

Studying Social Work at the University of Kassel



Dear applicant,

Thank you very much for your interest in studying Social Work at the University of Kassel. First, some questions! Are you expecting to gain a bachelor's degree which is acknowledged as valid across Europe? Would you consider living in Germany for (at least) three years to complete this degree? And have you already started to look at possible opportunities to finance your stay? If you can say 'yes' to these three questions, this document will be a key reference point for you. It offers a short description of our Bachelor Programme in relation to how it works in technical terms. It also provides important and detailed information about how to prepare for your stay.

Please note that the University of Kassel is one of the few universities in Germany offering a BA degree in Social Work as well as three Master programs. The courses cover a wide range of themes and have a strong international orientation. In addition, a small part of the courses is delivered in English). The study program is combined with an internship within social work agencies. This will provide you with skills needed to become a social work professional or, if you wish, to continue studying up to doctoral degree level.

It is important to point out that a good mastery of the German language is *indispensable* to study our programme. Therefore, this document contains information related to the language certificates required to undertake your study at Kassel and how to acquire them. It also provides information about how to find suitable accommodation and ways in which you may obtain funding to undertake degree level study with us. To give you an idea about the content of the programme and how this is organized, we also provide you with a translated excerpt of our 'module handbook' The full document, in German, is posted on the University's homepage and can be found [here](#)).

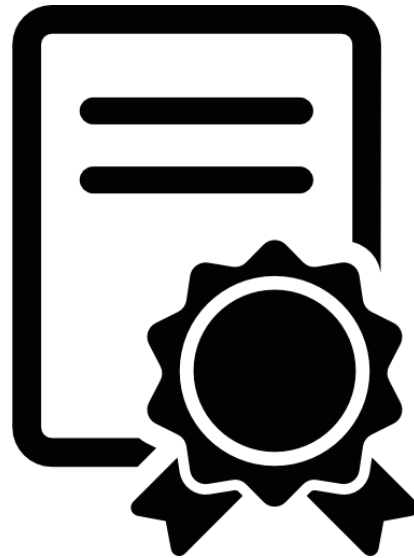


Language certifications

Let's start with the most important and fundamental issue. Even though our BA programme contains a couple of courses taught in English, most of them are delivered in the German language.

Hence, to complete our program, you need to be fluent in German! For this reason, you **must** demonstrate at least level **C1** before coming to Germany. If you have not yet acquired an appropriate certificate confirming your language proficiency, you might consider taking a course at one of the 'Goethe-Institutes' which offer German language courses in countries around the world. You can check out the institute nearest to your

country on [this](#) website. Once you are settled in Kassel, you can take part in German classes offered by the [language center](#) of the University. Under certain circumstances, you may need to come to Germany before starting with the study programme, in order to achieve the level of proficiency needed to participate in the classes and lectures taught in German. Once you have achieved a reasonable level of German, there are opportunities to improve your language skills while you are studying with us by attending to courses offered by the language center. After your enrollment with the university, these courses are free of charge. If you decide to come to Germany *before* starting the study programme, you will have to pay for them. Preparatory courses, which are recommended for all applicants planning to study full time at the University of Kassel, range from beginner level to advanced classes (A1 to C1). Courses usually consist of about 50 lessons, each lasting 45 minutes, with additional preparation and follow-up tasks at home. More information about the preparatory courses can be found [here](#).



Funding

For many students, getting funding is one of the most important issues when considering to study abroad. This section will help you understand how much money is reasonably required to live as a student in Germany, what financial resources are needed in order to be admitted to Germany, and some tips on how to finance your studies when you are living in Kassel.

First, according to legal regulations, international students must be able to cover their living costs when staying in Germany. In general, they do not receive state financial support or any other welfare benefits. Student living costs in Germany are about 870 euros per month on average. The bulk of this sum of money is needed to pay for rent on accommodation, food, public transportation, and healthcare. Of course, many international students receive financial support from their parents or earn some money on a part-time job.



In general, international students must be able to prove to the immigration office that they can afford to study in Germany. Proof of funding may include: information about your parent's income and financial assets; a letter of guarantee by a German resident; a **'blocked bank account'**; or a scholarship (which are rare at German universities). The current deposit to document per *study year* in Germany is roughly 10,332 euros. More detailed information about this can be found on [this](#) website.

Many students finance their studies by gaining employment (part-time or during study holidays). If you are an EU citizen, you have free access to the German labour market. If you come from a country outside the EU or EEA, the "120 full days / 240 half days-per year" rule applies. If the hours worked do not exceed these limits, a work permit from the immigration office is not required. But, if you want to work more than 120 or 240 days, you should contact the immigration office. You must also notify that office if you intend to become self-employed on a small scale. Exceptions to this rule include jobs like a residential tutor, research associate or student assistant. There are no caps concerning these jobs in terms of worked hours, however, such commitments should not jeopardize your academic work. It is important to note that internships (paid or unpaid) count as regular work and therefore fall under the above mentioned regulation. However, if the internship is part of your study program (as is the case for the BA Social Work) this does *not* count as regular work.

Useful websites & links to consider

In this section you can find an overview of useful links and tips to help you with preparing for your stay at the University of Kassel:

- The website <https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/> provides a one-stop shop for getting information about everything related to studying in Germany. It provides you with details about how to apply to a German university, what requirements you need to meet, how to finance your studies, and what you must do to: get a visa, take out healthcare insurance, and find accommodation. The website also explains at greater length the potential reasons to come to Kassel. This includes, top its status as a top quality university; diverse students and teaching staff; state-of-the-art research equipment and facilities; and opportunities to explore your academic potential.
- [Our university website](#) contains a step-by-step checklist of how to apply to the University of Kassel and offers tips concerning how to apply via the *uni-assist* webpage. Among other things, it describes the necessary documents to submit; the way to complete a formally correct application; and the general admission procedure.
- The Institute of Social Work and Social Welfare which hosts the BA program outlined below offers a [booklet](#) with extensive information for international students. Though addressing students coming for **one term** (particularly within the ERASMUS-framework), it nonetheless includes a large range of practical information concerning your stay with us in Kassel. This covers, for example, a list of contact staff for courses and study-related issues at our Institute; a list of common acronyms; and a list of leisure activities you can undertake during your free time when staying in Kassel.



Important passages from the module handbook (Modulhandbuch)

In what follows, you can find a detailed description of the detailed **content** of our BA programme, as well as information about how this programme works in technical terms. This includes, for example, scheduling, organisation, marking, exams etc. This overview is drawn from the official 'module handbook' which is available on our Website (in German).

- **Academic degree**
 - The faculty of human sciences awards the academic degree "Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)".
- **Start of studies**
 - Enrollment with the study program "Social Work" is possible for any winter term (usually from mid-October).
- **Standard period of study, scope of studies, start of studies**
 - The standard period of study stretches over six terms, including the time needed for an internship (a practical module) and the final stage during which to write and complete the Bachelor Thesis.
 - In Europe, there is a general regulation about what must be achieved in a first-stage academic learning program at university level – this means what is required in order to receive a Bachelor degree. Hence, each element (e.g., examinations, taught courses etc.) is assigned a number of credit points which combine to providing evidence of a milestone in your study programme (e.g., Methods of Social Work). This milestone is labelled a 'module'. To successfully pass the entire program, a total of 180 credits is required. These are split over 10 modules, each providing a thematic focus and ending with a written or oral exam (see table overleaf). The total of 180 points is composed of the following: 33 credits for the practical module; 15 credits from the final bachelor's degree module (12 attached to the bachelor thesis and 3 to having attended the preparatory/corollary colloquium) and submission of a preliminary outline of the BA thesis); a maximum of 12 credits from courses imparting 'key academic skills'; as well as credits related to other social work-related modules.
- **Composition and weighting of the grade**
 - Results achieved from studying the different modules are added to calculate the final mark for the degree. The table below shows how the results of the different modules are weighted respectively. The important aspect of this system is that a degree achieved in this framework is recognized by other EU countries.
- **Practical module "Berufspraktische Studien"**
 - During the study program, students must undertake some practical training lasting for 24 weeks ('Berufspraktische Studien'). You can, for example, take up an internship at a facility for addiction counseling, or you can work at a school as a social worker trainee. This internship forms an important part of the BA program (33 credits). Optionally, it can be completed as a 'research internship' within the university, meaning that you join a research project organized by one of the faculty's academic staff. Additional practical experiences as a social worker (as required for the state recognition) must be acquired after completion of the study programme. Furthermore, a proof of six

additional supervision sessions (each consisting of 90 minutes) is also required.

➤ **Bachelor's degree module**

- The topic of the bachelor thesis will be issued after the admission to the exam (at the beginning of the fifth semester at the earliest). The application takes place during a period determined by the examination board, usually a couple of weeks after the start of each term). Students have a right to suggest a topic for the bachelor thesis, to be exercised by providing an elaborate exposé which has to be agreed with one of the academic staff.
- The time to write the thesis is 9 weeks and begins at the day the topic is fixed officially (by a document signed by the supervisor). The thesis should consist of 35 to 45 pages (77.000 to 99.000 characters, including blanks).
- The thesis can be written in German or English. The use of any other language must be approved by the examination board. In technical terms, students first chose a preparation course; write a preliminary outline; contact a member of academic staff to ask whether he or she is willing and available to be their supervisor. At that point, students are considered ready to commence their thesis.

Overview table

Module number	Weighted percentage
1.1: Introduction to the study of social work I	-
1.2: Introduction to the study of social work II	4
2: Theories and history of social work	8
3: Educational science and psychology fundamentals of social work	8
4: Sociological and socio-political fundamentals of social work	8
5.1: Legal fundamentals of social work I	6
5.2: Legal fundamentals of social work II	6
6.1: Empirical approaches to practical fields of social work I	8
6.2a (elective module – choose one of two): Empirical approaches to practical fields of social work II: research	-
6.2b (elective module – choose one of two): Empirical approaches to practical fields of social work II: application & criticism	-
7.1: Professionalism, concepts, and methods of action in social work I	6
7.2a (choose one of two): Professionalism, concepts, and methods of action in social work II: deepening the fundamentals	6
7.2b (choose one of two): Professionalism, concepts, and methods of action in social work II: Theory-practice project studies	6
8: Fields of work in social work	12
BPS: Practical semester	8
S: key competencies	-
BA: Bachelor's degree module	20
Total	100

What are modules and how do they work?

Modules provide a way of organising the study program and break down the needed expertise into 'bite-size' pieces. Each module has an individual overarching theme (for example module 4 deals with "Sociological and socio-political fundamentals of social work"). All modules comprise a range of courses and lectures with different topics related to the overarching theme of the module. The 'module handbook' sets out how many lectures and courses you have to complete in order to successfully finish the module and gain credits. It also describes the range of themes you need to cover. So, taking module 4 again as an example, you need to complete one lecture about the sociological dimensions of social work; one lecture about the latter's socio-political foundations; and one course that digs deeper into one of the two topics. Once you have successfully completed each element, you have passed the module. Sometimes there are multiple lectures or courses on offer. In these cases, you can choose which topics best fit your personal interests. Concerning modules 6.2a/b and 7.2a/b, it should be specified that these modules involve some degree of choice. Hence, you can opt for *either* the **a** or **b** variant in modules 6 and 7. This means that, to complete modules 6.2 and 7.2, you only need to do the (a) or (b) variant in each module. Further information on the differences between the a and b modules can be found in their outline below.

In the following sections, the content of the Bachelor Program will be set out in greater length, with a separate description of each module and information about the learning goals, types of courses and exams within each module.

Module 1.1 – Introduction to the study of social work I

Learning goals

- The students will be cognizant with the basics in scientific thinking and research. They will know the reference disciplines of social work. They understand the various areas and organizations of social work and their respective traditions. They are able to discern the nexus between this wide universe and the current economic, socio-political, and historical discourses.

Course types

- One lecture regarding major areas and organizations in social work

Exam types

- One exam covering the topics of the lecture (in written form, potentially with a multiple choice design). The exam will be graded as passed or failed.

Module 1.2 – Introduction to the study of social work II

Learning goals

- Students will understand the foundations of scientific research.

Course types

- “Wissenschaftswerkstatt” (This ‘scientific workshop’ is a course dealing with the basics related to learning and research in scientific contexts)
- One course.

Exam types

- One documented study performance (This involves the students’ active but ungraded contribution to a course in various formats, in oral and/or written form) in the ‘scientific workshop’ (see above)
- An outline (1-2 pages) and a term paper (10 pages, 22.000 characters including blanks) related to the course.

Module 2 – Theories and history of social work

Learning goals

- Students will have a basic knowledge of the **history of social work** understood as a profession and scientific discipline. They will be aware of key theoretical problems, tasks and problems, subject matters, and structures of social work. They will be able to discern the relevance of **theoretical reasoning** about social work when it comes to conceptualizing and performing critical practice in line with its general mandate.

Course types

- One lecture about the theoretical foundations of social work
- One course deepening the topics of the lecture.

Exam types

- One so-called ‘**documented study performance**’ in each course (some work / input contributed to the proceedings of the course)
- One exam covering the topics of the lecture (in written form, potentially with a multiple choice design).

Module 3 – Educational science and psychology fundamentals of social work

Learning goals

- Students will know the history, terms and approaches of pedagogical thinking and their relevance to different fields of action. They will possess knowledge of theories and empirical findings which display the thinking, behavior, and experiences of human beings in different stages of their life course. They will be cognizant of the disciplinary orientation of both the educational sciences and psychological approaches to social work.

Course types

- One lecture about the educational foundations of social work
- One lecture about the psychological foundations of social work
- One course deepening the topics of one of the both lectures.

Exam types

- One documented study performance in the course
One joint exam covering the topics of the two lectures (in written form, potentially with a multiple-choice design).

Module 4 – Sociological and socio-political fundamentals of social work

Learning goals

- Students will know about the functioning of societies and social relations, as well as the inner workings of socio-political institutions and regulations, including their impact on the living conditions of individuals. They will be able to discern the attributes of organizations and their repercussions in social work endeavor. Students will be familiar with the cross-sectional structure and development of social inequalities.

Course types

- One lecture about sociological dimensions of social work
- One lecture about the socio-political foundations
- One course deepening the topics of one of the both lectures.

Exam types

- One **documented study performance** in the course (see above)
- One joint exam covering the topics of the two lectures (in written form, potentially with a multiple-choice design).

Module 5.1 – Legal fundamentals of social work I

Learning goals

- Students will possess knowledge about the legal framework and requirements in central areas of social work.

Course types

- One introductory lecture about the legal foundations of social work
- One exercise

Exam types

- One exam (in written form or multiple choice) about the topics covered by the lecture.

Module 5.2 – Legal fundamentals of social work II

Learning goals

- Students will gain a deeper understanding of the legal framework and requirements in central areas of social work and be able to apply techniques of dealing with legal issues.

Course types

- Two courses

Exam types

- One documented study performance in one of the courses
- One term paper (~25 pages, 55.000 characters including blanks) for the course in which **no** study performance was performed.

Module 6.1 – Empirical approaches to practical fields of social work I

Learning goals

- Students will possess knowledge about a wide array of different approaches to empirical research, including qualitative and quantitative research methods and methodologies. They will be able to discuss the respective advantages and disadvantages of such methods and methodologies.

Course types

- One introductory lecture about empirical methods
- One tutorial.

Exam types

- One written exam covering the topics of the lecture (in written form, potentially with a multiple choice design).

Module 6.2a (elective module) – Empirical approaches to practical fields of social work II: research

Learning goals

- Participants will have a command of specific research methods. They can select and implement an appropriate research procedure (for a given purpose). Methodological skills will be acquired via independent empirical research projects.

Course types

- Research workshop

Exam types

- One documented study performance in the research workshop
- One research paper (~30 pages, max. 66.000 characters including blanks).

Module 6.2b (elective module) – Empirical approaches to practical fields of social work II: application and criticism

Learning goals

- Participants will have a command of specific research methods. They can select and implement an appropriate research procedure (for a given purpose). Some methods will be studied in greater depth, concerning both the way they are applied and how related knowledge can be used to criticize scientific work.

Course types

- One lecture about empiricism in its application and possible critique
- One course.

Exam types

- One documented study performance in the course
- One exam (in written form or multiple choice) about the topics of the lecture.

Module 7.1 – Professionalism, concepts, and methods of action in social work I

Learning goals

- Students will have developed an understanding of professionalism. They will know the relevant (including clinical) methods for social intervention, also from an international perspective. They will know how such methods are applied in different contexts of social work.

Course types

- One lecture about professionalism and methodical work
- One course.

Exam types

- One documented study performance in the course
- One exam covering the topics of the lecture (in written form, potentially with a multiple choice design).

Module 7.2a (elective module) – Professionalism, concepts, and methods of action in social work II: deepening the fundamentals

Learning goals

- Building upon the knowledge acquired in module 7.1, students will acquire a deeper understanding of different methodical foundations of social intervention, in different settings and contexts. Students will develop a deeper understanding of professionalism and professional competences, as well as respective knowledge of how to apply this in social work settings.

Course types

- Three courses.

Exam types

- One documented study performance in the two courses in which students have not sat an exam.
- One oral exam in one of the courses.

Module 7.2b (elective module) – Professionalism, concepts, and methods of action in social work II: Theory-practice project studies

Learning goals

- Building upon the knowledge acquired in module 7.1 students will be able to identify different theories and methods of social intervention and test their application by participating in a theory-practice project. Students will develop a deeper understanding of professionalism and professional competences, as well as respective knowledge of how to apply it in social work settings.

Course types

- One course
- One theory-practice project, lasting for two semesters.

Exam types

- One documented study performance
- One oral exam in either the course or in part two of the theory-practice project.

Module 8 – Fields of work in social work

Learning goals

- In this module students will deepen their understanding of topics and problems they have learned about in modules 1 and 2, with a focus on empiricism and theory.
Option A: Focus on “conceptual issues of social intervention” in areas of social work
Option B: Focus on “infrastructural and social contexts of social intervention” in areas of social work.

Course types

- Four courses.

Exam types

- One documented study performance
- One term paper (~30 pages, 66.000 characters including blanks)

Module BPS – Berufspraktische Studien (practical professional studies)

Students will learn about different fields and institutions of social work by embarking on practical studies. They will be required to do an internship in a field/institution engaged with social work. A list of approved institutions can be found [here](#). Students can also apply for an internship at an institution not already approved by the University (approval can be requested via a specific form). Part of the internship can also be completed by participating in a research project run within the Institute of social work and welfare.

Practical studies will embrace 768 hours of work and are formalized via a contract between the student and a selected facility/institution. This usually takes place during the third term (according to the [recommended study program](#)), but this is not mandatory.

Learning goals

- Students will know the living situations, resources, and the client's abilities for social action in settings of a given facility. They can apply and reflect on facility-specific technical knowledge and techniques of social work, in order to develop their own learning goals related to their internship, in cooperation with their supervisors. Students will be able to apply an appropriate theory-practice-interface and be able to reflect on social practice verbally and in written form by using appropriate technical instruments.

Course types

- One accompanying course.

Module contents

- An internship (768 hours) at a facility approved by the university
- 384 hours can be done via a research internship within the university
- Additional six supervisory sessions are mandatory.

Modul S – Key competences

Learning goals

- Students will possess interdisciplinary, methodical, social, personal and intercultural skills related to what is expected from graduates of a BA study program.

Course types

- Four events.

Exam types

- A documented study performance for each event.

Module BA – Bachelor thesis

Students must take part in a preparatory course for the bachelor thesis, in which they will produce an outline, which constitutes an indispensable prerequisite for the thesis. Furthermore, students will be supervised individually by a member of academic staff. Additionally, students will have to partake in a preparatory and accompanying colloquium.

Course types

- One preparatory and accompanying colloquium.

Exam types

- Bachelor thesis (35 to 45 pages, 77.000 to 99.000 characters, including blanks).

Questions?

Thank you very much for your interest in the BA social work in the faculty of Human Sciences here at the University of Kassel. We hope that this document has provided answers to some of your questions and has helped you in deciding to come to Germany and study with us. If you have any questions, please contact the international academic coordinator of the Institute of Social Work and Welfare, Professor Sigrid James PhD (sigrid.james@uni-kassel.de).

We look forward to welcoming you here in Kassel!

