



This is an excerpt from the publication

“Wissenschaft weltoffen 2024”

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. The current edition presents the most important results and graphics.

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. Special data analyses shed 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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English-language study programmes are a central instrument in the internationalisation of university teaching in Germany and other non-English speaking countries. Not only do they offer domestic students an internationalised form of study, they are also an important factor in attracting international students and teaching staff.

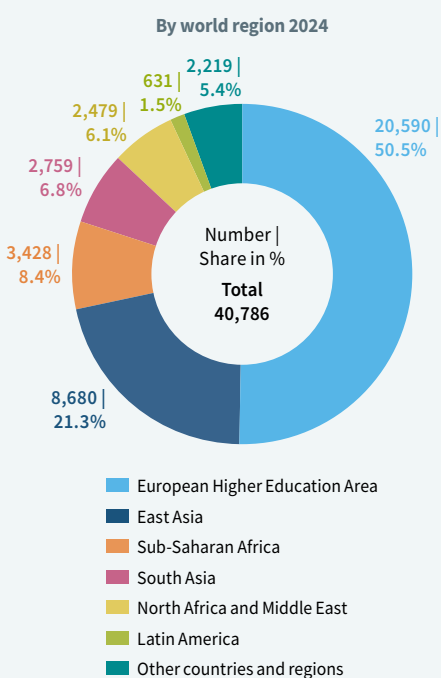
Sharp rise in English-language study programmes around the world

According to a recent analysis¹ undertaken by the British Council (in cooperation with the private education service provider Studyportals), just under 41,000 English-language, on-campus study programmes were available worldwide for bachelor’s and master’s degrees, outside the “Big Four” host countries of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, in March 2024. This number has tripled over the last decade, almost doubling (+49%) in the past five years, whereby the growth in bachelor’s programmes (+59%) since 2019 has noticeably outstripped that for master’s (+43%). Currently, a good 22% of the approximately 183,000 English-language study programmes worldwide identified in the analysis are offered outside the Big Four.

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) accounts for over half of these degree programmes (around 20,600); the key non-English speaking provider countries are Germany (2,300) and the Netherlands (2,100). However, particularly marked gains in the range of programmes in the EHEA since 2019 are reported in Italy (+46%), Turkey (+55%) and notably in the Czech Republic (+78%). Outside the EHEA, the widest selection of English-language degree programmes can be found in China² (3,500), South Africa (2,800), Malaysia (2,400) and India (1,600).

The analysis carried out by the British Council also looked at which curricular aspects predominate in the English-language study programmes in non-English speaking countries. Universities in the non-English speaking countries make a conscious decision as to which degree programmes are to be offered in English and which are not. Therefore, a comparison between the key English-speaking countries (the Big Four) and the non-English speaking countries is particularly relevant with regard to the distribution of subjects.³ The results show that, in relation to the English-language study programmes in non-English speaking countries, the subject groups of business & management, engineering & technology are over-represented, while the humanities, education & training, arts, design & architecture tend to be under-represented.

FS1 English-language study programmes offered outside the Big Four (US, UK, Canada, Australia), by world region and key non-English speaking provider countries, in 2019 and 2024⁴



Provider country	2019		2024		Development 2019-2024	
	Number	in %	Number	in %	Number	in %
China ²	1,475	5.4	3,512	8.6	+138	
South Africa	1,833	6.7	2,772	6.8	+51	
Malaysia	973	3.6	2,397	5.9	+146	
Germany	1,906	7.0	2,269	5.6	+19	
Netherlands	1,946	7.1	2,104	5.2	+8	
India	363	1.3	1,610	3.9	+344	
Turkey	1,035	3.8	1,602	3.9	+55	
France	1,020	3.7	1,323	3.2	+30	
Italy	831	3.0	1,212	3.0	+46	
Spain	1,157	4.2	1,027	2.5	-11	
Sweden	933	3.4	1,019	2.5	+9	
Pakistan	214	0.8	913	2.2	+327	
United Arab Emirates	304	1.1	719	1.8	+137	
Switzerland	592	2.2	658	1.6	+11	
Iran	46	0.2	651	1.6	+1,315	
Poland	515	1.9	642	1.6	+25	
Japan	246	0.9	554	1.4	+125	
Jamaica	233	0.9	499	1.2	+114	
South Korea	326	1.2	489	1.2	+50	
Thailand	184	0.7	467	1.1	+154	
Portugal	385	1.4	459	1.1	+19	
Finland	485	1.8	457	1.1	-6	
Belgium	399	1.5	457	1.1	+15	
Czech Republic	255	0.9	453	1.1	+78	
Cyprus	485	1.8	450	1.1	-7	
Other countries	9,225	33.7	12,071	29.6	+31	
Total	27,366	100	40,786	100	+49	

Source: British Council/Studyportals

FS2 English-language study programmes offered within and outside the Big Four (US, UK, Canada, Australia), by selected subject groups, in 2024³

Big Four in %	Subject group	Other countries in %
12	Business & Management	18
7	Engineering & Technology	15
16	Social Sciences	13
11	Natural Sciences & Mathematics	11
6	Computer Science & IT	9
8	Medicine & Health	7
11	Humanities	6
10	Arts, Design & Architecture	5
4	Environmental Studies & Earth Sciences	5
7	Education & Training	2
2	Journalism & Media	2
2	Law	2

Source: British Council/Studyportals

English-language study programmes in Germany: development and distribution

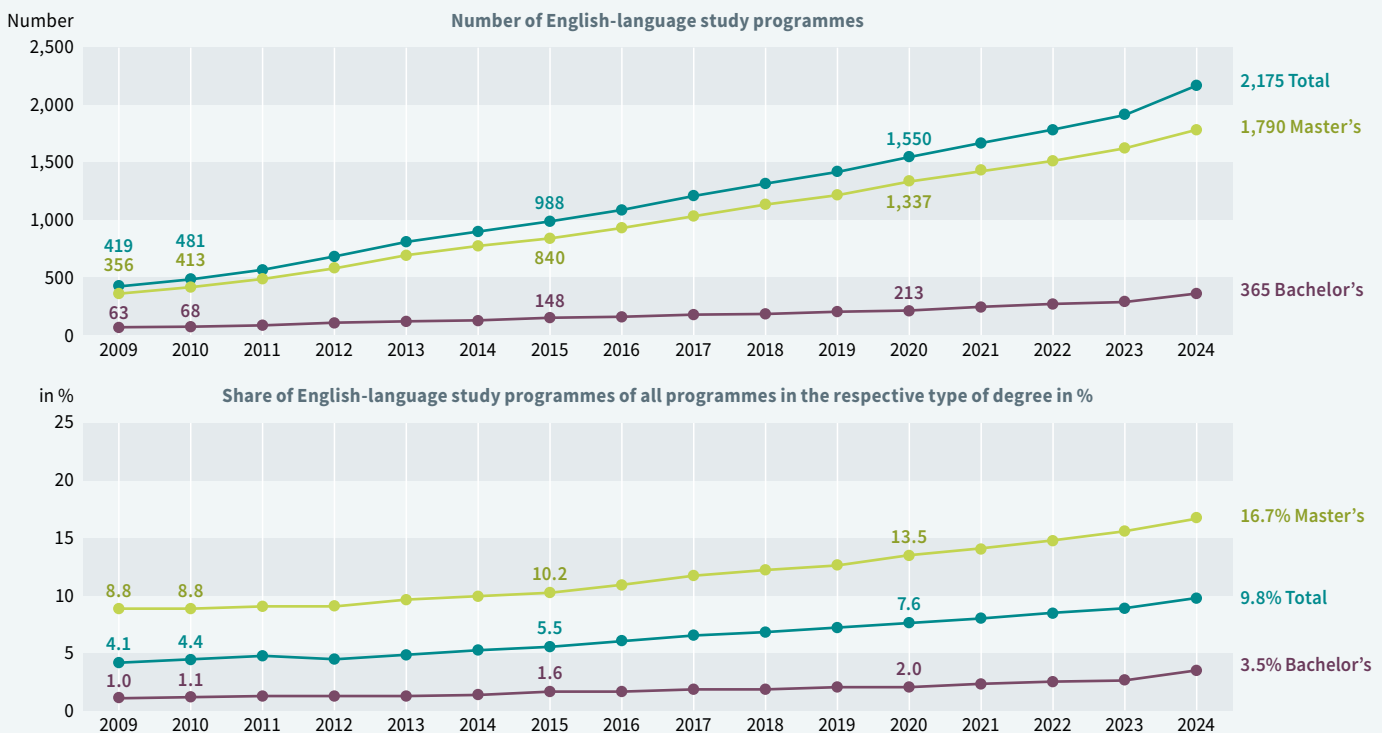
According to the Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), in 2024 (as of 17 July), a total of 2,175 study programmes with English as the primary language of instruction are available, representing a share of almost 10% of all study programmes.^{5, 6} In 2009, there were just 419 degree programmes, in other words, there has been a more than fivefold increase in the number of English-language study programmes at German universities over the last 15 years. Over the same period, the number of universities in Germany offering English-language study programmes rose from 340 to 414 (+22%); this means that the vast majority of the currently 427 state-recognised universities in Germany now have at least one English-language degree programme. Moreover, it can be concluded that the greatest portion of the increase presented above is due to an expansion of the corresponding study options at each university: thus, the average number of English-language degree programmes per university offering English-language curricula has more than tripled between 2009 and 2024, from 1.2 to 4.1. Over 80% of these study programmes (1,790 or 82%) are master's programmes, while just under a fifth (365 or 17%) are bachelor's programmes. Furthermore, the proportion of English-language programmes of all master's degrees is around 17%, more than four times higher than for bachelor's degrees (4%).

Looking at the distribution of English-language study options at universities in Germany by subject group, it can be seen that, overall, the three subject groups of business, administration and law (677 or

26%), mathematics and natural sciences (674 or 26%) plus engineering (455 or 18%) account for a good 1,800 or roughly 70% of these study programmes. At the same time, above-average proportions of English-language study programmes of all study programmes are found in these three subject groups, but particularly in the two groups of business, administration and law (18%) and mathematics and natural sciences (19%). Nevertheless, the highest share of English-language degree programmes, almost 23%, relate to the agriculture and forestry subject group; in absolute terms, however, these are only around 50 English-language programmes.

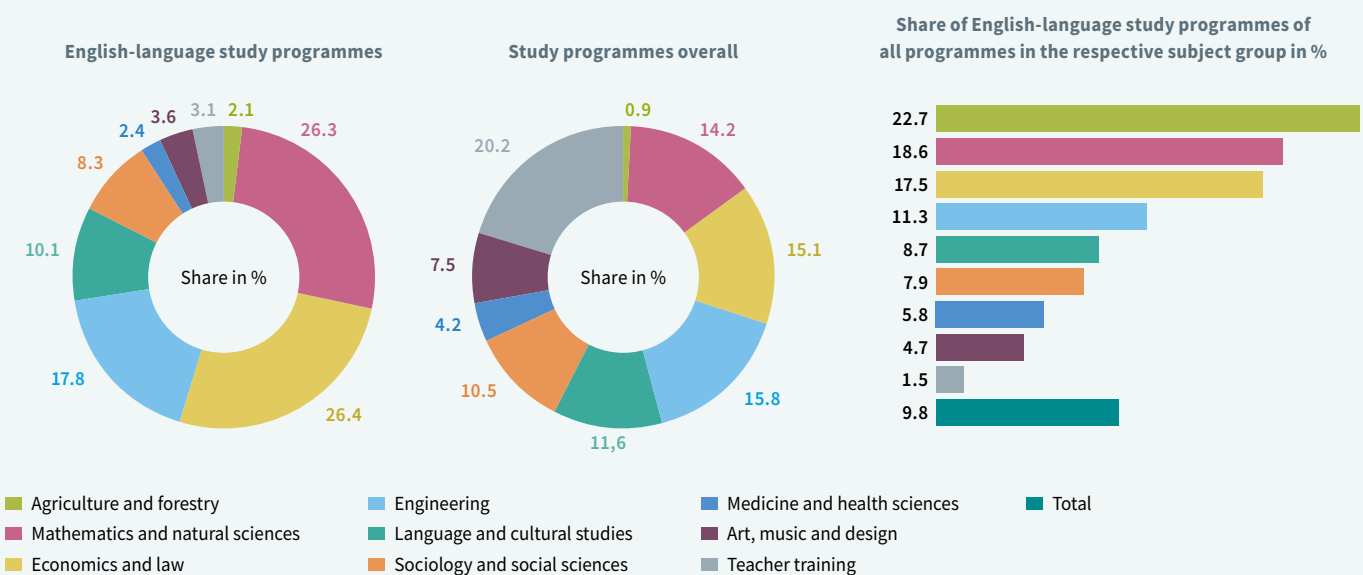
An analysis of English-language study programmes by type of university and funding body reveals that roughly 1,300, or about two thirds, are offered by universities and roughly 700, or about one third, at universities of applied sciences (UAS). On the other hand, English-language study programmes do not figure prominently at colleges of art and music. In total, just 24 such programmes are on offer, representing a share of only 2% of all study programmes at colleges of art and music. By comparison, the shares at UAS and universities, 9% and 10% respectively, are significantly higher. Moreover, it appears that over 80% of the English-language study programmes are offered by public universities in Germany, with the remaining 20% by private universities. However, the proportion of English-language degree programmes of all degree programmes at private universities (18%) is double that at public universities (9%). English-language study programmes are evidently an important business segment for some private universities, designed in particular to encourage international students to enrol for a degree.

FS3 English-language study programmes at universities in Germany, by type of degree, since 2009⁷



Source: German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Higher Education Compass

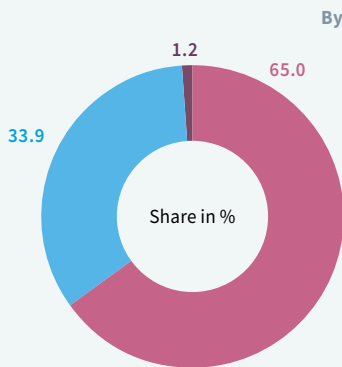
FS4 English-language study programmes at universities in Germany, by subject group, in 2024^{4,8,9}



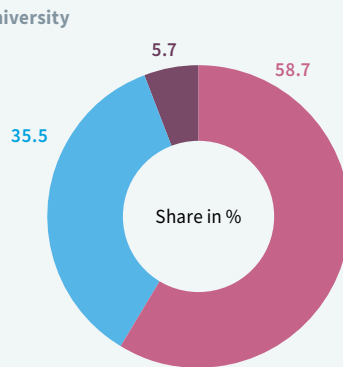
Source: German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Higher Education Compass

FS5 English-language study programmes at universities in Germany, by type of university and funding body, in 2024⁴

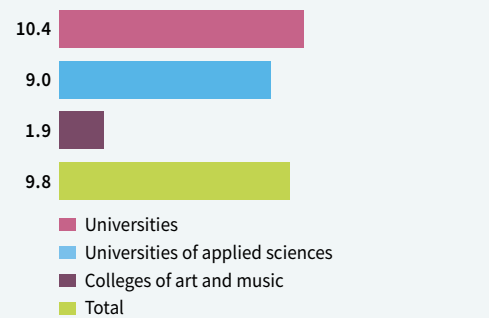
English-language study programmes



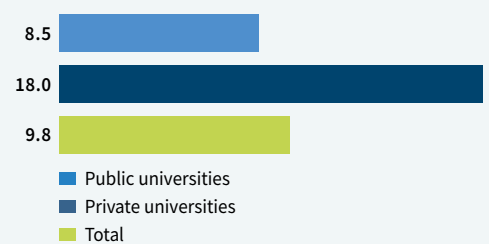
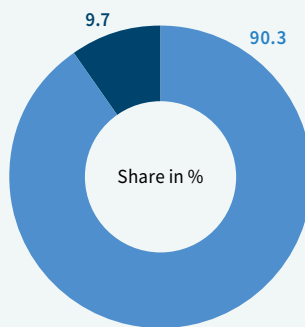
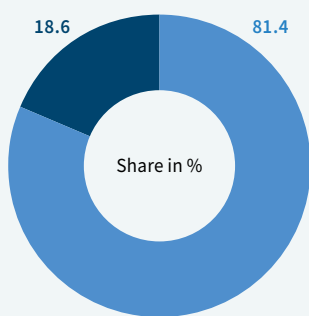
Study programmes overall



Share of English-language study programmes of all programmes, by type of university and funding body in %



By university funding body



Source: German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Higher Education Compass

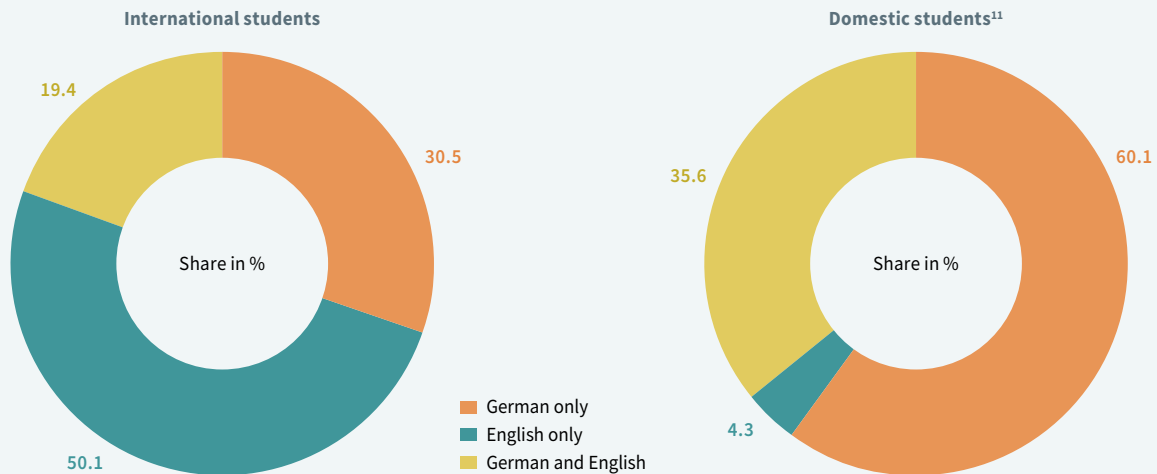
How important are English-language study programmes for international students in Germany?

At present, official higher education statistics do not include the language of instruction as an attribute, therefore no data are available on the student numbers in English-language study programmes. In light of the above, the BinHo Survey¹⁰ conducted by the DAAD in the 2023/24 winter semester asked domestic and international students to indicate the language of instruction. This survey therefore makes it possible for the first time to estimate major trends regarding student numbers in English-language programmes. On first comparing the significance of German and English as the language of instruction among domestic¹¹ and international students (intending to graduate), the findings in both groups differ enormously. Some 60% of domestic students are enrolled in German-language study programmes, with a further 36% in programmes taught in both German and English and a mere 4% in exclusively English-language programmes. Conversely, half (50%) of international students are enrolled in exclusively English-

language programmes, a further 19% in programmes combining classes in both German and English and just 31% in exclusively German-language programmes.

One important reason for the varying relevance of English-language study programmes among domestic and international students is the different distribution of these two groups between bachelor's and master's degree programmes and the various subject groups. The following section therefore looks at the importance of English-language programmes for international students (intending to graduate) in Germany, depending on the type of degree and subject group. The first conclusion is that almost three quarters (73%) of all international master's students in Germany are enrolled in English-language degree programmes, as opposed to just one quarter (26%) of all international bachelor's students. At the same time, half of the bachelor's students are enrolled in exclusively German-language study programmes (50%), but just over one tenth (11%) of master's students. Lastly, programmes that are taught in both German and English play a slightly greater role among bachelor's students (24%) than for master's students (16%).

FS6 German and English as language of instruction among domestic and international students intending to graduate in Germany, in the 2023/24 winter semester



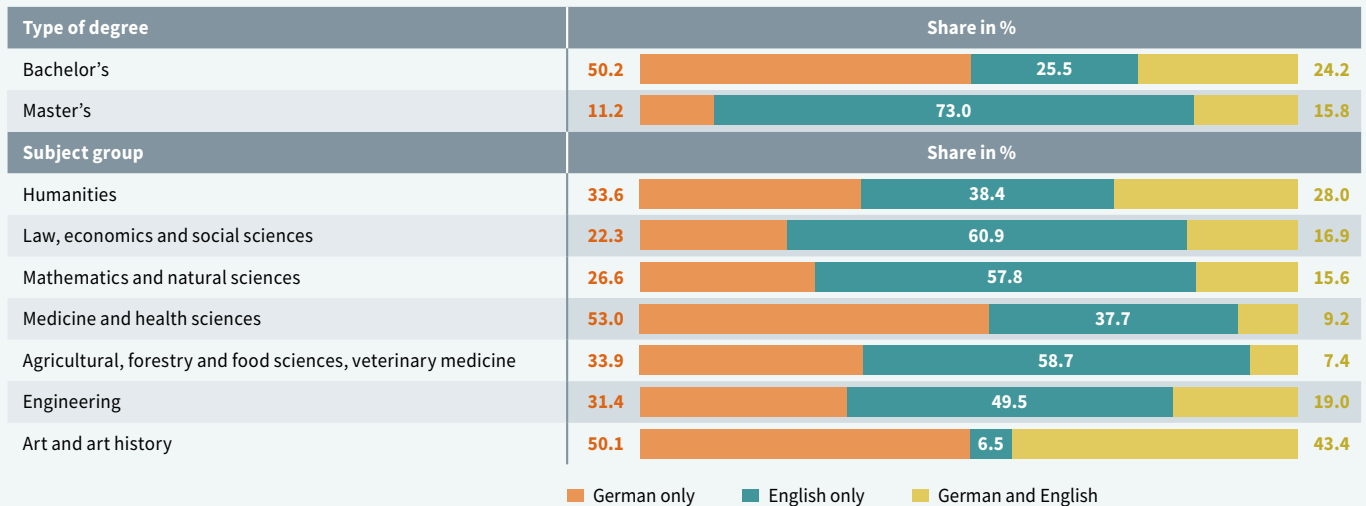
Source: DAAD, BinHo Survey 2023/24, weighted figures

FS7 Reasons for choosing their university from the perspective of international students intending to graduate in Germany, in the 2023/24 winter semester¹²

Reasons for choosing the university in Germany	Share in %
Programme curriculum	19.3
English-language study programmes	15.0
University's excellent reputation/ranking	13.2
Low or no tuition fees	11.8
Living expenses at the place of study	5.9
Others' recommendations	5.5
Attractiveness of the university's location	4.5
Low admission restrictions	4.2
Low requirements regarding level of German skills	4.1
Personal connection to the university's location	3.0
Available and affordable accommodation at the place of study	3.0
Favourable application deadlines	2.4
Specific teaching staff at the university/in the programme	2.1
I was only accepted by this university	1.9
Transport connections at the university's location	1.4
Preparatory courses at the university	1.3
Cooperation with home university/alma mater	1.1

Source: DAAD, BinHo Survey 2023/24, weighted figures

FS8 German and English as language of instruction among international students intending to graduate in Germany, by type of degree and subject group, in the 2023/24 winter semester⁴



Source: DAAD, Binto Survey 2023/24, weighted figures

* Footnotes

- 1 See the publication "Mapping English-taught Programmes Worldwide" on the website of the British Council: https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/mapping_english-taught_programmes_worldwide_0.pdf
- 2 Including Hong Kong and Macao.
- 3 Subject groups according to the classification in the British Council analysis.
- 4 Deviations from 100% are due to rounding.
- 5 Bachelor's and master's programmes account for the vast majority of English-language degree programmes (2,155 or 99%).
- 6 The above analysis by the British Council is based on the study programme database of the private education service provider Studyportal. As the database also includes study programmes at universities that are not officially recognised, the number of study programmes referenced is slightly higher than that in the Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference.
- 7 Total: including English-language study programmes leading to other types of degree.
- 8 Subject groups according to the classification of the German Rectors' Conference.
- 9 Including multiple answers as the study programmes in the Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference can be assigned to several subject groups.
- 10 See also the info box on p. 70 and www.daad.de/bintho.
- 11 German students plus foreign students who obtained their university entrance certificate at a German school (Bildungsinlaender).
- 12 Respondents were asked to select up to three particularly important reasons from a predefined list.

Sizeable variations in the significance of English-language study programmes can also be observed across some of the subject groups. Above-average shares of international students in English-language study programmes are found in the subject groups of law, economics and social sciences (61%), agricultural, forestry and food sciences (59%) plus mathematics and natural sciences (58%). By contrast, the engineering subject group has just an average share (50%) and the humanities (38%), as well as medicine and health sciences (38%) report below-average shares. Finally, the subject group of art and art studies is a notable outlier: even among international students, English-language study programmes only play a very subordinate role here (7%).

Another finding from the 2023/24 Binto Survey also highlights the importance of an English-language curricula in attracting international students to universities in Germany. International students who were intending to graduate in Germany were also asked to select up to three from a predefined list of 17 possible reasons that were particularly pivotal for their decision to study at their university in Germany. After the content of the programme (19%), English-language study programmes were the second most frequently cited reason (15%). Moreover, just two other reasons (the university's excellent reputation or ranking along with low or no tuition fees) were considered equally important (13% and 12% respectively). All other reasons played a much less significant role in selecting a university in Germany.