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“Wissenschaft weltoffen 2020”

Since 2001, the DAAD has been analysing data on the internationalisation of studies, research and higher education from Germany as well as from particularly relevant countries and regions such as the USA, the United Kingdom or Asia.

These include figures on international students in Germany, data on mobility behaviour, an overview of students' countries of origin and host countries as well as developments in the field of doctorates. A special data analysis sheds light on the status quo and trends at universities and research institutes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The study integrates international data from OECD and UNESCO as well as national data from the Federal Statistical Office in Germany. In combination with other indicators, it provides a valid basis for long-term analyses.

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Authors

Rachel Estévez Prado (DAAD)
Katharina Fourier (DAAD)
Dr. Ulrich Heublein (DZHW)
Dr. Julia Hillmann (DAAD)
Christopher Hutzsch (DZHW)
Alexander Kupfer (DAAD)
Dr. Jan Kercher (DAAD)
Dr. Christian Schäfer (DAAD)

Data preparation

Configuration and evaluation of the Wissenschaft
weltoffen web information system: Martin Fuchs,
Dr. Ulrich Heublein, Christopher Hutzsch (DZHW)

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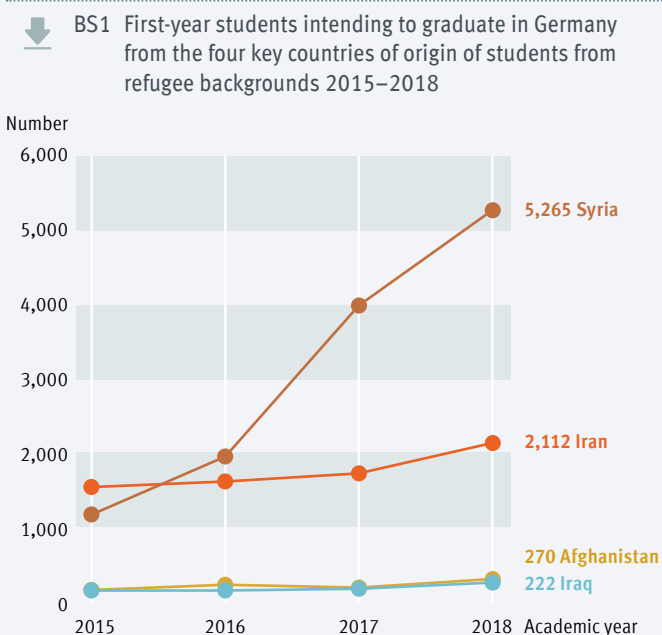
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Education is the key to integrating refugees into society and the workforce. Around 37% of the people who have found refuge in Germany since 2015 are between 18 and 30 years of age – i.e. at an age at which they aspire to an education.¹ For people of this age in particular, flight means not only leaving their home country and often their families, but also saying farewell to educational paths already begun or planned, which are of decisive importance for their lives now and in the future. The aim of German education and higher education policy is, therefore, to establish suitable access to educational opportunities to create new perspectives for the refugees, whether for their future life in Germany or, in the case of a later return, in their home countries. The DAAD's higher education programmes for refugees, which have enabled thousands of refugees to gain access to a German university over the past four years, can make a major contribution to this.

Numbers of refugee students at German universities

When students enrol at German universities, it is not recorded whether they come from refugee backgrounds. The number of students in Germany who arrived as refugees can therefore only be estimated. Between 2016 and 2019, around 30,000 refugees prepared for university studies on language and subject-specific courses. Based on DAAD funding data, it can be assumed that the four key countries of origin for refugee students (Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq) easily account for 90% of all refugee students in Germany. If one also assumes that a majority (around 90%) of the students from these countries of origin are from refugee backgrounds, this results in a figure of around 22,000 refugee



Source: DAAD

DAAD funding programmes for refugees

The BMBF-funded DAAD Integra – Integration of Refugees into Studies programme supports language and subject courses at German universities and preparatory courses for higher education admission to prepare students for and support their studies. In addition, the programme supports measures to ensure the success of their studies by focusing more strongly on study guidance and measures to prepare students for the labour market.

The NRWege ins Studium programme is currently financing additional staff at 28 North Rhine-Westphalian universities to coordinate and expand the advice and support structures at the universities, in addition to measures to prepare and support students. It also awards scholarships for especially talented and committed refugees.

This approach is rounded off by the BMBF-funded Welcome – Students Helping Refugees programme, which funds student projects to help prospective students who have experienced being refugees to get to and integrate at university.

Based on a 2016 survey conducted by the BAMF (SOEP), it is assumed that around 11% of the refugees in Germany have at least a first university degree.² In order to tap this academic potential, the BMBF's "PROFI" programme has created a new type of support programme in addition to the existing refugee programmes from 2020 onwards. It aims to enable highly qualified refugees to find employment in Germany in line with their qualifications and, at the same time, to counteract the shortage of skilled workers that has been identified in many areas of the German labour market.

A similar programme has been created at state level in North Rhine-Westphalia: NRWege Lighthouses – Projects for the sustainable internationalisation of universities. One focus here is on the development and implementation of shortened study programmes for teachers who have fled, which at the same time promote (labour market) integration and address the prevailing shortage of skilled workers.

students who were seeking a degree at a German university in 2019. The corresponding figure in 2015 was still around 9,000 students. If this trend continues, as DAAD funding data suggest, it can be assumed that around 30,000 refugee students at German universities will have fled in 2020. If the same assumptions are applied to international first-year students, the total number of first-year students with a refugee background in the years 2015 to 2018 was around 21,000 (data for 2019 will not be available until the end of 2020). Based on the available data from the DAAD funding programmes, it can also be assumed that, since 2015, around 2,000 to 3,000 students from refugee backgrounds have successfully completed a master's programme at a university in Germany.

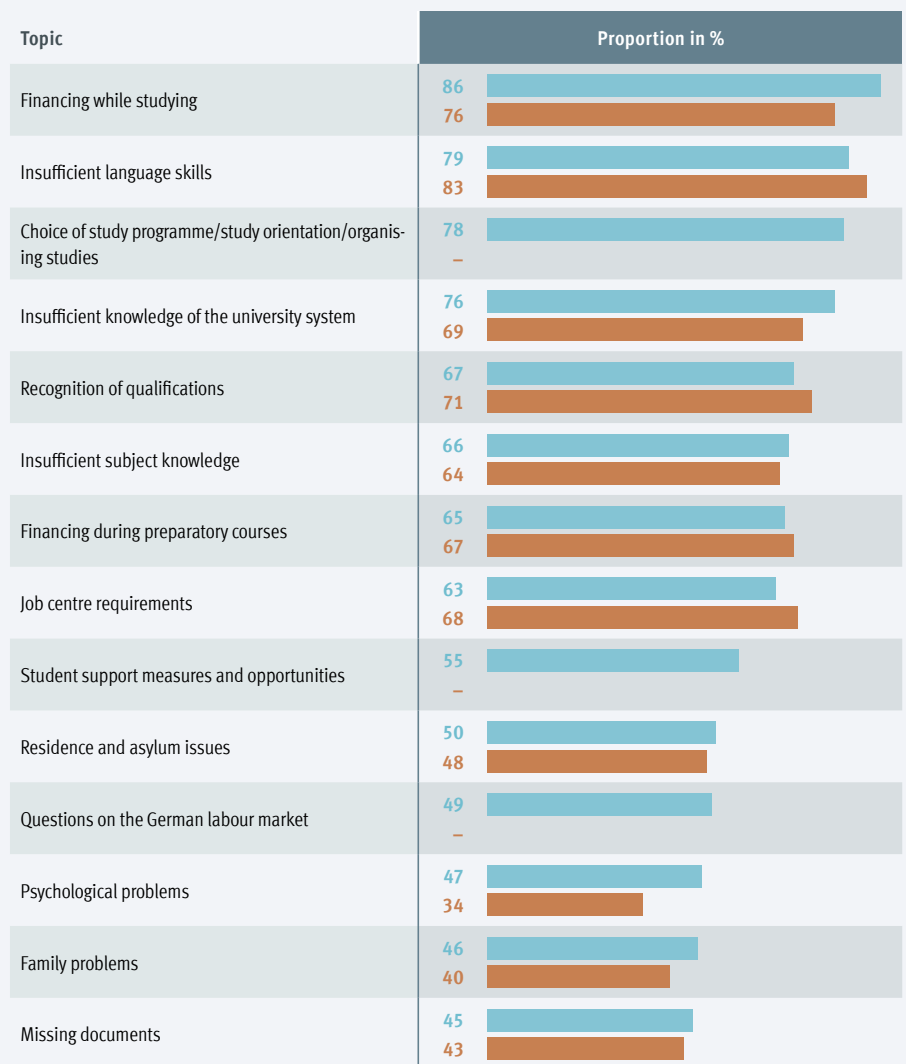
Support requirements and intentions to stay

Each year, universities provide over 43,000 advisory sessions for refugees interested in studying. When advising refugees, the universities and preparatory courses for higher education admission are confronted with many different and sometimes complex issues that go far beyond the usual subjects of advice and competencies of student advisory services. At the same time, however, there are also many areas of overlap with counselling for other international and also German students.

Consultations with prospective refugee students most often address limited or non-existent German language skills. Inadequate language skills thus continue to be one of the biggest obstacles to successfully starting a course of study. Almost as frequently in 2018, there were questions about the choice of study programme, study orientation and organisation: topics that were not yet issues in consultations in 2017. Insufficient knowledge of the German higher education system continues to be one of the topics most frequently addressed, as are financing issues. While, in 2017, covering living expenses during preparatory courses was still one of the topics that arose most often, this question extended to financing options for university study in 2018. A lack of specialist knowledge and questions about measures and opportunities related to study were also addressed much more frequently last year than in 2017. More inquiries were also received about the labour market and job opportunities in Germany.

This indicates that students who have experienced being refugees are looking into ca-

BS2 Major topics of advice for prospective students from refugee backgrounds in Germany 2017 and 2018



Proportion in %: 2018 2017

Source: DAAD

reer opportunities in Germany, both before and during their studies. Evidently, a significant proportion of these students see their working future in Germany rather than in their country of origin. This corresponds to the results of a DAAD survey of people funded within the Integra programme, according to which 89% of the refugees from the 2017 cohort surveyed intend to work in Germany after completing their studies, while only 6% were unable to answer this ques-

tion with certainty and 5% said they had no intention or gave no response.

Starting university and study characteristics

The refugees surveyed by the DAAD who were already studying at the time of the survey enrolled primarily in the subject groups of engineering sciences (47%), law,

* Footnotes

- 1 Cf. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen (years 2015–2019).
- 2 Cf. Brücker et al. (2018).

economics and social sciences (16%), and mathematics and natural sciences (12%). At 57%, most aspire to a bachelor’s degree, almost 1 in 3 hope to obtain a master’s degree (32%), 7% want to take a state examination, and as many as 3% are aiming for a doctorate. While 33% of the refugees felt well prepared in their studies, 50% reported that they were not sure whether they would be able to meet the academic requirements. 17% considered themselves to be badly or very badly prepared. It is interesting to note in this context that, despite these assessments, a clear majority of 81% say that they are likely or very likely to complete their studies successfully in Germany. Only 5% assume that they are less likely to complete their studies successfully.

The most common reason given by refugees for withdrawing from their studies in Germany is language problems. This was cited by around a third of the respondents (32%) who were concerned about the possibility of withdrawing. Academic reasons were also cited by as many as 14% as a possible reason for withdrawal, as were problems in their private lives (13%) or financial problems (11%). Almost one in three also stated that other reasons could prevent the successful completion of their studies or that several reasons could have a combined impact.

Outlook: challenges and perspectives

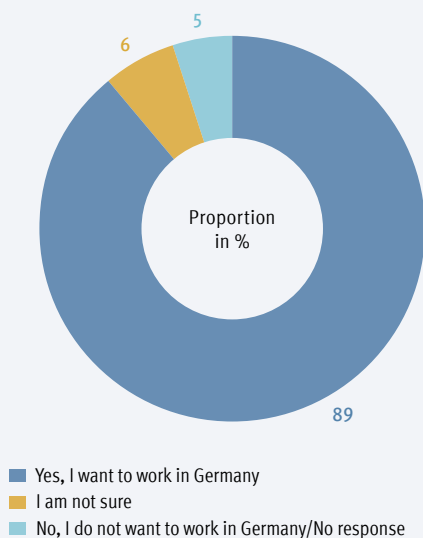
Refugees’ interest in tertiary education remains high. This is indicated by the high number of advisory sessions provided by universities, the well-attended preparatory courses for higher education admission and the increasing number of enrolled students from refugee backgrounds. In future, it will be important

to focus more strongly on ensuring the success in their studies. The higher education programmes for refugees were developed in such a way that it is possible to react flexibly to the educational progress of prospective students or students with a refugee background and to expand the programme design in line with requirements. Based on the experience of the universities and course participants, the call for proposals for the higher education programmes for the funding period from 2020 onwards placed extra emphasis on such measures as the language, specialist and methodological courses to support university study, as well as on measures to prepare students for the labour market. In addition, the courses have been partially opened to allow international students to participate.

The experiences of refugees in higher education provide evidence that offering specialist support, including specialist terminology, and social assistance, can reduce the withdrawal rate and thus contribute to improving the rates of success among international students in Germany.

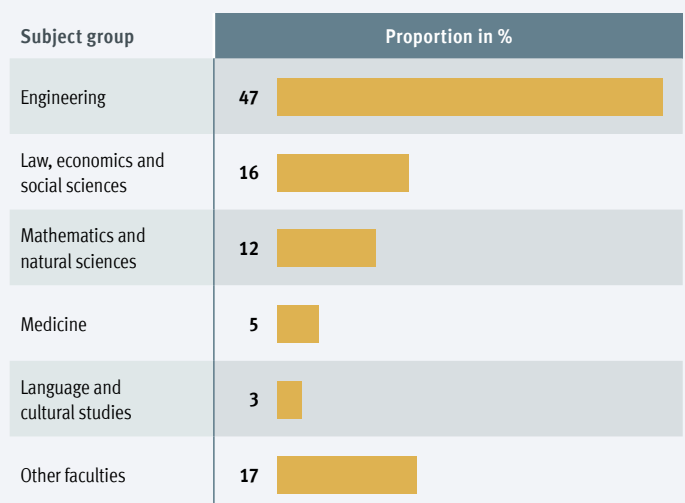
The integration of refugees and international skilled workers into the German labour market is one of the most important challenges for the years to come. For this reason, making international students more eligible for funding programmes and targeting their preparation for the German labour market during their studies represent two further central fields of action for future programme design. By expanding the programmes in line with demand, the challenges can be met with foresight and a strong foundation can be laid for the successful integration of international students into our society and labour market.

BS3 Integra programme participants by intention to remain 2018



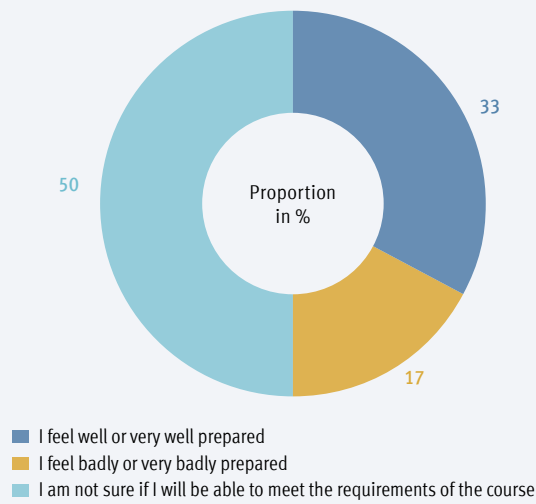
Source: DAAD

BS4 Former Integra participants who have started a degree course, by selected subject group 2018



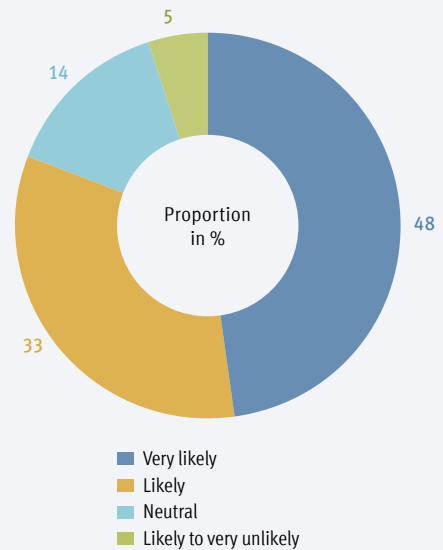
Source: DAAD

BS5 Integra programme participants who have started a degree course, by evaluation of degree requirements 2018



Source: DAAD

BS6 Integra programme participants who have started a degree course, by assessment of the likelihood of graduating successfully 2018



Source: DAAD

BS7 Integra programme participants who have started a degree course and are considering withdrawing, by possible reasons for lack of success in studies 2018

Possible reasons	Proportion in %
Language problems	32
Academic problems	14
Problems in private life	13
Financial problems	11
Multiple/other reasons	30

Source: DAAD