

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	Refugee

I – Preparation

24, male, Damascus (Syria), in Germany since December 2015, with residence permit

II - Awareness

I studied English Literature in Syria. But I didn't finish. I studied for 6 semesters and I would have to do 8 semesters. Only 4 semesters were officially recognized in Germany. I applied at the LMU to continue my studies. In Syria I was planning to finish my English Literature Study and then acquire computer skills Like in Syria: If you can speak English and have computer skills you can work nearly everywhere. My plan was to learn programming languages in a private institute. But here studying English Literature is different than in Syria. It is Literature and not Language. E.g. in Syria if you have studies English Literature you can become a teacher after one year. But in Germany this is not possible. You have to do different studies. I didn't know this and wanted to become a teacher as I came to Germany. The LMU told me that I have to study three subjects to become a teacher. I wanted to study sports and English, but then I had to do my studies at the Technical University (sports) and at the LMU (English) and that didn't work out well. And then I heard what a teacher can do and has to do in Germany from a friend who is a teacher here. And after that I said to me: ok not teacher any more. What I want to do now is to complete my studies and then work as an interpreter. I can speak several languages.

The validation of my documents was easy and I got them validated very early here. I had my passport and my certificates and it took about six months to get them validated. But then in 2016, one week before the time for application ended I was told that my documents were not complete. I had to get in contact with Syria to get the documents validated and so I lost one year. I supported by the International Office of the LMU and the counselling service there. With the help of my mother in Damascus who went to the university there it was possible to get my documents validated.

IV – Documentation and support

I think I can do a lot of things here and I am in the right county. But there are so many barriers. It is not always easy to get what you want. E.g. I want to work as an interpreter here. But here in Germany there is a special training in certified school for interpreters. But as I get money for unemployed people (Hartz IV in German) I will not get any more money if I am a student. And there is no financial support for students (BaFög) if you visit such a school for interpreters. And I would get much money if I worked as an interpreter without a

certificate. But if I start studying English literature at the LMU I get financial support (BaFög). And then I hope that I can work as an interpreter because of my university certificate plus the languages I learned through my whole life. And: I studied English literature in Syria for three years and I don't want to throw this away.

V - Assessment

What I have found is that people in Germany e.g. in the International Office know a lot about Syria, but not enough to validate unusual cases. What is helping me in Germany are (German) friends who explain the German educational system to me so that I can decide how I can do the things that I want to do here. And it was easy for me to make some friends here.