From International Students to Skilled Professionals: Can English-Taught Degree Programmes Help Address the Skills Shortage?

New Evidence from Germany

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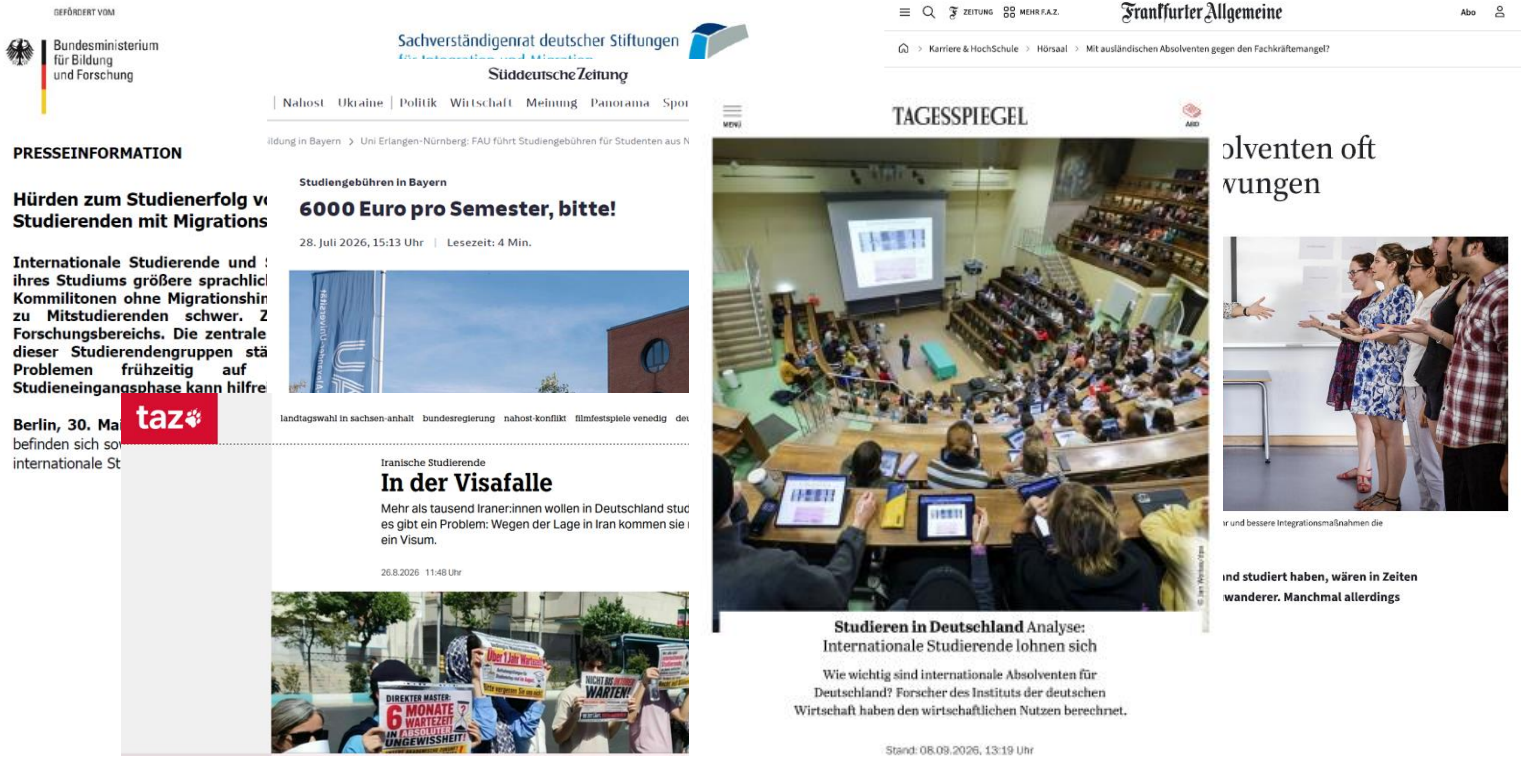
Eurostudent Talks
Online, 29 October 2026

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Background and Problem Statement

- Demographic trends and the shortage of skilled workers
- Studying in STEM Fields
- Recruiting international students
- English-Thaugt Degree Programms (ETP), 2009-2025
- International students in Germany (2014-2024)
- Effects and challenges have hardly been studied

Current Challenges



GEFÖRDERT VOM
Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

PRESSEINFORMATION

Hürden zum Studienerfolg v
Studierenden mit Migrations

Internationale Studierende und
ihres Studiums größere sprachlic
Kommilitonen ohne Migrationshi
zu Mitstudierenden schwer. Z
Forschungsbereichs. Die zentrale
dieser Studierendengruppen stä
Problemen frühzeitig auf
Studieneingangsphase kann hilfre

Berlin, 30. Ma
befinden sich so
internationale St

Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Nahost Ukraine | Politik Wirtschaft Meinung Panorama Spor

ildung in Bayern > Uni Erlangen-Nürnberg: FAU führt Studiengebühren für Studenten aus N

Studiengebühren in Bayern

6000 Euro pro Semester, bitte!

28. Juli 2026, 15:13 Uhr | Lesezeit: 4 Min.

landtagswahl in sachsen-anhalt bundesregierung nahost-konflikt filmfestspiele venedig deu

taz

Iranische Studierende

In der Visafalle

Mehr als tausend Iraner:innen wollen in Deutschland stud
es gibt ein Problem: Wegen der Lage in Iran kommen sie
ein Visum.

26.8.2026 11:48 Uhr

Frankfurter Allgemeine

Abo

Karriere & HochSchule > Hörsaal > Mit ausländischen Absolventen gegen den Fachkräftemangel?

TAGESSPIEGEL

Studieren in Deutschland Analyse:
Internationale Studierende lohnen sich

Wie wichtig sind internationale Absolventen für Deutschland? Forscher des Instituts der deutschen Wirtschaft haben den wirtschaftlichen Nutzen berechnet.

Stand: 08.09.2026, 13:19 Uhr

olventen oft
vungen

r und bessere Integrationsmaßnahmen die

nd studiert haben, wären in Zeiten
wanderer. Manchmal allerdings

Research questions and design of the ESDA study

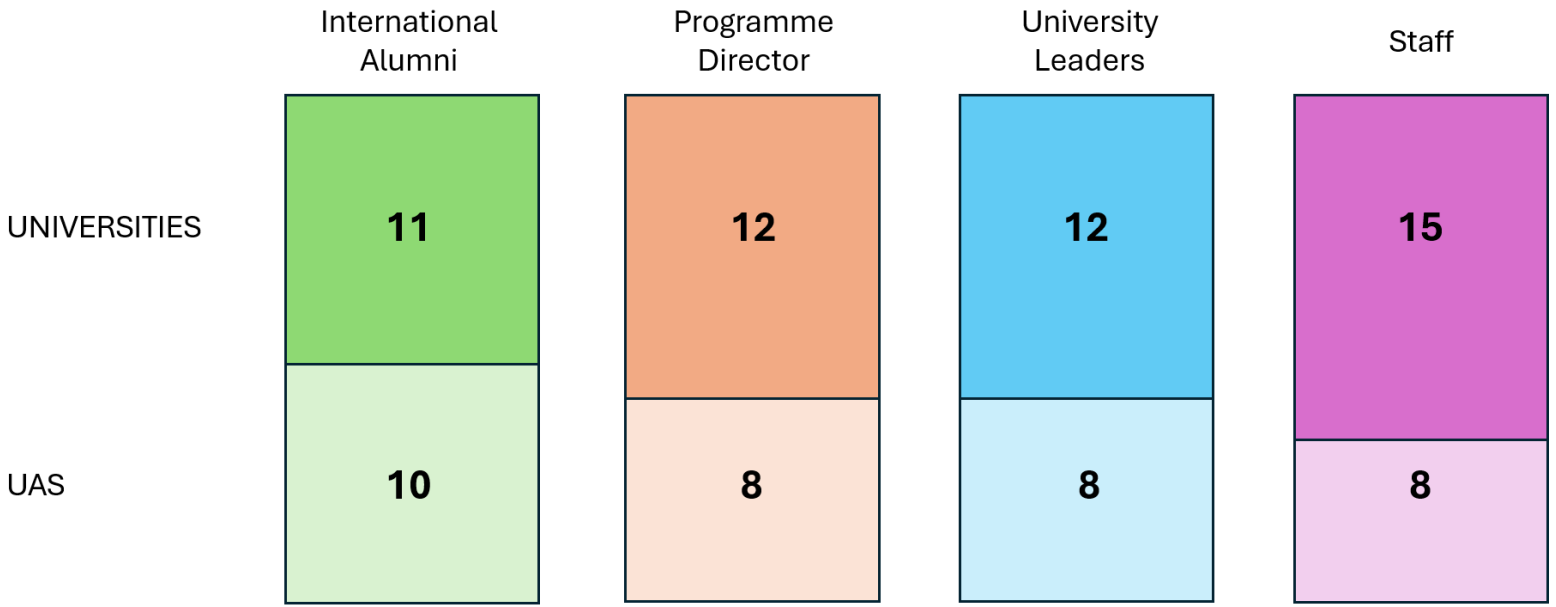
How can English-language degree programs help address the shortage of skilled workers in Germany?

- Attracting int. students
- Developing German language skills
- Preparing for the job market

- English-language STEM degree programs
- Publicly funded universities (universities and universities of applied sciences)
- Qualitative research design
- Four target groups

15.01.2025 — **DAAD / BMFTR** — **31.10.2026**

Target Groups



Data Collection Method	Qualitative Interviews	Expert-Interviews	Expert-Interviews	Group Discussions

Attracting int. students

Developing German language skills

Preparing for the job market

- Limited strategic management of recruitment
- Limited flexibility in adapting admission regulations
- …

Often no **admission restrictions**

Low **language barriers**

High number of applicants

Heterogeneous qualifications

Concentration on **specific countries of origin**

Manage recruitment more strategically

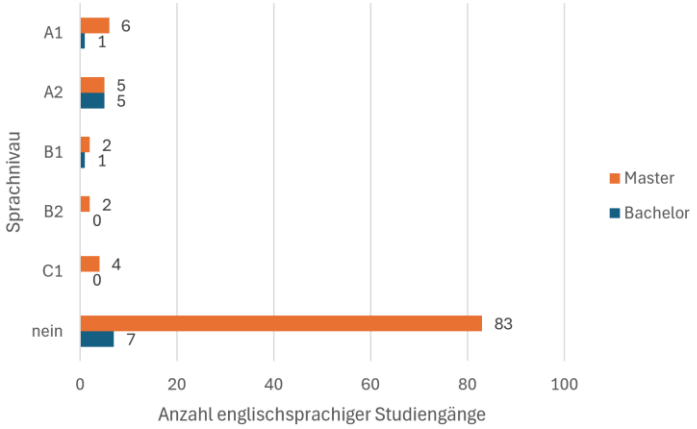
Focus more closely on target groups

Further develop selection procedures

English-language degree programs → Effects → areas of action

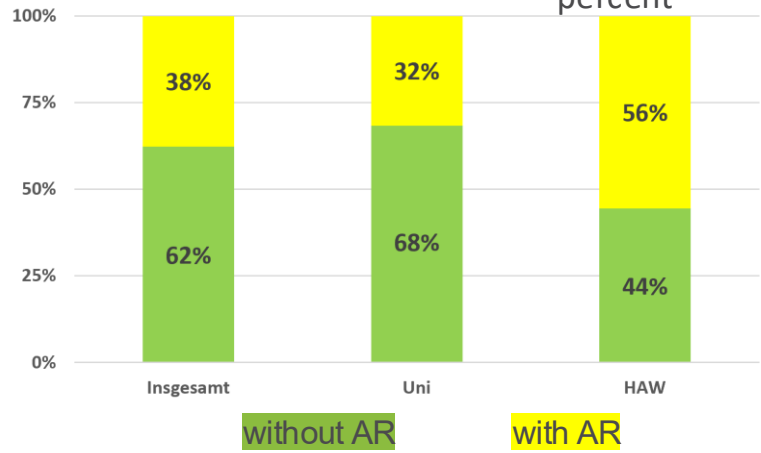
Recruitment and Admission

Structures of English-Language Degree Programmes



German language skills as an admission requirement (n=120)

Admission restrictions (AR) for English-language master's programmes (n=106) in percent



Source: Results of a website analysis, 2026

Attracting int. students

Developing German language skills

Preparing for the job market

- Limited Resources for Language Support and Coordination
- Language support and academic studies not always aligned
- …

Limited Importance of German at **the start of studies** and as a **language of instruction**

Language acquisition is **often not integrated into the curriculum**

Strong ties within intern. student groups**; limited contact with German students**

German language acquisition sometimes **begins late**

Use of voluntary programs is **sometimes low (additional burden)**

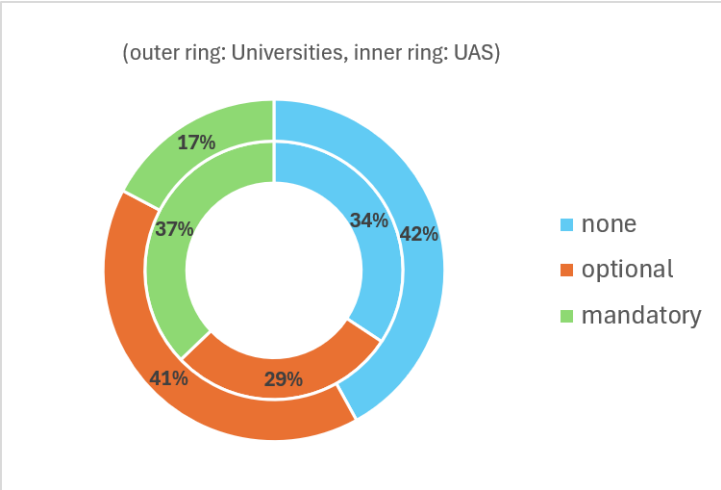
Integrate language support into the **curriculum at an early stage**

Better align academic studies with language support

English-language degree programs → Effects → areas of action

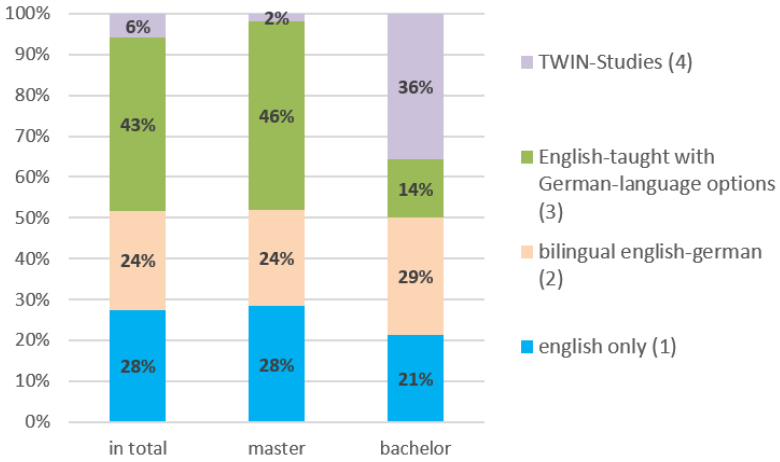
Social and Academic Integration

Structures of English-Language Degree Programs



Integration of German Language Acquisition into the Curriculum (n=120)

Prevalence of Different Language Models (n=120)



Source: Results of a website analysis, 2026

Attracting int. students

Developing German language skills

Preparing for the job market

- Requirements vary depending on the employer, field of work, and work environment
- Contacts with employers often depend on individual faculty members
- Employers often expect language skills at the B2/C1 level

German language acquisition usually up to a **maximum of Level A2/B1**

Practical experience is **not consistently integrated into the degree program**

Language barriers to gaining practical experience and employment

Lack of **practical experience and networks**

Limited **access to employers**

Combine early German language learning with practical experience

Facilitate **contacts with employers** early on

Establish **institutional links with employers**

English-language degree programs → Effects → areas of action

The potential of English-language degree programs depends on their organization and framework conditions.

Attracting int. students	Make the admission, recruitment, and selection processes more targeted
Developing German language skills	Establish language acquisition early on and integrate it into academic studies
Preparing for the job market	Facilitate practical experience and institutionally embed access to employers

ETPs can help ensure a supply of skilled workers if their design and relevant framework conditions are aligned.

From Findings to Practice

Where do you see room for flexibility—and where do HEIs and degree programmes reach their limits?

What changes would need to be made to the framework conditions, and how, so that ETPs can play a greater role in ensuring a supply of skilled workers?



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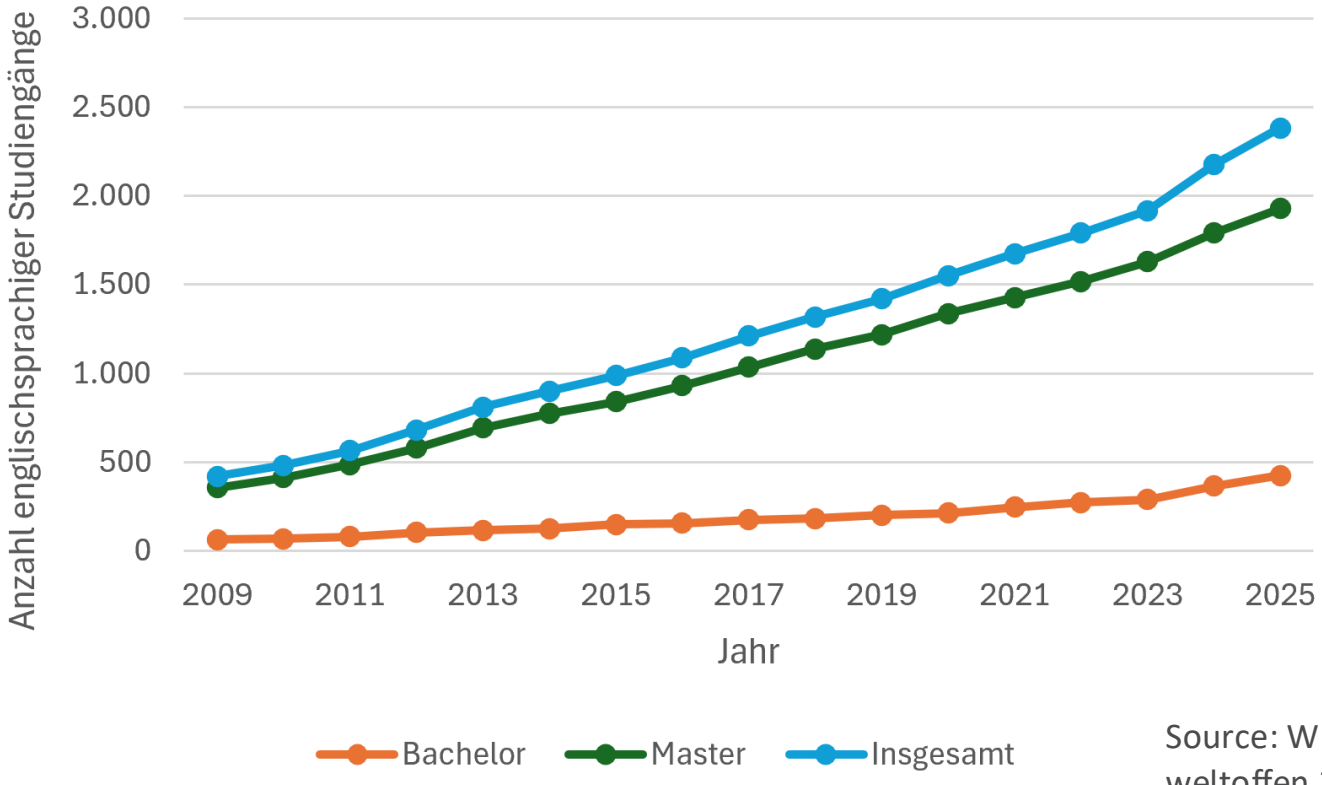


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DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
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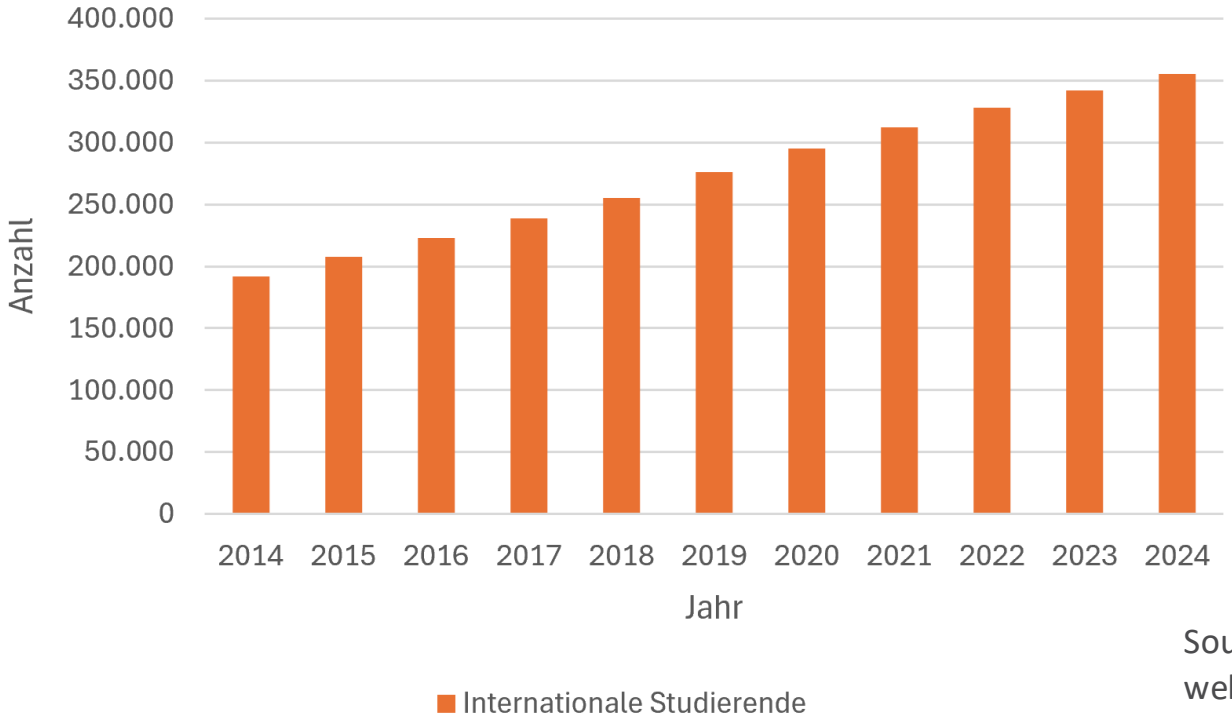
ETP Trends from 2009 to 2025



Source: Wissenschaft weltoffen 2025

International Students in Germany, 2014–2024

->back



Source: Wissenschaft weltoffen 2025