

# INFORMATION ON BAFÖG



## BAFÖG INTERNATIONAL BAFÖG FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT GERMAN CITIZENSHIP

**BAföG (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz) is the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act for university students in Germany. In many cases, non-German citizens studying in Germany are entitled to this grants-and-loans-system. Whether you are eligible depends mainly on the type of your residence title.**

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

In addition to the special conditions applying to non-German students which are described in this info sheet, the basic rules are the same as for Germans: Students can get BAFöG for their first cycle of education, meaning a bachelor's and a master's degree. If you have already started or completed university education abroad, the BAFöG office will check whether you are still entitled to get BAFöG.

Furthermore, the general age limitation for eligibility is set at 45 years when beginning a degree course. BAFöG may be granted in exceptional cases only, if the candidate is older than the set age limitation on starting their studies.

BAföG-funding is needs-based. It is granted if the prospective student's own financial means or those of his or her parents (or spouse) are insufficient for this purpose. Half of the BAFöG financial support is usually a grant, the remaining half an interest-free loan.

There are a few restrictions in the BAFöG-system for foreign students regarding the funding of studies in countries other than Germany.

### EU CITIZENS

There are different possibilities for EU citizens to get BAFöG. Citizens of Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland are legally equal to EU citizens regarding BAFöG.

### ENTITLEMENT TO BAFÖG BY WORKING IN GERMANY

EU citizens studying in Germany are entitled to BAFöG-funding if they are working in Germany at the same time. This is due to the right to freedom of movement for workers in the European Union. Students need to meet the following requirements to be eligible for funding:

- When first applying for BAFöG-funding, the student must have worked in Germany for at least ten weeks.
- As a rule, the employment must comprise of 12 weekly working hours (monthly average).
- If, in individual cases, the requirements are not (yet) met, please contact the BAFöG office for advice. To maintain the entitlement, the student must work in this extent during the whole course of studies.

These rules also apply to students who are self-employed.

In order to be entitled to BAFöG-funding, however, students may only work to the extent that allows them to pursue their studies full-time.

### ENTITLEMENT TO BAFÖG WITH RESIDENCE PERMIT AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES

Students from an EU member state are entitled to BAFöG-funding if they have a permanent residence permit in Germany. This is usually obtained after living in Germany for five years without interruption. For verification purposes, students need the permanent residence card.

Furthermore, students are entitled to funding if they are employed in a job that is substantially associated with their course of studies. In this case, the employment must have existed at least six months before taking up the studies.

Finally, EU citizens with a so-called secondary right to freedom of movement, i. e. spouses or children of EU citizens, are entitled to BAFöG-funding as well.

## CITIZENS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

Foreign students to whom the provisions relevant for EU citizens do not apply are nevertheless entitled to BAföG-funding under certain conditions.

## SETTLEMENT PERMIT

Students in possession of a settlement permit are entitled to BAföG-funding.

## RESIDENCE PERMIT + PROSPECTIVE RIGHT TO STAY IN GERMANY

Students with a residence permit may be entitled to get BAföG if they have a prospective right to stay in Germany for a longer period of time.

This applies especially to individuals meeting one of the following criteria:

- The student is officially recognized as an asylum seeker or as a refugee, or the residence permit was issued for humanitarian or political reasons.

- The student is the spouse of a German citizen.
- The student has custody of a minor with German citizenship.
- As the spouse or child of a foreign citizen holding a settlement permit, the student has a residence permit in accordance to sec. 30 or sec. 32-34 of the German Residence Act („Aufenthaltsgesetz“).
- Students in possession of a temporary residence permit according to §24 of the German Residence Act, or a corresponding probatory certificate („Fiktionsbescheinigung“).

## RESIDENCE PERMIT + 15 MONTHS IN GERMANY

All other foreign students holding a residence permit are only entitled to receive BAföG once they have legally lived in Germany for at least 15 months.

This case applies to individuals under certain deportation bans or foreigners who hold a temporary suspension of deportation in accordance with section 60 a subs. 2 sentence 3 of the Residence Act.

## OTHER POSSIBILITIES

Furthermore, students are eligible to receive BAföG-funding

- if they have been working for five years in Germany before taking up their studies OR
- if a parent has been working in Germany for a total of three years over the course of the last six years before taking up his/her studies.

### Important notice:

Students who are staying in Germany with a residence permit according to sec. 16 of the Residence Act, i. e. exclusively for the purpose of pursuing their academic education, are not eligible for BAföG-funding (unless they fulfill one of the conditions described above at the same time).

We strongly advise international students to contact our office so that we can examine your individual case.

READ MORE ONLINE

[www.sw-ol.de/geld/bafog](http://www.sw-ol.de/geld/bafog)



## NEED TO KNOW MORE?

Please contact the advisors at the BAföG office in Oldenburg or the on-campus offices in Emden and Wilhelmshaven for any further questions.

