

## Learning and Teaching Culture in Germany

In order to complete your studies successfully you need good language skills as well as a high interest in your subject of study. Besides this, it is also particularly important to understand the teaching and learning culture of the country and university you are studying at! It is very likely that in your home country there is a different understanding of how a study program is structured, what good scientific work consist of and which skills and knowledge is demanded from students in general.

### The following aspects are expected from students in Germany:

- personal responsibility for study organization and time management
- open and constructive communication
- autonomous, critical and analytical way of thinking and questioning
- proactive participation in lectures and group work
- attend to additional support offerings and events - if suitable
- compliance with formal conditions and regulations

This means, students in Germany must initiate action themselves and should not wait until others ask them to do so! To take self-initiative is not impolite but rather a sign of independency and it shows the interest in your studies.

There is no precise checklist of how to behave and what to do while studying in Germany. Yet, in order to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments we would like to provide you with some information about what is demanded and expected from students in general. You can understand them as a guide of understanding the teaching and learning culture at Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences and how you can meet them best.

### **Events and important deadlines**

- Inform yourself about preparatory courses and introductory events right at the beginning of your studies and partake in those. You can find more information about the first semester [here](#).
- Find out about current semester [dates and deadlines](#) and add them to your personal calendar. Especially important are lecture and examination periods, the duration of exam registrations as well as re-registration deadlines.
- Watch out for additional [events](#) and advisory services offered by the university and register for those. You can benefit from workshops or seminars and master your studies well from the beginning. As an example, the [Language Service](#) offers C1 German courses, Excel classes or workshops for scientific writing.

However, it is up to you to look out for offerings and thus take advantage of them. It is your personal responsibility to inform yourself and assess which basic competencies and soft skills you would like to develop for your studies. If you sign up for events make sure you attend those and if not, cancel timely.

## **Before, during and after lectures**

- Make sure you do not miss any lectures. Be there on time and stay until the end.
- Prepare your courses well, i.e. read the relevant literature and prepare questions in advance.
- Take an active part, i.e. participate in discussions and in the development of solutions.

Be prepared for the fact that the contents and suitable solutions are not only presented in the courses. Usually a problem is discussed and suitable solutions are to be worked out together. The goal is to show the students how problems can be approached and solutions derived, so that you can apply this independently to other problems later on.

- Take notes during the courses.
- Work through your notes afterwards, i.e. compare them with the working materials and slides provided by the professor. Mark important parts and prepare questions for the next session if necessary.
- If things remain unclear, ask your fellow students if they can explain it to you or visit your professor's office hours.

## **Tips for effective learning and scientific work**

- Form study groups with other students and take part in those regularly.
- Structure your week in a balanced way so that you have enough time for self-study, work and leisure.
- Learn continuously throughout the whole semester so that the active study period before the exams is not too stressful.
- Organize your workplace (desk) in a way that prevents you from distraction and keeps you motivated.
- For writing scientific papers and projects, inform yourself about the right format, structure and citation style.
- Make sure you name always the author/researcher when using results or statements etc. from their work.
- Ask someone to proof-read your work and also request feedback or improvement suggestions. Here, we highly recommend you to use the [Student Mentoring Program for Writing](#) by HSHL.

## **General behavior and principles when dealing with others**

- Communicate directly and openly, but be respectful and polite.
- Address problems timely as they arise and discuss them rather objectively than emotionally.
- Criticize in a constructive way and not only show what was good and what was not, but also make suggestions for improvement if appropriate.
- Do not hesitate to approach students and professors in order to integrate well.
- Ask for help whenever you need to.

**Reflect on your study progress and wellbeing on a regular basis.**

- Do I feel comfortable at the university?
- Do I get along well in class?
- Is there a good and healthy work-life balance?
- Am I in touch with other students and do I feel integrated?
- Are there any deficits in lessons or in other areas I should address?  
→ e.g. knowledge of German, scientific writing, correct etc.
- Am I still motivated to achieve my goals?
- Can I cope with stress and exam situations?

**If you notice any problems or difficulties, do not hesitate to seek support or get advice at...**

...the [International Office](#)



internationaloffice@hshl.de

...the [General Student Counseling](#)



studienberatung@hshl.de

...the [Career Service](#) or



career@hshl.de

...the [Zentrum für Wissensmanagement](#).