is it always easy to juggle a job and studies. But it's definitely worth it! The experience you gain will make your life richer – both privately and professionally. An internship or student job opens the door to living in a new environment, meeting new people, facing new challenges, learning German, making professional contacts that might help you later in life and gaining valuable work experience. These are experiences that can't be bought with money, and will be worth their weight in gold when you later come to apply for a job. Internship or student job – try it out!

Have fun, and we hope you learn lots!

Yours,

the *Student und Arbeitsmarkt* team

Recommended reading:

http://issuu.com/oliverhecker/docs/20140523_brosch_praktikum_a5_1405

<http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/Veroeffentlichungen/Merkblatt-Sammlung/MB7-Beschaeftigung-ausl-AN.pdf>

www.minijob-zentrale.de/

Concept & design

Johannes Hoch (editor)

Stephanie Burgstaller (text compilation & layout)

Christian Effenberger (concept & illustrations)

Appendix I: Sample CV

Your name

Street and house number

Postcode / town

Telephone number

Email address

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO
(no personal pictures!)

Personal details

Date of birth <<day month year>>

in <<place of birth>>

Marital status <<single/married>>

Advanced education and vocational training

Month/year – Month/Year **University / Educational institution, location**

Name of degree course / Name of vocational training course

- List your core fields of study
- Include supplementary and subsidiary courses
- For graduates:
 - o Topic of final dissertation and grade
 - o Total grade

Month/year – Month/year **First degree course / vocational training, place**

Name of degree course / Name of vocational training course

- Not everyone finishes their degree course!
- But it should be mentioned in your CV nonetheless

Month/year – Month/year **School, place**

- List your primary and secondary schools
(e.g., grammar school) here

Advanced training / Internships

Month/year – Month/year **Name of institute of higher education, place**

Institute / school

- Description of your advanced training

Month/year – Month/year **Company, place**

Description of internship

- If you have completed one or more internships, you should describe these in detail ONLY if they are recent and relevant for the position for which you are applying.

Professional experience

Since month/year **Company, place**

Job title (e.g., placement student position)

- If you work(ed) alongside your degree course, e.g., as a placement student or in a mini job, write a brief description here about what you do/did in your job..
- The aim is to convey to the reader succinctly and comprehensibly the main focus of your work.

Month/year – Month/year **Company, place**

Job title or description

- As above

Qualifications / Miscellaneous

Languages (e.g.) German: strong command

English: strong command

French: basic skills

IT skills (e.g.) Excellent knowledge of MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, Access

Additional qualifications: (e.g.) Marketing course, business administration course, Business English course

Memberships (e.g.) Help Africa e.V. (since 2010)

Place, (current!) date

Your signature

Even if it's hard, make sure your CV is no longer than two pages!

Appendix II: Sample cover letter for an internship

Mary Smith
Sample Street 1
12345 Sampletown
Phone: 123456789
Email: mary.smith@xxx.de

Sampletown, xx/xx/xxxx

Company ABC
Sam Sample
Sample Street 2
12345 Sampletown

Application for an internship

Dear Mr. Sample,

I am deeply impressed by the international focus and innovative approach of your company, and see it as a place of work where I – as a student who is interested in culture and eager to learn – could apply myself and develop my skills. Hence I would hereby like to apply for an internship in your company.

During the past five semesters of my cultural science degree at LMU University, I have acquired a broad and sound understanding of antique and modern cultures, as well as of Asian culture – an understanding which is reflected in my excellent grades. Having gained insights into culture management in my previous internship, I would now like to be involved directly as part of a work group in the development of new cultural projects and programs.

Appendix II: Sample cover letter for an

Besides the specialist knowledge acquired on my degree course, I also speak excellent English and Chinese, having spent two semesters abroad at UC Berkeley in California, USA and at the University of Peking in China. I am also actively involved in an international student organization where my primary responsibility is to teach German to international students and help them with everyday organization as they settle into Germany.

I would be most happy to introduce myself to you personally and grateful for the opportunity of an interview.

Yours faithfully,

Mary Smith

Appendix III: Internship checklist

Step 1: Finding an internship

- Find an internship (6-8 months in advance if you're coming from abroad; 2-4 months in advance if you're already in Germany).
- Application
- Acceptance

Step 2: What comes next after receiving formal acceptance?

- Internship contract (important!)
- Visa / work permit
- Accommodation
- Lodger for your apartment/room back home, if applicable
- Plane, bus or train ticket

For international students and graduates:

- Application for grant (as soon as you have been offered a place / given an internship contract)
- Valid passport
- Health, liability and accident insurance
- Apply for international student ID
- Refresh your German language skills
- Preparation for cross-cultural integration
- Information about Germany and the region of your internship

Step 3: At your destination

- Register with the local authorities
- For international students (where necessary): apply for a replacement income tax certificate (tax office)
- If required: open a bank account
- If required: mobile phone contract or pre-paid card
- If required: tickets for public transport

Step 4: After the internship

- Reference (important!)
- If required, or for your own benefit: internship report

Appendix IV: Sample cover letter for student jobs

Joe Bloggs

Samletown, xx/xx/xxxx

Sample Street 1

12345 Samletown

Phone: 123456789

Email: joe.bloggs@xxx.de

Company ABC

Sam Sample

Sample Street 2

12345 Samletown

Application for a placement student position

Dear Mr. Sample,

I am deeply impressed by the international focus and innovative approach of your company, and see it as a place of work where I – as a student who is interested in technology and eager to learn – could apply myself and develop my skills. Hence I would hereby like to apply for a student placement in your company.

I am a student at the Institute for Business Economics at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich where I am currently writing my Bachelor dissertation on the subject of “The Adaptability of Organizations in the Energy Sector”. I aim to successfully complete my degree course in February 2016. My decision to study was based on a desire to underpin my many years of hands-on experience in the energy sector with the corresponding theory.

The clear industry focus on energy and high level of competence in this field, coupled with the international focus, strengthened my desire to apply to ENERGIE AG. I am also

Appendix IV: Sample cover letter for student

interested in gaining professional experience in the field of management consultancy. My activities as a student consultant for Energie & Gas AG and an internship with Energie & Strom GmbH have given me first insights into this field of work. Here, two aspects in particular fascinate me with regard to management consultancy: Finding answers within a team for new fields and questions in order to find optimum solutions for the customer; and the personal and professional development connected with this process.

Allow me to briefly describe my strengths. In the past I have not only learned, but also demonstrated my ability to think analytically and tackle challenges strategically. Through working together with others on various levels, I have developed excellent social skills. I would now like to use my skills in order to qualitatively and quantifiably contribute to your company I would be delighted for an opportunity to meet you personally.

Yours faithfully,

Joe Bloggs

Enclosures