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Business, Economics and Social Sciences

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Land of Ideas

Business, economics and social sciences in Germany

Business, economics and social sciences are represented at **most German universities and universities of applied sciences**. Year after year business administration is the most popular subject among students from Germany and abroad.

It is hardly possible any longer to imagine a degree course in business, economics or social sciences without an **international orientation**. Global political, social and economic linkages and the teaching of intercultural competencies play a major role in most of the degree courses.

While social sciences and economics impart more **scientific methodological skills**, degree courses in business administration have a direct practical orientation and teach the students **application know-how**, which prepares them for the international labour market.

A bachelor's degree in business, economics or social sciences creates the basis for graduates to **extend the skills they have acquired** in a master's course. Via a multitude of international doctoral programmes they can enter very different and increasingly also interdisciplinary fields of research.

This magazine provides an overview of university studies in business, economics and social sciences in Germany for **anyone abroad** who is interested in **taking a degree** or in **pursuing academic further training**.

The **higher education landscape** and the disciplines of business administration and social sciences are presented under the heading "studying business, economics and social sciences". Foreign students are also given tips on how to get a place at university and the best way to commence studying.

Another section is dedicated to **master's courses** and doctoral studies, in particular in **international post-graduate programmes**. These guarantee special support for foreign students or doctoral students both in issues related to their studies and in general issues.

Finally the **career prospects** of graduates of business, economics and social sciences on the German labour market are examined.

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine!

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Rival siblings

It is hard to believe considering the dominance of the discipline of business and economics, but it emerged in the field of social sciences. From the early 20th century onwards, business administration was booming and all over the world societies were increasingly being viewed from the economic perspective. Both academic fields have taken the global interlinking of markets and societies to heart, each in their own way.



Intercultural training and language courses are offered at German universities in order to support the integration of foreign students or to prepare German students for a stay in another country.

Professor Christof Wolf from the GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences in Mannheim is of the opinion that the social sciences go better with business and economics than with the humanities,

Professor Christof Wolf is a professor of sociology at the University of Mannheim and director of the department "Monitoring Society and Social Change" at the GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, the largest infrastructure institution for this discipline in Germany.



although they are often mentioned together with the latter. The scientific director of the department "Monitoring Society and Social Change" sees a reciprocal positive influence of the two disciplines "when they define humans as norm-driven beings in sociological terms and as utility-maximising beings in economic terms. They could be viewed as rival siblings, as parallel developments emerging from a common root, with similar questions and methods."

The sociologist Wolf immediately points out that there are large differences within the family of business and economics. He himself studied economics as a minor subject and knows what it has in common with the social sciences. He also confirms a con-

siderable proximity to the way of thinking in economic geography or business psychology. "Business administration is furthest away. That may have something to do with the fact that this subject teaches in particular practical knowledge about specific enterprises and transactions and concentrates less on forming abstract and model-oriented theories." Social scientists, on the other hand, learn about all scientific methods, or, as Professor Wolf puts it, "how to reduce complex issues to a model that reflects essential aspects and makes them workable. For this reason nobody who wants to work with people a lot should study sociology. A degree course in Social Work would be more advisable in that case."

Monitoring society and social change

One core task of the social sciences is to observe, describe and explain current social developments. For this purpose the GESIS department "Monitoring Society and Social Change" provides extensive resources for social research. "In the future these infrastructure services will become more and more important," Christof Wolf knows, and sees the necessity for setting up a system of indicators for the whole of Europe. "In such a sociological 'weather station', survey programmes would be used to record and collect macro- and microdata in every country of the EU in order to be able to compare and assess the different developments. This also includes developing uniform standards that are needed for measuring certain dimensions, such as poverty." The undertaking could fail, however, due to funding and communication problems and due to the lack of common European legislation relevant for this field.

"Even in economic processes, the social sciences examine everything that goes beyond purely economic dimensions," Christof Wolf explains and gives an example of a sociological concept: "Trust is of great importance in economic actions, too. The role of social relations and political constellations is not to be underestimated when contracts are concluded or in longer-term

economic commitments. After all, these are not one-off transactions between strangers, as is assumed in business models." Professor Wolf sees three major topics and challenges for the social sciences throughout the world: increasing the efficiency of education systems, integrating people with migration backgrounds and reducing poverty.

Social responsibility

Within the discipline of business and economics, too, criticism is being voiced about the one-sidedness of homo oeconomicus. Kolja Briedis from the Higher Education Information System (HIS-Institut für Hochschulforschung) does not yet want to speak of a paradigm shift here, "but critical voices that have always existed in business, economics and social sciences are being heard again." A trend that is not surprising following the financial crises and the excesses of global turbo-capitalism. "An awareness is slowly developing that the consequential social costs and other consequences have to be taken into account right from the start when generating profits," Kolja Briedis continues.

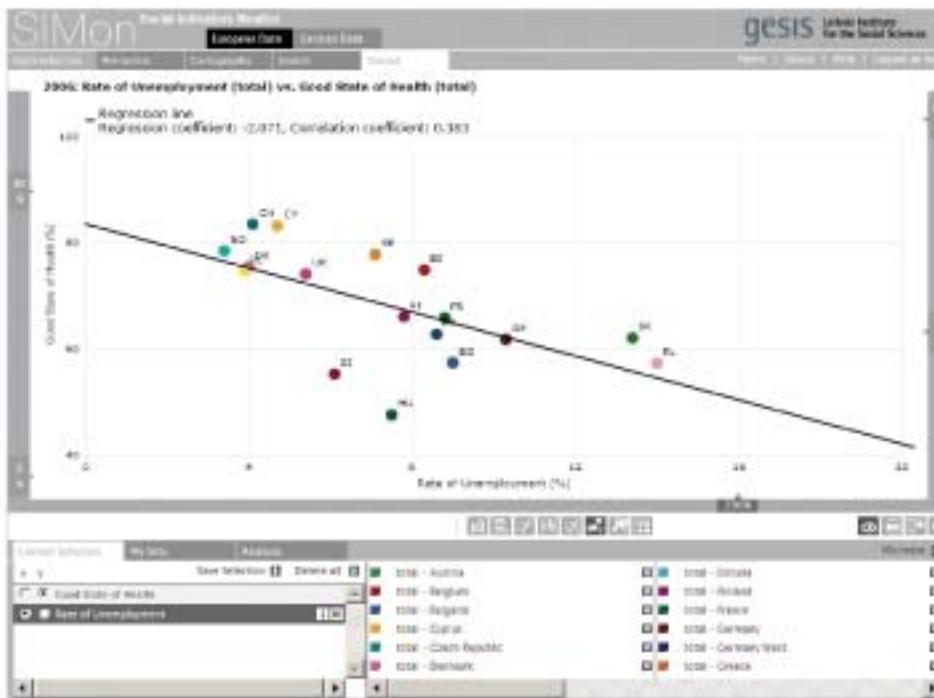
The philosophies of social responsibility and sustainability have entered corporate management. Business ethics is a subject that is taught at universities. Value orientation is also a topic that the Association of German Economists (Bundesverband Deutscher Volks- und Betriebswirte

e.V. - bdvb) is concerned with: "Limits have to be set for profit maximisation. In egocentric and materialistic times it is important to treat each other fairly," says Dieter Schädiger, an economist and managing vice-president of the bdvb. For 111 years the bdvb has represented the interests of economists in Germany and provides its members with support regarding studying, occupations, further training and careers.

Because money rules the world

Nonetheless, when asked about reasons for studying economics, one could answer the way Professor Schlüchtermann, Dean of Studies of the Department of Economics at the University of Bayreuth, does: "Because money rules the world..." Whether it is a matter of marketing oneself or products, preparing offers and calculations, reducing costs or managing one's own business – knowledge of economics aids one's career and is in demand in all sectors, business fields and spheres of life. For this reason the bdvb is of the opinion that economics and law should already be introduced as a compulsory subject in schools: "This subject must be part of general education and is necessary in order to understand the backgrounds in today's world and to be able to make decisions," Dieter Schädiger emphasises.

The strong presence of the economy is certainly one reason for the discipline of business and economics having become considerably more differentiated since its birth in the 18th century. Economics (Volkswirtschaftslehre) replaced the earlier subject of national economics (Nationalökonomie), which developed in the 19th century, and deals in the meantime with the international economic processes of countries, enterprises, private households and consumers from a macroeconomic point of view. Since the 1960s new, practically oriented aspects of business administration have regularly appeared at German universities: functional degree subjects focus on areas such as controlling, management, marketing or human resource management. Other courses concentrate on sectors such as financial services, banking, real estate, media, tourism, logistics, health economics or automotive business. In regional business administration, economic interests are combined with language and culture, for instance in degree courses like International Business Studies or International Management with Arabic Studies (Wirtschaftsarabistik).



The Social Indicators Monitor (www.gesis.org/simon) is a forward-looking system of indicators. It processes data as European comparisons and permits users to analyse these data themselves in chart form on the Internet. It can be gathered from the diagram that the health of the population is poorer in countries with high unemployment.



Marie Augère is the coordinator of the Master of European Governance and Administration (MEGA) at the University of Potsdam.



Professor Stephan Kudert is holder of a chair in business taxation and accounting at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder).



Professor Mathias Moersch is international relations officer of the Faculty of Business 2 at Heilbronn University.

The trend towards internationalisation

In the age of globalisation and internationally active enterprises, the disciplines of business, economics and social sciences hardly make sense any longer without an international orientation. "The interrelations do not stop at national borders. So it is important to observe and analyse the international connections," says Marie Augère, the coordinator of the Master of European Governance and Administration (MEGA) at the University of Potsdam. "That is why we conduct mainly international projects, involve international experts and promote scientific exchange of ideas. Governance (government administration, management of authorities or enterprises, administration) is so important as an object of research because decision-making processes are characterised today by a manifold and intensive exchange of ideas at the levels of society, economy and politics. Those participating in the MEGA programme therefore have to complete an internship in the administration of a partner state."

The faculties of business and economics are also creating an international atmosphere. German students are to gather experience abroad and large numbers of foreign students are to be brought to the universities here. In the bachelor's degree course International Business Administration at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), dialogue between East and West is fostered and language training is of great importance: "In a few years' time our students will very probably find themselves in companies that act on international markets. This is not only the case with the large DAX-listed companies but has also become quite usual in medium-sized firms. The structure and content of the degree courses have to satisfy these demands," says Professor Stephan Kudert, who teaches business taxation and accounting at the Viadrina.

Open to other cultures

Heilbronn University is an example of economics with a particular international orientation. It offers a number of international business degree courses that focus on intercultural management, Eastern Europe, tourism, marketing and communication, transport and logistics or culture, leisure and sports management. "We want to prepare our students for engaging in business abroad and for working in mixed-nationality teams," emphasises Professor Mathias Moersch, international relations officer of the Faculty of Business 2. He himself studied in the USA and was subsequently employed there and in Switzerland. There are students from 90 countries in his current area of responsibility. Approximately three quarters of the German students spend at least one semester abroad. Heilbronn University has partner universities

in more than 70 countries throughout the world, whose lecturers are regularly invited to lecture series in Heilbronn.

Mathias Moersch cannot imagine that there is still a really "national" education at a German university. "But at Heilbronn University the focus is clearly on the linguistic and intercultural aspect of business administration. Our intention is not to point out the differences between the countries here. We want to raise awareness of other cultures, to impart to our students a point of view that helps them to create synergies and to prevent conflict at the workplace later on."



In the summer semester of 2012 Heilbronn University organised "Russia Days" with numerous lectures and panel discussions on topics from economics and politics, concerts and cultural events. The Russian partner universities presented themselves at information booths and provided guest speakers.

INFORMATION

GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

www.gesis.org

Higher Education Information System (HIS Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH)

HIS-Institute for Research on Higher Education (HIS-Institut für Hochschulforschung)
www.his.de

Association of German Economists (Bundesverbands Deutscher Volks- und Betriebswirte e.V. – bdvb)

www.bdvb.de

University of Potsdam

Department of Economic and Social Sciences
www.uni-potsdam.de/wiso_dekanat

European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder)

Faculty of Business Administration and Economics

www.bwl-viadrina.de

Heilbronn University

Faculty of Business 2 (W2)
www.hs-heilbronn.de/w2

Interview with Dr Jürgen Stehn from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW)

Model solutions for the financial crisis?

The Kiel Institute for the World Economy (Institut für Weltwirtschaft – IfW) at Kiel University is one of the major centres for research in global economic affairs, for economic policy advice, economic education and further training and economic documentation. Dr Jürgen Stehn explains the tasks of the Institute, which employs mainly economists. Among other things the researchers deal with developing solutions to the financial crisis.



Dr Jürgen Stehn holds a doctorate in economics and is head of the Public Relations Center at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW).

You focus on the world economy – that sounds like an ambitious undertaking. What are the tasks of the Kiel Institute?

The Kiel Institute sees its main task in searching for innovative solutions to urgent problems in the world economy. On the basis of this research work it advises decision-makers in politics, the economy and society and keeps the interested public informed about important matters of economic policy. The research topics of the Kiel Institute are assigned to three programmes: the International Economy and International Economic Policy, Economic Policies for Sustainable Development, and Macroeconomic Activity and Policy.

Can you give some examples of innovative solutions that are being developed at the Kiel Institute?

Innovative solutions are being explored, for example, with regard to combating long-term unemployment (“training vouchers”), regarding the demography problem (partly tax-exempt income during retirement age) and concerning the financial crisis. Our proposal “debt-for-equity swaps” or “from creditors to shareholders”, for instance, concerns the following: systemically important financial institutions will only be allowed to incur debt in future if the creditors pledge to exchange their debt claims for equity in the bank should the bank become insolvent. As this reduces the value of individual shares, it creates incentives to monitor involvement in banks precisely. In the case of insolvency it would no longer be the taxpayers who are required to bear liability for the risks taken, but the creditors or shareholders.

Why are there so many different approaches and opinions in issues of international economic policy? Can the scientific community provide facts here?

Scientifically based economic-policy recommendations are derived in principle from economic models. If these models are to remain resolvable, they cannot depict every single issue of economic policy. Scope for interpretation therefore always remains when applying model statements to current economic-policy problems.

Who works at the Kiel Institute?

It is mainly economists that are employed at the Kiel Institute. In research in environmental economics we also have sociologists, lawyers and climate experts. For other issues, such as the field of financial markets, we cooperate with external researchers from various disciplines, without employing them ourselves.

What skills do employees at the Kiel Institute need to have?

An excellent broad foundation in economics and a sound education in empirical economic research are crucial. Macroeconomic skills are important in economic research and monetary policy, but are not a basic precondition for the other fields.

What institutions and experts in other countries do you cooperate with? Who do you advise?

The most important cooperative ventures come from the researchers themselves when they work on possible economic solutions together with external experts from around the world. This is a constant process which leads to many new networks. In addition, the Kiel Institute maintains institutional contacts with important scientific institutions throughout the world. We advise the German Federal Government, the EU, international organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank, as well as national and international foundations.

How does the Kiel Institute contribute to academic education with its education and training activities?

The most important education activity offered by the Kiel Institute is the Advanced Studies Program in International Economic Policy Research, which leads to a certificate and is aimed above all at careers in international institutions. The target group is postgraduates. The lecturers are internationally renowned economists. We also offer the Kiel Institute Summer School, a one-week further training programme in applied economic research. Via our internship programme we enable interested students to gain an insight into the work of an economic research institute.

What skills do people interested in doing a doctorate at the Kiel Institute need?

The most important thing is an enjoyment of economic research. Only those who have self-discipline, a talent for abstract thinking and a lot of staying power in economic policy advice will experience enjoyment. For even the best proposals are never implemented without any changes. Anyone wanting to complete a doctorate at the Kiel Institute should have an excellent degree, a sound education in international economics or in one of the other specialisations of the Institute and some experience of empirical economic research.

What were your motives for studying economics and business education?

My motivation was to understand economic relationships and to be able to explain them to other people in a way that is easy for everyone to understand. What made the biggest impression on me was the huge importance of prices as an incentive system in the economy.

INFORMATION

**Kiel Institute for the World Economy
(Institut für Weltwirtschaft – IfW)**
www.ifw-kiel.de

Global Economic Symposium

At this symposium, which is held annually and is organised by the Kiel Institute, internationally renowned experts suggest solutions to urgent global economic problems.
www.global-economic-symposium.org

Understanding the economy and society

How is social coexistence regulated within modern societies? What impact do macroeconomic factors such as inflation or unemployment have? What financing and marketing strategies can firms use to open up new markets? From a theoretical and empirical perspective, students of business, economics and social sciences deal with the highly complex control mechanisms and mutual dependencies in the economy and society.



How are price, demand and output related? Mathematics – for instance financial mathematics, differential and integral calculus and linear algebra – is very important for degree courses in business, economics or social sciences.

Interest in degree courses in business, economics and social sciences remains considerable. In the winter semester of 2011/2012 about 720,000 students were enrolled on one of the numerous bachelor's and master's degree courses, some 70,000 of them from abroad. In numerical terms it is therefore the largest field of study at German universities. Business administration (Betriebswirtschaftslehre – BWL) is particularly popular and was at the top of the list of the most popular subjects at German universities once again in the winter semester of 2011/2012, with approximately 54,000 fresh-

man students. Business administration is also the most attractive subject for prospective students from abroad and brings 5,500 new foreign students to study in Germany every year.

Growing spectrum

The spectrum of degree courses and specialisations in business, economics and social sciences has been growing constantly in recent years. In addition to the "classic" subjects, such as economics and business administration, new subjects have emerged in response to an increasingly globalised

economy. Self-contained degree courses in the field of international trade and service management, in international sales and marketing or in supply chain management emphasise regional or functional features. In addition, degree courses in business administration with an industry-specific orientation have become established, for example for the fields of sports, tourism, health or media. Degree courses such as business law or business psychology constitute interfaces to other disciplines.



Degree courses in business, economics and social sciences (a selection)

Whereas subjects like business administration, business information systems or engineering management can be studied at either a traditional university or a university of applied sciences, political science, sociology and economics are represented almost exclusively at the traditional universities. Degree courses that prepare their graduates for a career in the social field, on the other hand, are the domain of the universities of applied sciences.

Single-subject or combined bachelor's degree

The bachelor's degree courses in business, economics and social sciences are generally offered as single-subject bachelor's degrees - they therefore concentrate on one single subject. In addition, there are types of degree

courses at the universities which cover a combination of several subjects (combined or double-subject bachelor's degrees). In this case, political science, for example, is taken as the main subject and a second or minor subject is selected in addition from an extensive catalogue. This may be another subject from the field of social sciences or from a different academic field. Possible combinations differ from one university to another.

In addition to this, at some universities it is also possible for students to create academic profiles qualifying them to become teachers of such subjects as economics or social studies in the state school system in Germany later on. A degree in business education also opens up fields of employment at vocational schools or in company training.

Personal initiative and soft skills

Studying business, economics or social sciences requires a great deal of personal organisation. At the beginning of the semester, for instance, each student has to compile a study plan from an extensive range of courses and this must take into account the Study and Examinations Regulations (Studien- und Prüfungsordnung). Furthermore, study groups have to be formed, presentations prepared and the necessary literature obtained from libraries. The Departmental Student Advice Services and student groups are helpful, with introductory events and examples of study plans, and provide valuable tips on how best to organise one's studies, but personal initiative and a talent for improvisation are also always needed.



» My best friend has always told me about the good conditions for studying in Germany. I decided to study social sciences in Fulda as the degree course has a unique profile and is highly interdisciplinary due to the involvement of many fields. I chose 'Intercultural Relations in Organizations' as my course specialisation because I'm interested in intercultural work with migrants. «

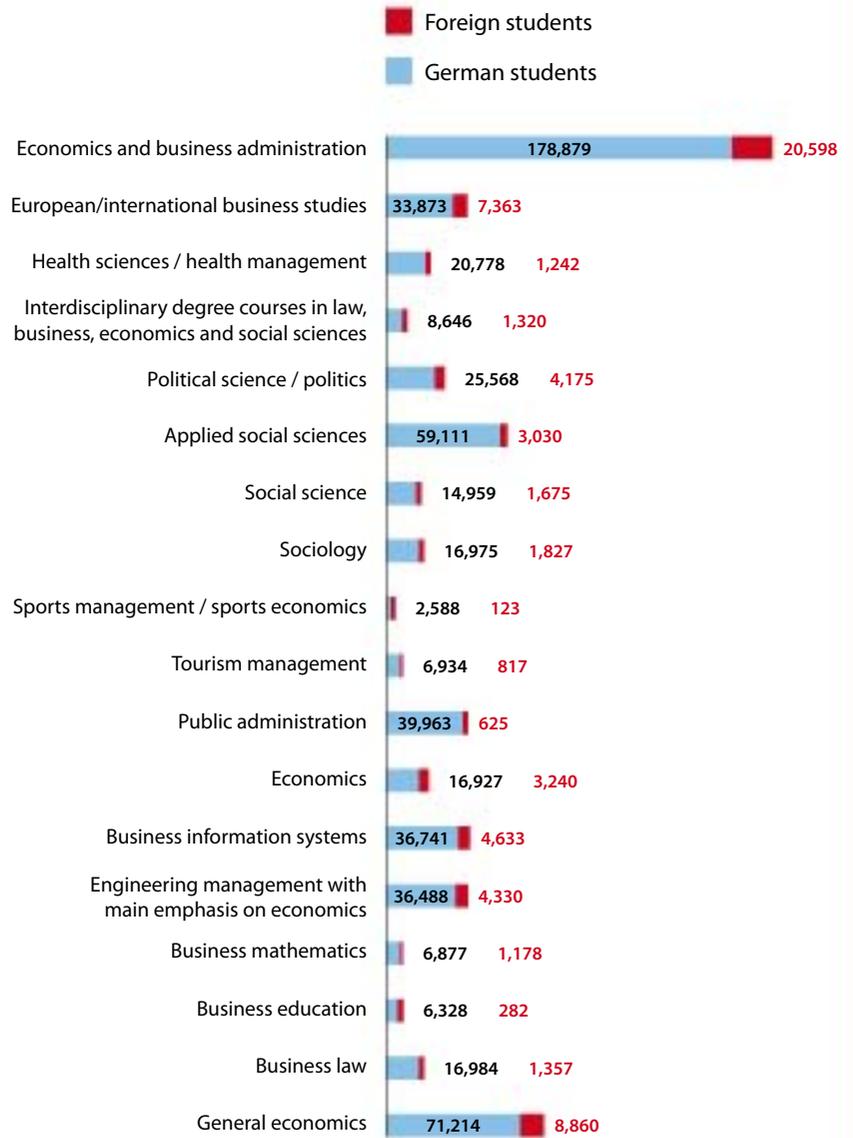
Rachid Kadir comes from Morocco and is in his eighth semester of a degree in Social Sciences for Intercultural Relations at Fulda University of Applied Sciences.

As the occupational field for social scientists in particular is very diverse, creating a specific focus in the degree course and gathering initial practical experience are very important to make career entry as smooth as possible. The modules aimed at imparting key qualifications and practical skills which are integrated into virtually all degree courses help with this. Time spent abroad at a partner university, project work and internships are also frequently integral elements of many degree courses.

Linguistic competence and mathematics

German is the language of tuition in many degree courses in business, economics and social sciences, so a good understanding of the language is an important precondition for successful university studies. The international orientation of degree courses in business and economics, and the specialist literature, some of which is written in other languages, call for additional linguistic competence. Good English language skills are essential. The students should also possess analytical skills, basic knowledge of IT as well as proficiency in mathematics and statistics. The classes and examinations in mathematics often prove to be a stumbling block for the students during the first semesters.

German and foreign students in the winter semester 2011/12



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office), Studierende an Hochschulen Wintersemester 2011/2012, Wiesbaden 2012



» German political science rightly enjoys a very good reputation in Europe (and beyond). Foreign students enrich the university teaching in political science in many ways, in particular with their intimate knowledge of politics in their home country, but also as a result of their confrontation with a different academic culture of teaching and studying. The language skills and the familiarity with Germany and its political system which students acquire by studying in Germany are worthwhile for foreign students. They are very important elements in the foreign students' respective qualification profiles. As a liberal and tolerant host country, Germany is an interesting and attractive place to study. «

Professor Philip Manow teaches comparative political economics at the Centre for Social Policy Research at the University of Bremen.



The basic principles of business and economics are taught in lectures on general business administration, statistics or accountancy. Due to the large numbers of students, these lectures are often held in big lecture theatres.

INFORMATION

Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference

(Hochschulkompass der Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK)

Information about higher education opportunities, universities and colleges, doctorate opportunities and international cooperations with German higher education institutions
www.hochschulkompass.de

uni-assist

Internet portal of the University Application Service for International Students (Arbeits- und Servicestelle für ausländische Studienbewerber)
www.uni-assist.de

anabin

Information system of the Central Office for Foreign Education Systems (Zentralstelle für Ausländisches Bildungswesen – ZAB) for the recognition and evaluation of foreign educational qualifications
www.anabin.de

DAAD

This page of the DAAD website provides information about which educational certificates obtained outside Germany are required for admission to higher education in Germany.
www.daad.de/admission

A place at university in Germany – admission restrictions, application, admission

For about one third of the bachelor's degree courses in business, economics and social sciences there are no admission restrictions in terms of student numbers. For the rest of the courses there are local **admission** restrictions with selection procedures. In the case of combined degree courses (double-subject bachelor's degrees) the admission situation has to be taken into consideration for both of the subjects chosen.

When **selecting applicants** the universities can take into account not only the average mark of the qualifications entitling the applicant to go to university but also other criteria, for example grades in certain subjects, the results of an interview or subject-related foreign language skills. What is also important is the waiting period for a university place.

It is frequently only possible to **begin a degree course** as of the winter semester.

At many universities, **prospective students from outside Germany** who fulfil

the basic requirements for entering higher education in Germany can apply directly to the university. They should obtain information about the specific admission requirements for the degree course in advance from their preferred university.

For a number of universities, applications have to be submitted via the University Application Service for International Students, **uni-assist**. You can find details about the member universities and detailed information about the application procedure at www.uni-assist.de.

Anyone interested in a master's or doctoral programme also applies directly to the university or to uni-assist.

In general the **application for admission** must have arrived at the relevant university by 15th July for the winter semester and by 15th January for the summer semester. The application deadlines may differ from this depending on the university, however.



» I'm very interested in mathematics and accounting and in the fundamental issues concerning how a firm works. The degree course at the University of Applied Sciences, Stralsund has ranked highly for years now and has an excellent reputation. What convinced me was the degree course concept, the selection possibilities for specialisations, the small study groups and the location. As I already have a family with children, the well-known family-friendliness was another important factor in the decision-making process. «

Elena Schuldeis comes from Russia and is in her fourth semester of a degree in business administration at the University of Applied Sciences, Stralsund.

Interview with the chairman of the Association of Faculties of Business, Economics and Social Sciences (Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlicher Fakultätentag e.V. – WISOFT)

Internationality plays an important role

As the chairman of the Association of Faculties of Business, Economics and Social Sciences (Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlicher Fakultätentag e.V. – WISOFT), Professor Johann Engelhard is well aware of the situation at the German universities and knows why degree courses in this field are so popular with foreign students.



Professor Johann Engelhard is the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Economics and Business Administration at the University of Bamberg and holds the Chair for Business Administration, especially International Management with the focus on European Management.

For many years now degree courses in business, economics and social sciences have been some of the most popular courses at Germany's universities, for foreign students too. How do you explain this attraction?

To a large extent, the attraction of degree courses in business and economics can be put down to the general versatility of the acquired competencies in a labour market that is growing as a result of globalisation. However, the hope of interesting employment opportunities after graduation is borne by an increasing interest in careers in firms and organisations that are geared towards economic value added. In many areas, "coping with" the rush of applicants has triggered a break with routines and led, for example, to an increase in the teaching staff, a more flexible use of space, innovative forms of teaching and examinations and a stronger emphasis on virtual media.

What possibilities do students have for creating a profile that suits their personal interests?

Bachelor's degree courses in business and economics mainly follow a generalist approach. The opportunities for "personalising" university studies are therefore strongly restricted right from the start, as it is obligatory that a broad basic knowledge be taught. It is generally not possible to set priorities until the final phase of the degree course, in addition via internships or by concentrating on certain subjects while studying abroad.

What role does internationality play in university studies in business and economics?

Internationality plays a very important role in degree courses in business and economics. It concerns the economic issues which are investigated, the training in business languages and the expectation that internships and parts of the degree course will be completed abroad.

How is the teaching of social and personal skills integrated into the degree courses?

The acquisition of social skills is an integral element of a modern degree course in business, economics or social sciences. These skills are generally taught as part of the specialist education: the students practise presentations and discussions, work on case study projects in groups or meet foreign students and representatives of the business world. Special short courses in soft skills, for example on intercultural competence or conflict resolution, or events associated with business ethics help them. With regard to "personal skills", I still count on someone being able to understand and comprehend the world better after graduating than he or she did before starting out at university.

What characteristics should foreign students definitely have?

The demands on students in business, economics and social sciences are the same, irrespective of their geographical origins: an interest in explaining and shaping economic and social processes, a willingness to work hard, command of the language in order to be able to hold their ground in the German education system, and an openness to the German culture.

Association of Faculties of Business, Economics and Social Sciences (Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultätentag e.V. – WISOFT)
www.fakultaetentag.de/test_WISOFT

Self-assessment

Foreign prospective students can already test their personal aptitude for taking a degree in business, economics or social sciences, on the Internet from their home country. Self-tests provide some idea of the requirements of the degree courses and help prospective students to assess their own strengths and weaknesses better. Below there is a selection of the tests provided online by higher education institutions and university associations.

RWTH Aachen Self Assessment:

The Self Assessment is offered, for example, in business and economics. Informative and helpful feedback on strengths and weaknesses; in German; duration: 90-120 minutes; free-of-charge.

www.rwth-aachen.de/selfassessment

Self assessment of the Association of North German Universities (Verbund Nord-deutscher Universitäten – Bremen, Greifswald, Hamburg, Kiel, Lübeck, Oldenburg, Rostock):

The test is aimed in particular at people interested in starting a degree course at one of the universities in the Association of North German Universities. Individual feedback and explanation of the results; in German, duration: 90-120 minutes, free of charge.

www.uni-nordverbund.de/selfassessment

BORAKEL – online advice tool of the Ruhr-

Universität Bochum: two different test modules help you to gain more information about characteristics of personal performance, career prospects and suitable degree courses. Individual feedback and advice; in German, free of charge.

www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/borakel

Even if the tests are geared towards the degree courses offered by the particular university, taking part can still provide valuable tips for choosing a degree course.

TestAS

is a central, standardised scholastic aptitude test for foreign students. Three test modules measure intellectual abilities that are important for successful university studies in Germany. The test is offered in German and English and is free of charge. Registration online, tests can be taken in licensed test centres throughout the world.

www.testas.de

Fresher programme at the University of Cologne

“Studienstart International”

During her first two semesters, the fresher programme greatly helped Alexandra Biller from Russia to get started successfully in her business administration degree course. Especially the classes on learning strategies and the subject-specific German courses were the ideal preparation for her. A reason for the positive feedback: an individual package of courses and measures is tailored for each participant.



In the business German course the students work on fundamental topics of business administration. In order to guarantee intensive learning, small groups of students with comparable levels of knowledge are formed.



Alexandra Biller comes from Russia, is in her second semester of a degree course in business administration and is participating in the fresher programme “Studienstart International” at the University of Cologne.

Alexandra Biller worked as an au-pair near Cologne. During this time she took a language course, at the end of which she passed the examination required for admission to university. In the process she heard about “Studienstart International”. “The participants have to provide proof of language proficiency at the level of DSH or TestDaf and have been accepted for full academic studies,” the SI coordinator, Dr Heike Berner, explains. “We then determine the language level more precisely and, on the basis of this, we decide which additional courses may be necessary.”

The SI team works closely together with the course guidance centre. “The students have a large schedule to follow right from the start. By means of targeted guidance we aim to prevent them from taking on too much or attending unsuitable courses, and help them to select the courses that are most useful to them,” Dr Berner tells us.

Subject-specific German and study skills

Students of business, economics and social sciences benefit above all from the subject-specific German courses. In the business German course the students work on fundamental topics of business administration on the basis of lectures, specialist texts from secondary literature and diagrams. In addition, the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences has created the group “German Economic and Social System” for foreign students as one of the electives in the main degree course. Here, basic

knowledge of the economic, political and social classification systems in Germany is taught and the students are prepared for classes in the main degree course.

“The study skills courses include a course on working methods from the field of management, economics and social sciences that is conducted by lecturers from the faculty,” Heike Berner adds. More elementary things are also taught in these courses, however: how to give presentations, how to write reports, how to address teachers. “The learning strategies were of great practical value for me,” Alexandra Biller reveals. “Through SI, I found out, for example, that I’m a visual learner. In lectures it helps me if I can see the professor’s facial expressions and gestures.”

German students, too, are invited to the seminars on Cultural Awareness. “For German and foreign students should learn something together and from one another here,” Dr Berner says. “Incidentally, with all of the SI classes the students can earn credit points that are counted towards the ‘Studium Integrale.’”

Orientation and getting to know people

In the orientation events and in the TEAM programme, German students look after foreign fellow students in tandem partnerships, with regard to organising their leisure time, too. The series of events consists of activities aimed at making it easier for students to find their bearings at the university, in the city and in Germany in general. “Every week

a different lecturer presents his or her area of responsibility, for example a representative of the City of Cologne may give a talk about labour law or law concerning foreigners.” The standard events include a guided tour of the library or information about scholarship schemes. Sports and leisure activities are also presented.

“Our contacts at SI have always advised us very well,” says Alexandra Biller, enthusing about the many tips and the support she received. “Because of the small groups I got to know my fellow SI students very well, and also the differences between the cultures. We also meet outside the events. The atmosphere is always very nice.”



INFORMATION

Studienstart International
http://verwaltung.uni-koeln.de/studienstart_international

Generalists with intercultural competence

If the expectations of many firms are anything to go by, then graduates in business administration should be all-rounders: preparing annual financial statements and consolidated balance sheets, designing marketing strategies or dealing with supply-chain management. And not forgetting that they should be able to conduct negotiations confidently in an international environment. At the University of Bayreuth flexible generalists are trained who are able to cope with the challenges in modern firms and intercultural teams. The concept also convinced two students from Bulgaria.



Aleko Dimitrov and Hayrie Zylkyarova come from Bulgaria and are in their sixth semester of a degree course in business administration at the University of Bayreuth.

About three years ago Hayrie Zylkyarova and Aleko Dimitrov from Bulgaria decided to study business administration at the University of Bayreuth. "I had been to Germany before and liked everything very much – so peaceful, so organised. One of the reasons for my choice was that the town of Bayreuth and the university are not so big. Everything is manageable and close at hand," 25-year-old Hayrie Zylkyarova says, explaining her decision to go to Bayreuth, and adds, "The tuition fees are also not nearly as high here as they are in Great Britain or in the USA, for example."

Good ranking and Bavarian way of life

Hayrie Zylkyarova and her 22-year-old countryman, Aleko Dimitrov, are in the sixth semester of their degree course. He, too, had

been offered places at several German universities. "The University of Bayreuth has a well-made website and excellent positions in the rankings, and in addition I like the Bavarian way of life," he says, revealing his reasons for coming to Bayreuth.

All the important buildings of the six faculties and the university administration, including the International Office, are located on the park-like campus in the south-east of the Upper Franconian town. From the modern building of the Faculty of Law, Business Administration and Economics virtually all of the university facilities can be reached on foot in just a few minutes.

Neither of the students had trouble finding a room: "I only had to wait just under a month for a vacant room in a student dorm that's only two minutes away from the university," Hayrie Zylkyarova tells us.

Up-to-date tradition

"As far as our tradition is concerned, we place emphasis on a generalist education designed to impart fundamental patterns of thought within the subject," is how Professor Jörg Schlüchtermann, Dean of Studies of the Department of Economics, describes the educational objectives of the business administration degree course. Social and intercultural skills are trained in the field of key qualifications. "We want our graduates to have wide-ranging opportunities," Jörg Schlüchtermann emphasises.

There are currently about 950 students on the challenging degree course in business administration in Bayreuth. The course covers the entire spectrum of the subject: at the beginning the focus is on learning the general fundamentals of business administration, economics and law, as well as mathematical and statistical methods. A comprehensive catalogue of additional electives subsequently helps the students to gain a broad overview of the different branches of business administration. These include, for example, financial management, controlling, strategic marketing, management studies or international management. Building on this, the students then select and consolidate two of a total of ten possible specialisations depending on their personal interests and professional aims. These specialisations also often form the basis of the bachelor thesis that concludes the course.

Hayrie Zylkyarova has specialised in Marketing and International Management. "I'd like to go in this direction in my career too later on and work in the air transport industry," she says, outlining her plans. Her fellow student, Aleko Dimitrov, has discovered a passion for controlling, accounting and issues of corporate tax during his course and has selected corresponding specialisations.



Professor Jörg Schlüchtermann is Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Law, Business Administration and Economics at the University of Bayreuth.

20 languages to choose from

Foreign language training is one of the trademarks and an integral part of the degree course in Bayreuth. The repertoire of the Language Centre covers more than 20 languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and Russian, as well as less common languages such as Bambara, a West African language. In addition to an obligatory course in Business English, the students choose another one or two foreign languages.

“Our integrated foreign language training is a major building block on the path to internationalising university studies. In this way we make it easier for students to go abroad. Conversely, it increases our attractiveness for foreign prospective students,” Professor Schlüchtermann emphasises. Efforts are currently also underway to offer more and more classes additionally in English.

Practically relevant

The two students had the opportunity to get a taste of working life during their nine-week compulsory internship: “In a medium-sized travel company in Bayreuth I was able to see how the things we learn here are put into practice. I really gained a lot from it,” says Hayrie Zylkyarova.

If necessary, the University’s Internship Service provides help with finding a suitable internship position. Connections to firms located in the region, workshops and trade fairs make it easier to establish contact and ensure sufficient offers. “We expressly encourage students who also wish to write their bachelor thesis in cooperation with a company,” Professor Schlüchtermann emphasises.

Well looked after

Both of the Bulgarian students agree that the degree course is challenging in terms of subject matter. They are totally satisfied with the degree course conditions and the support. Initially they still had trouble following all the details of the lectures and classes that are held in German. “I then went to the trainer and asked him. Or I attended the special tutorials for foreign students. What I found very helpful were the revision courses shortly before the exams,” says Hayrie Zylkyarova, looking back.

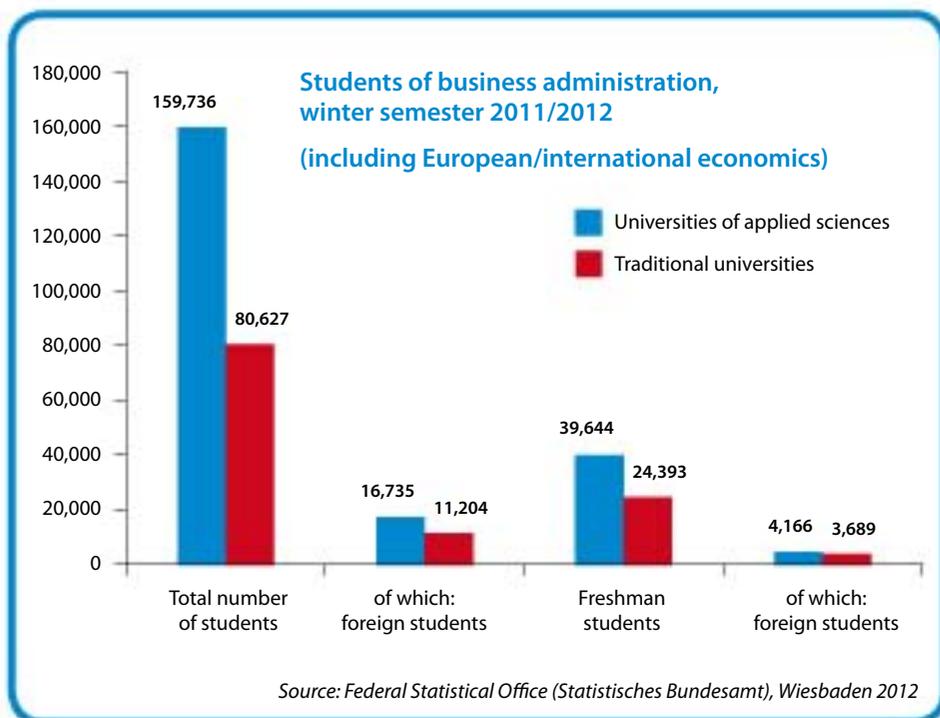
Aleko Dimitrov remembers the initial period as being rather stressful: “I only arrived here a week before the course began. Preliminary course in mathematics, preliminary course in statistics, learning German – in the

first two semesters there wasn’t much time for a social life.”

Professor Schlüchtermann formulates the mission statement for the relationship with the students like this: “We do the best we can to support our international students. This includes, for example, language courses run by the Language Centre, or special tutorials for non-native-speakers in which experienced teachers know precisely where the problems are. Furthermore, we can adapt the examination procedures accordingly. We are a relatively young university and our founding philosophy includes our teaching staff providing the students with good service and a good education.” One clear indication of the success of the concept is the fact that the business administration course in Bayreuth has a low dropout rate.

A master’s degree in sight

In the meantime Hayrie Zylkyarova and Aleko Dimitrov have successfully completed most of the degree course and are planning the next steps of their careers. Hayrie Zylkyarova is first going to go to France for a few months to improve her French skills. Then she is going to work part-time in the firm where she did her internship and simultaneously do a master’s degree in Bayreuth. Aleko Dimitrov, too, is going to remain true to Bayreuth and is already attending classes in the master’s course in business administration. He can well imagine working as a financial auditor later on.



INFORMATION

University of Bayreuth, Faculty of Law, Business Administration and Economics

www.rw.uni-bayreuth.de

International Office

www.international-office.uni-bayreuth.de

Curious about societies

Sociology or political science – which is preferable? Or perhaps something quite unusual? Like Taehyun Yoon from South Korea, someone who is curious about global social phenomena and developments often does not yet know which subject is the right one. Students of social sciences at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen therefore have an exceptionally large number of options when organising their degree course. After gaining an overview of the entire field, they can create their own profile.



Georg-August-Universität Göttingen was founded in 1737. The origins of the social sciences date back to that time.

The South Korean Taehyun Yoon has been living in Göttingen for two years now. "When I was twelve, thirteen, I already spent two years in Berlin because my father, who studied in Marburg, was working there at the time." Taehyun Yoon's language skills were therefore so good that he did not have to attend any preparatory courses. For entry to the six-semester bachelor's degree course in social sciences it was sufficient to take a language test. In the meantime the 22-year-old only finds some scientific texts in German to be a challenge.

"For foreign students the language is generally the biggest obstacle. But the University of Göttingen offers a large range of language courses, for example at the Central Institution for Languages and Key Qualifica-

tions (Zentrale Einrichtung für Sprachen und Schlüsselqualifikationen - ZESS) or at the Institute for Intercultural Communication (Institut für Interkulturelle Kommunikation - IIK)," Klaas Kunst, the coordinator of the bachelor's degree course in social sciences, reports.

Taehyun Yoon likes the campus of the University of Göttingen. All the buildings are close together. Especially the university library has made quite an impression on him: "It's one of the largest libraries in Germany and contains just about all the literature." He is enthusiastic about the support for foreign students: "The tutors took good care of me, for example by helping me to get my bearings in the different buildings or to compile a sensible course schedule."

Klaas Kunst is the coordinator of the bachelor's degree course in social sciences at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen.



Over 300 possible subject combinations

In reply to the question as to who should study social sciences, Klaas Kunst says, "What I consider very important is curiosity about societies, their conflicts and connections, as well as a desire to analyse things critically." He tells us that the rest just follows almost as a matter of course. The degree programme specifically promotes skills in scientific work and critical thinking: "We attach great importance to small courses so that they always provide the opportunity to practise debating, to learn how to discuss and to play simulation games," Klaas Kunst explains.

The Göttingen bachelor's degree course in social sciences is characterised by a special structure: the first semester provides an intensive overview of all the subjects in the social sciences, their common ground and their differences. On the basis of this, the students can select their areas of specialisation from the second semester onwards.

Taehyun Yoon comes from South Korea and is in his third semester of a degree course in social sciences at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen.



"It is only then that they choose their two social science subjects plus a specialisation," the degree course coordinator, Klaas Kunst, explains. "In terms of figures this results in more than 300 combinations to choose from, including quite unusual ones such as sport science, interdisciplinary Indian studies and economics, which can by all means be useful and promising. There is an advisor to assist the students with the decision, so that they make their choice in the most well-considered way possible."

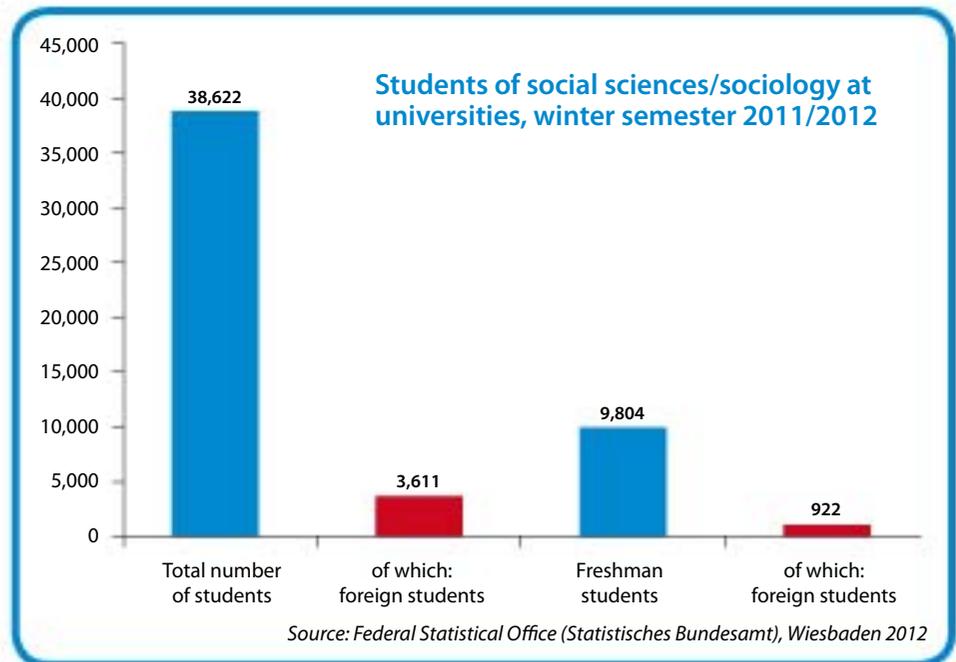
Of the areas of specialisation on offer Taehyun Yoon is most interested in political science. "My subjects so far were political science and sociology. But from next semester onwards I'll be studying economics instead of sociology. I realised that economics interests me more and that it is closer to political science." However, he has not yet chosen an in-depth specialisation: "At any rate it will be something with an international orientation. I could well imagine dealing in more detail with international politics or international economic relations, for example."

Soft skills for social scientists

However, in the first semester not only methods and working techniques of the social sciences are taught, but also soft skills, such as time management and personal organisation skills. "The lecturers for soft skills have a social sciences background themselves, so they are able to tailor their courses to the students' needs," Klaas Kunst emphasises.

Taehyun Yoon has already completed an internship to promote key qualifications. "I was able to assist with the organisation of a cycle race. I liked it very much, not only because of the insights into the procedures but also because I enjoy doing sport myself."

In the social sciences degree course an internship lasting 240 hours during the university holidays is compulsory. "Alternatively, it is possible to spend a period of time abroad, which may also be combined with an internship. We offer preparatory and follow-up workshops for this, for example in intercultural communication," Klaas Kunst adds. The faculty has internship agreements with a large number of different companies. The students receive advice and support when looking for an internship. "The regular excursions to companies are also very helpful," as Klaas Kunst knows. "Here contacts are often established which later lead to internship positions. And in turn, internships are important for career planning and entry."



Master's or an occupation

The graduates of the bachelor's degree course in social sciences can go on to do a master's degree in Göttingen. The courses on offer include euroculture, ethnology, gender studies, modern Indian studies, political science, sociology or sport science. However, the bachelor's degree already qualifies the graduates for successful career entry.

"The social scientist working as a taxi driver is a cliché. Depending on their subject combinations, our graduates can be found in a great many different fields." Besides university research and teaching, these fields include in particular public relations, the media, intercultural transfer, development cooperation, intercultural management, museums, initial and further training, urban and regional planning or human resource management. "The more specific the combinations of subjects are, the more specific are the career options later on, too. That can by all means increase the graduates' opportunities," Klaas Kunst emphasises.

"After gaining my bachelor's degree I first have to return to South Korea to do my military service. After that I want to enrol on a master's degree course, preferably in Germany again, or perhaps in the USA," says Taehyun Yoon, revealing his plans, which could lead him back to Germany at the latest when he starts work. "I can imagine working in a bank, in a Korean firm with a location in Germany – such as Samsung – or in a German company that is represented in Korea, such as Siemens."



INFORMATION

**Georg-August-Universität Göttingen,
Faculty of Social Sciences**
www.sowi.uni-goettingen.de/basowi

**Central Institution for Languages and
Key Qualifications (Zentrale Einrichtung
für Sprachen und Schlüsselqualifikationen – ZESS)**
www.zess.uni-goettingen.de

Master's and doctoral studies – two paths to success

Improved career opportunities, easier career entry or scientific curiosity are often cited as reasons for embarking on master's or doctoral studies. For graduates in business, economics or social sciences there is a broad range of master's courses and opportunities for doctoral studies at German universities. In these programmes they are able to deal intensively with the economic, political and social issues of our time.



Students in master's programmes can specialise further and sharpen their profiles. The specialisms on offer at the Universität Hamburg, for instance, include Finance and Insurance, Healthcare Management, Marketing and the Media, and Auditing and Taxation.

At Germany's universities the number of master's degree courses in business, economics and social sciences has been growing steadily over the past few years. There are currently almost 1,000 master's courses and in addition about 100 MBA programmes. In approximately 180 master's courses, English is the language of instruction.

A distinct practical orientation and internationality are typical characteristics of many degree courses. They impart management skills, which are indispensable for managerial positions in firms, or gain the knowledge necessary for developing and implementing social or political problem-solving concepts and strategies of action.

Research-oriented courses deal more intensively with the theories and methods of the subject. The scientific foundations can be evaluated critically here and developed in an international environment. Those completing the courses can also use their knowledge confidently in unfamiliar and multidisciplinary contexts.

Master's degrees – building on existing knowledge or learning something new

Master's degree courses, which generally last three or four semesters, are offered at universities of applied sciences and at traditional universities. As is the case with bachelor's

degrees, some specialisms are represented at traditional universities and at universities of applied sciences alike, while others are only offered by one of the two types of university. A master's degree course need not necessarily be restricted to the specialism of the first degree, but may also focus on a related discipline or tap into a completely new domain. Especially the master's courses in business administration provide opportunities to supplement the often rather generalist qualifications gained in the bachelor's degree courses in business and economics with subject-specific or industry-specific specialist knowledge.

»» *The Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS) is an ideal link between history and social sciences. All of the doctoral candidates work on different subjects but have the same interest in issues of social organisation. The atmosphere is open, friendly and international. The dialogue in the interdisciplinary seminars is really interesting and is of great benefit for the students' own research work. At the BGHS I can work on my PhD project about doctor-patient interactions in Russian medical Internet forums. For this I use methods of conversation analysis and study the ways in which the patients seek information online. In addition I enjoy living in a green town like Bielefeld and have become an enthusiastic cyclist.* ««

Anna Demidova comes from Russia and is working towards a doctorate at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS) at Bielefeld University.



A master's degree course can be started immediately after gaining a bachelor's degree or later on after a period of employment. The specific admission requirements, such as above-average grades in the examinations for the first degree or certain specialist skills and work experience, are laid down by the university. Master's degrees in business, economics or social sciences lead to the qualification Master of Arts or Master of Science. The precondition for taking part in a programme leading to the qualification Master of Business Administration (MBA) is at least one year of work in a skilled occupation. A master's degree can be the starting point for an academic career and is generally a prerequisite for doctoral studies.

Consider carefully whether to take a doctorate

With their research, their creativity and their commitment, doctoral students make a substantial contribution to shaping scientific progress. They are an indispensable element of the German academic system. Irrespective of whether a doctorate is intended to be the point of departure for an academic career or to improve career prospects on the labour market, the independent academic research achievements are the essential core of the doctoral studies.

A doctoral thesis takes four to five years to complete on average, and the student's individual situation, such as a simultaneous career, can prolong the doctoral study phase still further. That is why students should carefully weigh up their motives and the expected benefits against the effort involved in doing a doctorate. Academic curiosity, a clearly outlined and manageable topic and sustained interest in the chosen research subject as well as trusting cooperation with the doctoral supervisor are important preconditions for swift completion of a doctorate.

The number of doctorates earned at German universities has increased continuously over the past few years. In 2010, some 2,000 doctorates were successfully completed in business, economics and social sciences. Academic titles such as Dr. rer. pol. or Dr. rer. oec. are highly regarded internationally.

Making doctoral studies calculable

In business, economics and social sciences, like in the humanities, the traditional form of doctoral studies dominates, where the candidates choose and work on the topic of their doctoral thesis largely independently. Nonetheless, the doctoral candidates are often integrated into an institution: as employees of a university or research institute or in special colloquia for doctoral candidates, where they present intermediate results and can discuss problems and results of their work with other doctoral students and professors. Periods as guest researchers and active participation in conventions promote communication in the scientific community. Moreover, interest in graduate colleges and graduate schools is growing in business, economics and social sciences, too. They offer structured doctoral programmes in which the doctoral students are integrated into research projects and receive intensive support.

Structured programmes of this type are doctoral programmes at universities, Research Training Groups of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), graduate schools at universities, International Max Planck Research Schools.

The programmes are often interdisciplinary and contain a curriculum to be followed concurrently with the doctoral studies. One of their aims is to make the time required for doctoral studies easier to calculate and even to shorten it. An increased transfer of academic qualifications into practical fields of occupation is also an objective of many doctoral programmes. Structured doctoral

programmes frequently have an international orientation, with English as the working language.

In the International Promovieren in Deutschland (IPID) programme, the DAAD promotes the internationalisation of structured doctoral programmes at German Universities out of funds provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). These include eight programmes from the field of business, economics and social sciences in which young international researchers, in particular, can benefit from good academic supervision.

INFORMATION

DAAD – International Programmes in Germany

On the website of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst), you can search for internationally recognised, accredited bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes in business, economics and social sciences, most of them taught in English. All the programmes offered in the database ensure special course-related and personal support for students and doctoral candidates from abroad. www.daad.de/international-programmes

PhDGermany – the platform for doctoral positions and research opportunities in Germany

The website of the programme provides an overview of the structured doctoral programmes promoted in IPID. www.phdgermany.de

IPID – International Promovieren in Deutschland

The website of the programme provides an overview of the structured doctoral programmes promoted in IPID. www.daad.de/ipid > Service

Sustainable development in an unequal world

The economic and social development of countries and regions is determined more than ever by the global economic and political processes. There are considerable differences in levels of social and economic progress. In the MIDE master's programme, students from all over the world learn about the regional and global influences that development policy is subject to and about the strategies and instruments that can facilitate sustainable success.



The participants in the MIDE Summer School "Networks of High Potential in International and Development Economics" come from 20 different countries.

Volkan Emre is pursuing a clear goal. After first gaining a bachelor's degree in Public Finance and then completing a master's course in Financial Economics in his home country, Turkey, the 30-year-old came to Berlin to do another master's course at the HTW Berlin – University of Applied Sciences. "I wanted to give my career a new direction with a special focus on development economics. My goal is a professional research activity." He discovered the MIDE programme on the website of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). After obtaining further information and an in-depth informative conversation with the course adminis-

trator, Cindy Gottstein, in Berlin, it was clear that he wanted to be one of the participants in the master's programme in 2011.

Intercultural working groups

Every year at the beginning of the summer semester 30 to 35 students, mainly from Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe, begin the degree programme, which lasts three semesters and is taught in English. Professor Ulrich Wurzel, the study programme director, regards the heterogeneity of the group of participants as a challenging enrichment: "The participants come from countries with different education systems and educational

traditions and have occupational experience in a wide variety of fields." In order to test the students' prior knowledge and to impart the necessary level of knowledge, tutorials are already offered in the two most important subjects before the actual course begins. The interculturality of the study group has further advantages for subsequent professional practice, as Ulrich Wurzel says: "Anyone who has worked in a working group here together with fellow students from different continents knows what paths you can take in intercultural teams."

Volkan Emre comes from Turkey and is a student on the master's course International and Development Economics (MIDE) at the HTW Berlin. In the course he deals intensively with issues concerning the supply of energy.



Critically analysing development policy

The 18-month degree programme is intended to provide an understanding of the socioeconomic conditions in the developing and less developed countries and of global economic contexts. "The different progressions of economic and social development processes in the individual regions and countries are the best empirical ground for discussing the subjects we deal with in the degree programme. What is important is that mistakes are recognised and that we learn from them how development policy has to be adapted," Professor Wurzel summarises.

In the first two semesters the students complete compulsory modules in which they broaden in particular their knowledge of development studies, international economics and macroeconomics. "This also includes examining the current theoretical and political debates, taking a critical look at the development policy concepts to date and searching for alternatives," as Ulrich Wurzel emphasises.

Agricultural economics, social security systems, privatisation

From a catalogue of 13 optional modules the students are able to shape their professional profile as they wish. The modules on offer include Agricultural Economics, Social Security Systems, Privatisation of State-Owned Enterprises and Quantitative Methods of Economics. Some of the courses gave Volkan Emre an important impetus: "I'm particularly interested in issues associated with developing energy resources and safeguarding the supply of energy. Many of Turkey's neighbouring countries are developing countries and have an abundance of natural gas reserves, but they are unable to utilise them as a result of economic, social and political problems. I'm interested in how the situation there can be improved."

The third semester is reserved for writing the master's thesis. For this the students often choose topics with a specific reference to the problems in their countries of origin: how can microfinance instruments be used for rebuilding in Indonesia following natural disasters like the tsunami in 2004? Can military spending promote industrial development in Brazil and be used as resources for industrial policy? What impact does the inequality of income and wealth have on the development prospects of Colombia? Volkan Emre is dealing in detail with the security of supply on the Turkish natural gas market and developing a quantitative scenario analysis for natural gas production in the region, based on two competing pipeline projects, Nabucco and South Stream.

City of short distances

"The location of Berlin offers numerous advantages for a degree course related to developing countries," as study programme director Ulrich Wurzel knows. These are not only the good research infrastructure or the large number of universities and libraries in the city: "The good contacts that we maintain to the ministries, trade associations or political foundations located in Berlin facilitate the exchange of ideas with experts and enrich the university studies. If we invite a specialist to give a lecture, he or she only needs to take the underground." The students benefit from the location advantage of the capital city with regard to excursions, too: visits to the institutions based in Berlin, such as the German Institute for International and Security Affairs of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), the largest think tank for international and security policy within Europe, provide interesting insights into scientific policy advice and the opportunity to participate in expert dialogue at both national and international level.

Professor Ulrich Wurzel teaches in Department 3 Economics of the HTW Berlin and is the director of the master's programme International and Development Economics (MIDE).



After completing the master's programme, Volkan Emre is first going to go to Washington D.C. in the USA for personal reasons. There he wants to try to find a research-related job. A broad spectrum of employment opportunities has opened up for MIDE graduates in the past: in international development organisations, NGOs, multinational firms, banks, ministries or trade organisations. Doctoral studies are another option.

Before leaving, however, Volkan Emre definitely wants to take part this year's Summer School. In addition to interesting events, this also provides an opportunity to meet alumni of the MIDE programme, who sometimes have offers of internships or jobs in their pockets.



INFORMATION

Information about the master's degree programme and admission requirements of the HTW Berlin – University of Applied Sciences (Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin)
<http://mide.htw-berlin.de>

Information as a factor of production

Booking flight tickets and hire cars on the Internet, ordering goods for the supermarket at the central warehouse or setting up new information channels and communication structures when two companies join together – none of this would work without the IT-supported dissemination and processing of information. The students on the master's course in Information Systems at the University of Münster are racking their brains to work out how organisation and application systems have to be designed so that operational procedures in firms and administrative departments interlock seamlessly.



Tradition is combined with modern research and teaching in a relaxed campus atmosphere at the University of Münster.

"I did it!" Adriana López Córdoba exclaims happily. The 26-year-old graduate of the master's course in Information Systems received the results of her master's thesis a few days ago and is very pleased with them. For four semesters she studied at the University of Münster, learning a lot and gathering valuable experience in the process. "After gaining my bachelor's degree in engineering management in Mexico I definitely wanted to go to Europe for my master's degree," the young graduate remembers. "I had several reasons for choosing the master's programme in Münster: first, I wanted to extend my qualifications in the direction of computer science. Second, the programme is taught entirely in

English and had good positions in the rankings." They were very flexible in Münster with regard to the necessary prior knowledge and the admission requirements. "After a colloquium it was agreed that I should attend three lectures from the bachelor's degree course in Information Systems in Münster, then I was able to start."

Designing enterprise architecture

The Department of Information Systems at the Münster School of Business and Economics of the University of Münster is one of the largest and most prestigious departments of information systems in Germany. Regular national rankings confirm the reputation of

the department. Modern computer rooms, numerous IT labs and a library with more than 10,000 titles provide for outstanding study conditions.

"The master's course is interdisciplinary and integrates the fields of information systems, management, computer science and quantitative methods. The heart of the programme, which provides opportunities for specialisation, comprises four so-called tracks: information management, process management, business networking and business intelligence," says course director Professor Ulrich Müller-Funk, explaining the concept of the master's programme.

Adriana López Córdoba comes from Mexico and completed her master's degree in Information Systems at the University of Münster.



Adriana found the Information Management track especially interesting: "I had taken a course in Information Systems Architecture (ISA) there and also dealt with this subject in more detail later on in my master's thesis. It's about the holistic organisation of information and operative processes, in which a company is examined from the levels of business architecture, information architecture, applications architecture and technology architecture. This makes it possible to describe all of the processes in a company and relate them to each other, and to recognise the mutual dependencies."

Experience of practical work and research included

Providing practical experience and introducing the students to research work – these are also objectives of the course. "An integral component of the degree course is a project seminar in which we were able to establish contact with firms and to gather work experience under conditions like those in the real working world for one semester. This project seminar also led to the contact for my master's thesis," Adriana López Córdoba tells us, looking back on the third semester of the course. She subsequently wrote her master's thesis in cooperation with a leading German logistics company. For this she investigated how a common software framework can be adapted to the specific conditions in firms.

The Mexican student gained an insight into research work via her collaboration in the ERCIS research network (European Research Center for Information Systems), whose headquarters are in Münster. There, ten professors from the fields of business information systems, applied computer science and quantitative methods, business administration and law conduct interdisciplinary research together in the field of application systems and organisational design. "The training in Germany is more comprehensive

and more thorough with regard to scientific methods than the way I know it from the university in Mexico," Adriana López Córdoba states, comparing the two countries. In one of the ERCIS working papers she has published an article on the subject "Communication and Trust in Networks of Practice".

Knowledge with a long half-life

Technical developments have expanded the fields of employment for graduates in business information systems considerably. Linking business processes with the Internet has made new business models possible. The spectrum here ranges from classic online trading, through secure payment systems, to applications for mobile business, where, for example, job offers are transmitted directly to smartphones.

Technical innovations will influence the work of graduates in business information systems considerably in the future, too. A solid theoretical foundation and a willingness to continue training are therefore important prerequisites for career success. "The advantage of a university education such as that here in Münster is also that it imparts knowledge with a long half-life. Although there will continue to be lots of new trends in the future, too, the fundamental structures will endure," Professor Müller-Funk emphasises.

German language skills open doors

Although the master's course is taught entirely in English and a knowledge of German is not a requirement for admission to the course, Adriana López Córdoba is glad that she completed a six-month German course at the University of Paderborn, some 100 kilometres from Münster, before starting the master's course. "My knowledge of the German language helped me a lot at the beginning to establish contacts and to make friends," recalls the graduate, who speaks perfect German in the meantime.

Professor Ulrich Müller-Funk holds a chair at the Department of Information Systems of the University of Münster and heads the department group Quantitative Methods.



After gaining her master's degree she had no trouble finding a job. "I am now working for a consulting firm in Bonn and first want to gather more occupational experience here." Surveys conducted among the alumni confirm that highly attractive jobs in research and teaching and interesting career opportunities in business await the graduates of the master's degree in Information Systems.



INFORMATION

University of Münster
www.uni-muenster.de

Information on degree courses at the Department for Information Systems (Institut für Wirtschaftsinformatik)
www.wi.uni-muenster.de/institut/en/studieren/master

ERCIS - European Research Center for Information Systems
www.ercis.de

Researching independently with good support

At the University of Mannheim the Argentinian student Constanza Sanhueza discovered how doctoral programmes offer young academics an education in line with the best international standards and at the same time permit them maximum scientific freedom. Business administration, economics and social sciences are fruitfully combined under the umbrella of the Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences (GESS) there.



Research work in the library – researchers in business, economics and social sciences find excellent conditions for this at German universities.

Good support, a structured programme and a special focus on research excellence – that was what Constanza Sanhueza was looking for. The 28-year-old Argentinian student is one of the 187 doctoral students currently working towards their doctorates at the GESS in Mannheim. She has been in Germany for three years now after having gathered experience of higher education in several other European countries and gaining two master's degrees in the process – one in Sociology and Political Philosophy (Paris) and one in European Studies on Society, Science and Technology (Maastricht).

"I already started doctoral studies on a doctoral programme in Paris, but it was not sufficiently structured for me and there was not enough support," explains Constanza Sanhueza, who then went in search of alternatives and came across the GESS. "There is very good support here, and fruitful

interdisciplinary contact and exchange of ideas instead of that constricting university chair system. In addition, the GESS offers lots of courses in methodology and theory, which was also very important to me," says the young researcher, describing her reasons for coming to Mannheim.

Independent doctoral studies

"We have largely abolished the classic system in which doctoral students are assigned to a Chair, so that our students are able to develop their research questions and research work independently in the first two years without already being linked to specific Chairs," says Professor Klaus Adam, director of the GESS, explaining one part of the concept of the Graduate School in Mannheim, and adds that this increases the freedom and the competition.

Of the more than 800 applicants per year, 60 are admitted to the course, about 25 of them from abroad. The requirements are high: good English language skills, excellent results in previous degrees and, if possible, prior training in the field of quantitative empirical research. What is highly important for Professor Adam and his colleagues is that applicants have sound recommendations from their previous professors: "We want to hear something about the candidate's originality, the logical stringency of his or her thinking and his or her motivation, because these are the things that make an applicant stand out from the rest."

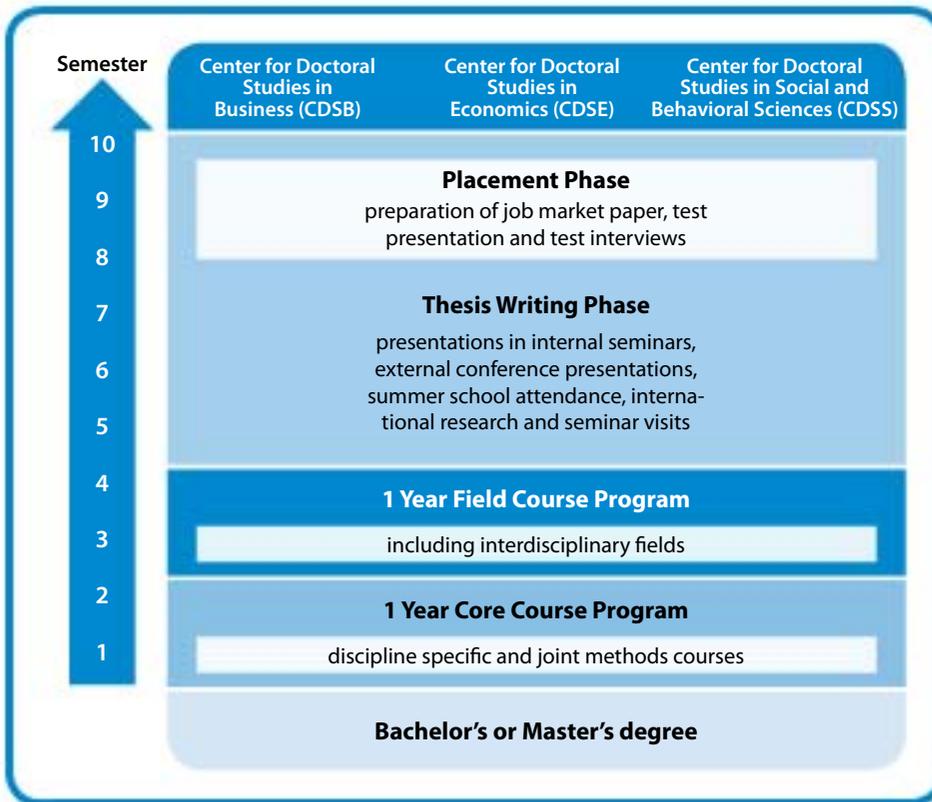
Three centres – one concept

The centres for doctoral studies in business, in economics and in social and behavioural sciences are combined under the umbrella of the GESS. They each offer a five-year research-oriented doctoral programme, the heart of which is an emphasis on quantitative empirical methods.

In all three fields the doctoral students first complete a two-year course phase, during which they attend a number of obligatory courses, for example on empirical research methods, econometrics and data collection, or interdisciplinary courses, for instance in the field of political economy. As the degree course proceeds, more and more specialisms and electives are added. At the end of the second year the students then develop and draft their thesis proposals.



Constanza Sanhueza comes from Argentina and is working towards a doctorate at the Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences (GESS) of the University of Mannheim.



The doctoral students basically have a free hand when choosing the topic of their thesis. "However, it would be helpful to select a topic that can be supervised competently by a member of our team. External professors can also be brought in, though," Professor Adam explains.

Three-year writing phase

The subsequent three-year writing phase is for completing the doctoral thesis. During this phase the doctoral students present their object of research and their findings regularly in internal seminars and external conferences and put them up for discussion.

In her thesis Constanza Sanhueza examines the "Participation and Representation of Migrants in the European Union" whereby she especially compares the situations in France, Germany and the United Kingdom.



Professor Klaus Adam is the director of the Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences (GESS) of the University of Mannheim.

"It is also important to me here to consider immigrants as players, as politically active individuals, and not to depict them just as victims or as being passive." At the moment she is very busy gathering data about the constituencies and the parliamentary behaviour of members of parliament in the French National Assembly, the German Bundestag and the British House of Commons.

350 talks at conferences

Constanza Sanhueza sees the constant exchange of ideas with other doctoral students, researchers and professors as one of the major advantages of the Graduate School in Mannheim. This includes regular talks with the supervisors, special workshops aimed at helping the students to write their draft theses, a weekly colloquium or a monthly informal meeting of the doctoral students of a particular year in a relaxed atmosphere. "In addition the GESS encourages the students to attend international conferences, to participate in Summer Schools and to spend short periods abroad for research purposes, for example at Yale or Berkeley. In this way our doctoral students grow into the international scientific community straight away. In the last four years doctoral students at the GESS have given a total of some 350 talks at conferences – and have of course also published lots of articles in specialist journals," Professor Adam adds.

Constanza Sanhueza has got to know a number of European countries and the USA and is able to make comparisons: "In Germany it takes longer to get to know people." Especially the older research colleagues at the GESS helped her at the beginning and explained the cultural particularities of Germany to her. In everyday academic life she sometimes found communication with her German colleagues somewhat harsh: "They express criticism very directly. But you can't learn anything without criticism."

A career step with prospects

Looking ahead, the Argentinian student can well imagine staying in Germany and working in research after gaining her doctorate. Optimistic expectations that are also shared by Professor Adam: "GESS graduates are very successful on the labour market. In the past, for example, they obtained positions as assistant professors at some of the leading universities at international level, posts in international organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund, IMF, the European Central Bank, ECB, and the German Federal Bank, as well as jobs in leading firms in the private sector."



INFORMATION

Graduate School of Economic & Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim

<http://gess.uni-mannheim.de>

Represented in all sectors

Graduates in business and economics are in demand for positions and tasks in the fields of finance, sales and marketing across all sectors of the economy, virtually irrespective of the economic situation. Social sciences graduates, too, have diverse opportunities, precisely because there is no classic occupational field for them. Their methodological skills make them sought-after specialists not only in market and public opinion research.



In degree courses in business, economics and social sciences, practical seminars and projects prepare the students well for working life.

The career opportunities for graduates in business, economics and social sciences vary considerably. The disciplines are difficult to compare with regard to the labour market, however. Even the reasons for embarking on a degree course are entirely different. "Social scientists are interested in social issues. They often want to get involved in research or in the social sector," explains Kolja Briedis from the HIS-Institute for Research on Higher Education (HIS-Institut für Hochschulforschung), project centre "Studies on Graduates and Lifelong Learning." "Graduates in business and economics are often more career- and income-oriented."

Moreover, the discipline of business and economics is highly multifaceted: just compare graduates in economics with those in business administration, for example. Economists and social scientists have a lot in common, especially as far as the research aspect is concerned. "In the case of the economists, however, the research approach generally only develops during the degree course," Kolja Briedis continues, "when the students want to understand and examine

entire economic systems more precisely." Business administration graduates are clearly more interested in applications know-how, for instance, in accountancy, which they are able to put into practise directly in their work. "IT skills are therefore also very important in their everyday work," the HIS researcher, Kolja Briedis, knows.

Strategic and operational tasks

Every large firm employs graduates in business administration. According to the labour market report of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA), they are in demand for both operational and strategic tasks: "They work as specialists in the fields of sales, marketing, logistics, controlling, finance and accountancy, book-keeping or human resource management. Examples of other areas of work are commercial administration, general administration, auditing, export, customer advice and service, tax department, statistics department, market research, public relations, asset management, quality management or scientific assistance. They are also welcome for

vacancies in general management, division management or project management as well as for positions as assistants to the management or the executive board."

As is the case with humanities graduates, there is basically no classic occupational field for social scientists. This can make career entry a difficult phase for new graduates. With some initiative, however, they can nonetheless find paths into a wide variety of sectors and company departments. One main area is social and market research. "They are also often sought by advice centres and non-profit organisations because they have learned to think in social contexts," Kolja Briedis explains. Other possible employers are federations, trade unions, associations, internationally active companies or large banks.

Demand for advice is growing

According to the labour market report of the Federal Employment Agency, a total of 14,300 vacancies were reported for management consultants, chartered accountants and tax consultants in 2011, 40 percent more



» Graduates in business administration are currently being sought in particular in information and communication technology, in management consultancy, in the health sector and in logistics and trade. The consultancy sector has grown considerably in recent years and has an increasingly international orientation. The health sector is not really a classic business administration field, but also offers interesting opportunities for graduates in business, economics and social sciences now. In principle, business administration graduates should keep track of new trends, especially new markets that can be opened up via Internet trade. «

Dieter Schädiger is managing vice-president of the Association of German Economists (Bundesverband Deutscher Volks- und Betriebswirte e.V. – bdvb).

than in the previous year. However, this astonishing increase cannot be confirmed for all occupations in the field of business and economics. “The employment prospects of graduates in business administration were never strongly dependent on the economic situation. This has changed slightly in the past few years,” as Kolja Briedis knows from studies on graduates conducted by the HIS-Institute for Research on Higher Education. “In the meantime representatives of this group, too, may experience problems with career entry when the economy is tight.” Moreover, the number of graduates is growing and that leads to fierce competition. In order to stand out from one’s competitors it is therefore necessary to create a clear profile. For example, personnel managers pay attention to the specialisations chosen in the degree course and to the selected internships or periods of work experience.

If Kolja Briedis had to compile a ranking list of degree subjects in social sciences as regards their employment prospects, it would be topped by the slightly more broadly structured social sciences, followed by sociology, which offers good employment opportunities at present. The situation for the political scientists is likely to be the most problematic. Yet a positive trend can be observed in this group, too, at the moment. Graduates of a degree course in Social Work, which is offered by some universities of applied sciences, usually have no trouble finding a job in the social care sector, although the jobs are often fixed-term positions initially.

Methodological skills and international experience

In the case of social scientists it is primarily the methodological skills that are looked at. The quantitative methods, which are

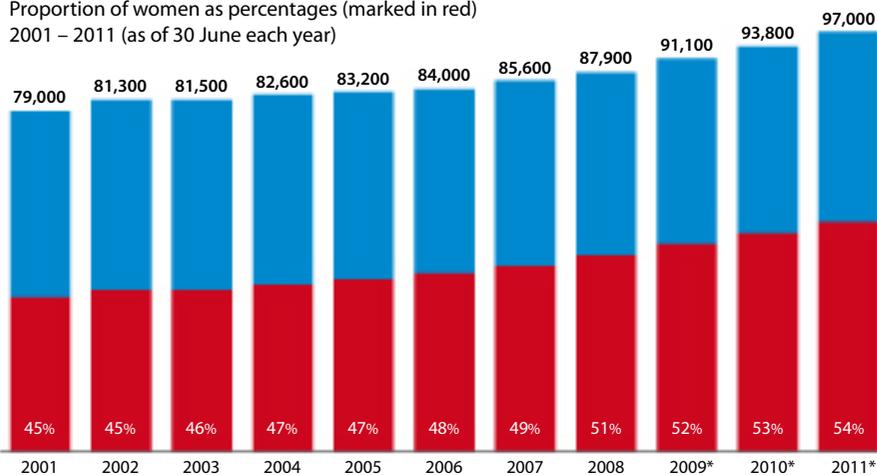
meanwhile taught in all degree courses, have gained considerably in importance and open the doors to jobs in market and public opinion research. “The spectrum ranges as far as opportunities in local authorities, for instance in projects such as the development of municipal schools. These are jobs that didn’t even exist ten years ago,” the HIS researcher, Kolja Briedis, states.

“Graduates in business and economics are very versatile in the economy. Their tasks are to generate sales and profits and to keep an eye on costs,” says Dieter Schädiger, managing vice-president of the Association of German Economists (Bundesverband Deutscher Volks- und Betriebswirte e.V. – bdvb), summarising the demands on graduates of business administration. “Furthermore, their university studies have prepared them well for self-employment.”

In addition, graduates in business and economics are increasingly being measured in terms of how much international experience they have. More and more small and medium-sized firms are also part of international networks and therefore bank on language skills. “Soft skills are tremendously important for graduates of business and economics anyway, whether it is rhetoric, presentation techniques, negotiation skills or organisation techniques,” Dieter Schädiger emphasises. “To acquire these additional skills it is advisable to become involved outside the university during the degree course, for example by doing voluntary work.”

Employment covered by social security on the increase

Graduates of business, economics and social sciences in employment covered by social security in Germany
Proportion of women as percentages (marked in red)
2001 – 2011 (as of 30 June each year)



*preliminary data

Data source: Statistics department of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

INFORMATION

Higher Education Information System (HIS Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH)

HIS-Institute for Research on Higher Education (HIS-Institut für Hochschulforschung)
www.his.de

Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA)

Brochure “Wirtschaftswissenschaftler/innen” from the series “Der Arbeitsmarkt für Akademikerinnen und Akademiker in Deutschland” (only available in German)
www.arbeitsagentur.de/karrieremachen
> Arbeitsmarkt > Arbeitsmarkt für Akademiker
<http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de>

Association of German Economists (Bundesverbands Deutscher Volks- und Betriebswirte e.V. – bdvb)
www.bdvb.de

Understanding travel customers

Economists observe markets and analyse the needs of target groups. Julian Yokoyama manages to do this in Group Marketing at TUI with the aid of statistical methods, strict project management, multilingual communication and a touch of creativity when interpreting data that has been collected.



Julian Yokoyama (right) discussing the evaluation of a customer survey with a colleague.

He had actually always had a connection to tourism: Julian Yokoyama comes from the Dominican Republic, which has just under four million visitors per year. His father worked in the Ministry of Tourism there. Julian Yokoyama first gave in to his preference for statistics and mathematical models and studied economics. After gaining his bachelor's degree he was employed in the Ministry of Finance. However, he soon began to wish for a job that focussed less on figures and which would take him out into the world.

Linguistic genius with statistical know-how

After eleven months as a scholarship student (Hiroshima Prefectural Research Student Scholarship) in Japan, where his paternal grandparents come from, his decision to

do a doctorate in Germany had matured. He had two important reasons: "My mother has German ancestors and I already knew Germany from taking courses at the Goethe-Institut." The language was therefore not an obstacle for him, on the contrary, he wanted to perfect it. In addition to fluent German, Spanish and English he also speaks Japanese and French.

His first point of contact was the database of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) containing international degree programmes. There he found the degree course that was right for him: the Master's Program in Economics and Management Science (MEMS) at the Humboldt-Universität in Berlin. "I specialised in international management and statistics," – an ideal combination with his qualifications. For the internship that was scheduled for the third semester he

applied to Group Marketing at TUI, where he also wrote his masters' thesis and was taken on as a permanent employee after gaining his degree.

Julian Yokoyama's qualifications for the travel industry could not have been better. With his language skills, his background in tourism and his knowledge of multivariate statistics and quantitative methods, he was predestined for the job in tourism market research.

Surveys, focus groups, coolhunters

Today Julian Yokoyama works as senior manager for International Consumer Insights and tries to understand travel customers and target groups all over the world. On the basis of this, the 31-year-old provides his company with strategy and product recommendations: "I look, for example, at how



Julian Yokoyama is senior manager for International Consumer Insights in Group Marketing at TUI.

holidaymakers behave in hotels, how they book their holidays, what they want in the travel programme or what they would like to eat." To this end he designs surveys, initiates and analyses focus group discussions, briefs coolhunters in all available languages and conducts research in databases and on the Internet.

There is no typical working day for Julian Yokoyama; the projects in which he is involved are too varied for that. About once a month he turns his back on Hanover, for instance to attend a focus group interview on the subject of "playing golf in Italy", where he observes the group, hidden from view, from an adjoining room behind a one-way mirror.

"Approximately 40 percent of my working time is spent on typical project management tasks." This means that he coordinates processes, discusses them with all the staff and contractors, and presents the results of the projects to decision-makers. Julian Yokoyama's tasks in survey research are to define questions, to instruct the partner institutes that conduct surveys for TUI and to evaluate and interpret the data and reports submitted. "This demands not only specialist knowledge of statistics and business know-how, but also a lot of creativity," the senior manager explains. "Only in that way can a strategy or product recommendation ultimately be developed from the many individual datasets."

Vision or product recommendation

Sometimes he is required to produce a vision of the direction that the company needs to take in future in order to be able to fulfil customers' wishes. It is also often a matter of recommendations concerning specific components of travel products. For example, he was able to relativise a longstanding and never questioned cliché that shopping is the main reason why the Chinese travel. "From surveys and conversations with potential customers it became clear that shopping only

constitutes part of the travel experience," Julian Yokoyama reveals. Via a focus group interview he discovered that some Indian travellers attach great importance to eating vegetarian food on holiday. In order to offer vegetarian food, it was necessary to consider how the kitchens have to be reorganised, how many chefs need to be hired and which ones, and lots of other things.

Another interesting project concerning "hotel design" was developed by means of coolhunting. The main question: what do different target groups expect from a hotel? Here Julian Yokoyama worked together with partner institutes and coolhunters in Brazil, Japan, the USA, Australia and many other countries. "The coolhunters conducted interviews with hotel managers, designers and guests and passed them on to us in text form, or as video and audio recordings," the TUI market researcher explains.

German planning and Caribbean spontaneity

"What I like about the Germans is that they plan everything in advance, which is noticeable in working life almost only in a positive way and does not let chaos arise in the first place," says Julian Yokoyama, describing the mentality here in Germany. "I sometimes find the many rules and laws rather difficult." At the university he first had to get used to the German higher education system, which is less school-like: "You have to organise a lot more yourself than you would elsewhere and there are fewer assessments spread throughout the semester." He misses the Caribbean spontaneity a little, even though he knows that social interaction is somewhat restrained at the beginning here but can then lead to intensive friendships. He finds the atmosphere at TUI to be collegial in every way: "Although the firm is so large and international, you can sense the common culture in all areas."



In market research the test persons' reactions are often observed from a room behind a one-way mirror during target group interviews.

INFORMATION

TUI AG

www.tui-group.com

TUI career pages

www.tui-karriere.de

Social scientists in market research

Of methods and markets

Due to their methodological competence, social scientists are popular at GfK, one of the world's largest market research firms, with over 11,500 employees in more than 100 countries. André Wolff, senior consultant in Human Resources International, sees them above all as experts, advisors and developers of tools for surveys and marketing.



What kind of social scientists work at GfK?

We employ social scientists, sociologists and political scientists. In addition, economists, communication scientists and psychologists are also of importance for similar profiles – the latter in particular for qualitative aspects of ad-hoc market research (editor's note: see also the information box).

Are your recruitment procedures for social scientists different from those for economists, for example?

In principle, no. Many of our vacancies are aimed equally at economists and social scientists. What is important is whether the applicant's profile matches the requirements of the job.

What do you appreciate in particular about social scientists?

We appreciate above all their analytical skills and their capacity for abstraction, which they can use to reduce complex issues to the statements necessary for certain target groups. Their specialist knowledge of marketing, market research and statistics, especially their know-how concerning the spectrum of methods, make them very valuable to us.

In which departments are social scientists employed at GfK and what are their tasks?

Social scientists are mainly deployed in our operative fields – panel and ad hoc market research – where we recruit large numbers of employees. Social scientists tend to work in our methodology departments, where they develop market research tools – statistical and mathematical procedures – and calculate key

figures. Here they often assume the role of experts in the context of studies or client projects. In addition, they supervise client projects in ad hoc market research and conduct studies. In panel research (editor's note: see also the information box) they are entrusted with long-term studies or look after clients continuously over a long period of time. Furthermore, they are also employed in human resources, namely in recruitment or in personnel development. They can also be found in internal and external communication, in public relations and in marketing.

Can you give an example of a spectrum of tasks typical for a recent graduate in social sciences?

One participant in our junior programme was able to put his knowledge of quantitative methods into developing a new research design in the field of statistics. For this he focussed constantly on the markets and competitors in the field of statistical procedures. He provided the project manager with advice about adapting a marketing tool and trained the staff of one of our clients in how to use this tool. In addition to that he of course participated in the evaluation of studies and helped to process the data for the client.

Which key qualifications do you consider to be particularly important?

What we basically like to see in all our staff is a keen perception, empathy and the ability to communicate with different target groups, to manage projects or to work in international project teams. It goes without saying that English language skills are needed in an internationally active company like GfK. International experience is gaining in importance when selecting applicants.

Where do people apply to GfK if they are interested?

Anyone who wants to go to a certain region but has not yet decided on a specific country should apply via the headquarters in Nuremberg. For our GfK locations outside Germany we recruit approximately the same profiles as within Germany. We also seek applicants abroad for certain vacancies in Germany, for example when we require employees for particular tasks, with special language skills or with the corresponding cultural background.



André Wolff is senior consultant in Human Resources International at GfK in Nuremberg.

What career development opportunities are there at GfK?

As they gain increasing occupational experience and broader specialist skills, employees from all disciplines can gradually take on more responsibility, larger or global projects and market research studies, or the management of key accounts or a team. When searching for the right person for a managerial position we do not look at his or her field of study but at what he or she has achieved at GfK or with previous employers.

INFORMATION

GfK

www.gfk.com

GfK career pages

www.gfk.com/careers

Panel market research

In a panel an identical group of individuals is asked about the same subject at regular intervals. This type of market research analysis makes it possible to determine changes in the behaviour or opinion formation of the target group easily.

Ad-hoc market research

In contrast to studies with a long-term design, ad-hoc studies collect data at one point in time for a certain purpose. With ad-hoc research it is possible to describe markets very well. It involves, for example, advertising pre-tests, product tests and surveys.

Important links at a glance

Preparation and overview of degree courses

www.study-in.de

First information about living and studying in Germany, with videos, chat forums, reports from foreign students, city portraits and a database of all degree courses

www.daad.de

Website of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD): more detailed information regarding first degree courses and doctoral studies in Germany

www.daad.de/international-programmes

Database with bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes, most of them taught in English, as well as language and short courses and preparatory programmes

www.hochschulkompass.de

Information portal of the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK) with information on German higher education institutions, their courses and opportunities for doctoral studies, as well as international cooperations

www.hochschulkompass.de/forschungs-landkarte

Interactive research map provided by the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK) showing the 'institutional research priorities' of German universities

Support and service

www.internationale-studierende.de

Information portal of the 58 student unions (Studentenwerke) in Germany with information about economic, social, health and cultural support for international students at German universities

www.daad.de/aaa

Addresses of the International Offices (Akademische Auslandsämter – AAA) at the German universities

Application, admission

www.daad.de/admission

This page provides information about which educational certificates obtained outside Germany are required for admission to higher education in Germany.

www.anabin.de

Information system for the recognition of foreign educational qualifications run by the Central Office for Foreign Education Systems (Zentralstelle für Ausländisches Bildungswesen – ZAB)

www.uni-assist.de

Internet portal of the University Application Service for International Students (Arbeits- und Servicestelle für ausländische Studienbewerber)

Business, Economics and Social Sciences

Scientific organisations, networks

www.dfg.de

German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG)

www.research-explorer.de

Research explorer of the DAAD and the DFG

www.wgl.de

Leibniz Association (Leibniz-Gemeinschaft, Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz e.V.)

www.mpg.de

Max Planck Society (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft)

Funding

www.funding-guide.de

Database of scholarships offered by the DAAD and other funding organisations

Associations, organisations, information portals

www.akwi.de

Working group on Business Information Systems at Universities of Applied Sciences (Arbeitskreis Wirtschaftsinformatik an Fachhochschulen – AKWI)

www.bdvb.de

Association of German Economists (Bundesverband Deutscher Volks- und Betriebswirte – bdvb)

www.bds-soz.de

Professional Association of German Sociologists (Berufsverband Deutscher Soziologinnen und Soziologen – BDS)

www.cap-lmu.de

Center for Applied Policy Research (Centrum für angewandte Politikforschung – C·A·P) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU)

www.soziologie.de

German Sociological Association (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie – DGS)

www.diw.de

German Institute for Economic Research (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung – DIW)

www.dvpw.de

German Association for Political Science (Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Wissenschaft – DVPW)

www.gesis.org

GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (GESIS – Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften)

www.schmalenbach.org

Schmalenbach-Gesellschaft für Betriebswirtschaft e.V. (SG)

www.sowionline.de

Information and link portal for social scientists

Imprint

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pursuing her doctorate in Economics
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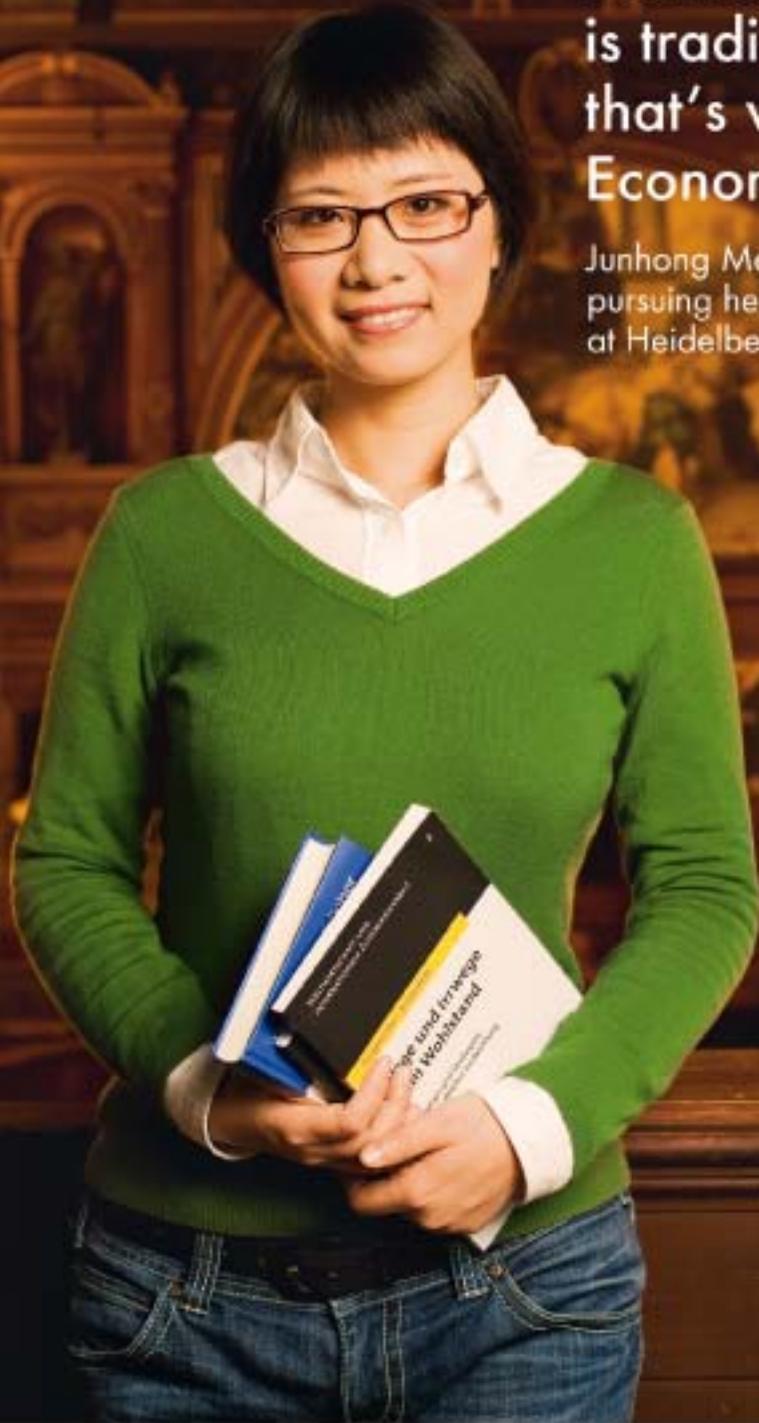


Photo taken in the auditorium of Heidelberg
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