

Germany – Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich

Institution	Ludwig-Maximilians University (LMU)
Study programs	LMU provides Bachelor- and Master programs (national and international) in education as well as structured PhD programs. http://www.fak11.lmu.de/studium/index.html
Skills in German language	German language skills are necessary for admission for many study programs, but there are also study programs in English language: http://www.en.mcls.lmu.de/study_programs/master/index.html
Study fees	There are no study fees at LMU
Interviewed Person	Person working in the International Office of the LMU

I – Preparation

The interviewee is working at the international office of the LMU. The International Office is a central partner in the internationalization-strategy of the LMU and an important interface between international students, the administration, the faculties and international institutions. It is a contact to foreign students and scientists as well as to students and scientists from the LMU who would like to go abroad. There are a number of cooperations within the LMU and with partner-universities and initiatives. Among others the International Office supports refugees and asylum seekers in beginning their study at the LMU by offering information and guidance, exchange or German language courses. In addition the International Office gives grants for some foreign students. (http://www.en.uni-muenchen.de/students/degree/admission_info/informationen_fluechtinge/index.html) As one of the biggest universities in Germany the LMU offers much support on different levels (see below). Nevertheless, this support is only designed for first-year students.

II - Awareness

The guidelines are enacted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in Germany and be the Bavarian Government. The International Office of the LMU – which was founded in order to facilitate the internalization of the LMU as one of the leading German Universities – has taken over these rules since 2015.

The German regulations give attention to refugees / asylum seekers to facilitate their start at the LMU. Two criterions have to be met to achieve this aim: First, the authorities need official documents that proof the refugee's qualification for admission to higher education (in Germany normally the 'Abitur'). And second, the applicants have to proof that their German language skills are at least at a C1 level. The interviewed person has told us that about 95% of the refugees / asylum seekers have to take courses to learn German. The International Office offers special courses which are free of charge to all of them. Again in 95% of the cases the refugees / asylum seekers have the official documents from their schools and universities in their portfolio in Germany.

III - Starting up

In the case that the refugee / asylum seeker doesn't fulfill the requirements he will be asked for an interview. In this procedure at least one document (or copy of a document) should be available (e.g. an enrolment receipt or a copy of a school report). Especially in Syria it is easily possible to get a duplicate from the Syrian administration. Sometimes the Embassy of Syria can help, at least if the person comes from a big city there. Concerning the universities of Aleppo or Idlib this is not possible because they were destroyed completely. In some

exceptions it is even possible to do without the documents due to the results of the interview.

In addition to that two possibilities exist in order to get permission to visit a university. One opportunity is a visit at the so called 'Studienkolleg' to prepare for a test. Refugees / asylum seekers can get registered at the 'Studienkolleg' by a University. When they are registered the refugees / asylum seekers can visit preparatory courses in German, Mathematics, English, Science, History etc. The head of the 'Studienkolleg' is a director of a Gymnasium and normally the lessons are held by teachers from a Gymnasium. Hence the 'Studienkolleg' can be regarded as a special form of a Gymnasium. There are about 350 to 400 participants every year. The alternative would be the participation in a test, which can proof the ability of a refugee to start his / her studies at a German University. This test is available online (<https://www.testas.de/>). One just registers and compiles a user account. The test is done online. It gives a detailed feedback about the measured competences. The records of the LMU don't show any case of a person who applied through such a test. Only students from the 'Studienkolleg' applied at the LMU. This may be due to the fact that the 'Studienkolleg' is located in Munich. Therefore, the situation might be different at other universities.

IV – Documentation and support

Because of this understanding

- a) of the situation of the refugees / asylum seekers and
- b) of the duties of a University or the International Office within a university

methods of validating personal competencies such as 'Profil-Pass' or 'Kompetenzbilanz' – which are well established methods in Germany are not applied by the International Office.

V - Assessment

The International Office sees its duties primarily in the documentation of achieved degrees during the life course of the refugees / asylum seekers. This system of documentation is more or less a formal procedure. The interview partner mentioned that a validation of competencies would imply a cooperation with the faculties and their departments because this validation would be subject-based. So the first step had to be to find out the subject the refugee / asylum seeker wanted to study. A validation of competences then had to be done by the professors of these subjects. – According to literature the understanding of the International Office would be named vocational guidance. A validation of competencies has to have a content. But this content is not necessarily a subject that can be studied at a university. What the International Office does is to facilitate contacts to the subject orientated guidance and to the coordinators of the subjects and to put a validation of competences into their responsibility.

Worth mentioning is a further possibility offered by the LMU. The refugees / asylum seekers can apply as a guest student. As official guests they can visit lectures and write tests, similar to ERASMUS-students. If they are matriculated later the results of the tests are credited. But normally the refugees' / asylum seekers' German is too poor to pass tests in a multiple choice format.

Furthermore, there are special grants for foreign students. They can get a grant for a one year period. Every foreign student can apply. The criterions to get a grant are orientated at the social needs so that refugees / asylum seekers have good chances to get such a grant. The grant is 650 Euros a month. Especially in Munich it is one of the biggest problems of refugees /asylum seekers to finance their visit at the university. It is not necessary to be accepted as an asylum seeker.

VI – Impact

In addition to that the International Office cooperates with different groups in Munich offering guidance for refugees / asylum seekers on an initial level (e.g. ,Student4 refugees': <http://students4refugees.de/>). Those groups receive money for us to finance assistant workers. We stand in close contact to these groups. They have got their own contacts and networks to support the refugees and to give them help that does not belong to our duties.