

HEAD OFFICE OF THE GERMAN SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Cologne 09 04 2026

BASIC DATA ON UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENTS IN GERMANY

Number of universities (winter semester 2024/2025, without colleges of public administration): 390 (universities: 108, colleges of education: 6, colleges of theology: 16, art academies: 53, universities of applied sciences: 207), of which 111 (28 %) are privately-funded and 36 (9 %) are church-funded. 151 of the German universities (39 %) have the right to award doctoral degrees. A further 11,5 % of German universities are members of Graduate Schools for Applied Research which can award doctoral degrees.

13.6 % of students in higher education in Germany are enrolled at private universities, 1.1 % at church universities (winter semester 2024/2025). 60 % of first-year students (236,358) and 62 % of all students (1,734,330) study at a doctorate-granting university (winter semester 2024/2025). 262,885 students (9.4 %), of which 38,246 are first-year students (9.7 %), study at a member university of a Graduate School for Applied Research.

Universities (without colleges of public administration)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 ¹²
First-year students ¹	454,393	456,380	463,316	471,759	472,991
at universities ²	253,126	259,282	267,120	271,543	261,888
at universities of applied sciences ³	201,267	197,098	196,196	200,216	211,103
<i>Average age</i> ⁴	19.4	19.4	19.3	20,0	.
Students	2,885,809	2,860,624	2,809,615	2,805,238	2,819,149
at universities ²	1,791,332	1,765,199	1,726,047 ¹⁰	1,715,225	1,706,296
at universities of applied sciences	1,094,477	1,095,425	1,083,568 ¹¹	1,090,013	1,112,853
Non-German students	440,613	457,847	469,485	491,659	.
From Germany	90,985	90,334	89,546	89,653	.
From abroad	349,628	367,513	379,939	402,006	.
Non-German students from the EU	102,775	102,248	102,192	102,723	.
German students abroad	137,000	138,500	137,200	.	.
Degrees	473,059	461,158	457,256	466,464	.
at universities ²	281,654	270,249	265,869	271,830	.
of which bachelor degrees ⁴	108,185	100,175	96,825	99,220	.
of which master degrees ⁵	95,422	93,954	92,328	94,248	.
of which teaching degrees ⁶	47,958	46,792	47,318	49,544	.
at universities of applied sciences	191,405	190,909	191,387	194,634	.
of which bachelor degrees ⁴	140,392	137,442	135,812	136,476	.
of which master degrees ⁵	49,181	51,700	53,871	54,730	.
<i>Average duration of study (bachelor)</i> ⁷	7.2	7.3	7.4	8.0	.
<i>Average graduation age (bachelor)</i> ³ ⁸	23.3	23.4	23.5	24.0	.
<i>Average graduation age (master)</i> ³	26.1	26.1	26.2	27.0	.
Doctorates	28,146	27,689	26,569	28,171	.
<i>Average graduation age (Ph.D.)</i> ³	30,6	30,6	30.7	31.0	.
Habilitations	1,621	1,535	1,592	1,564	.
<i>Average age (habilitations)</i> ⁹	41.7	41.6	41.6	41.7	.

| 1 Students who are enrolled at a university in Germany for the first time (excluding students in the first year of a second degree course at a German university). - | 2 Including colleges of education, colleges of theology and art academies. - | 3 Median; including colleges of public administration. - | 4 Without B.Ed. - | 5 Without M.Ed. - | 6 Including B.Ed. and M.Ed. - | 7 First-time graduates; in semesters. - | 8 First-time graduates; in years. - | 9 Arithmetic average. - | 10 Of which 703,185 BA and 388,920 MA students (without B.Ed. and M.Ed.). - | 11 Of which 869,660 BA and 195,500 MA students (without B.Ed. and M.Ed.). - | 12 Preliminary data.

2 | 4

Universities ¹	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
University staff ² ³	344,948	371,134	383,386	390,544	393,161	399,746	410,821
Professors	25,432	25,817	26,089	25,580	26,601	27,015	27,095
Other scientific staff	106,893	111,468	114,344	110,929	116,701	117,705	119,050
Non-scientific staff	212,623	233,850	242,954	247,315	249,860	255,027	264,676
Staff at universities of applied sciences ² ⁴	62,132	65,269	66,442	69,360	71,099	71,329	72,064
Professors	18,339	18,762	19,027	18,785	19,927	20,140	20,245
Other scientific staff	19,210	24,584	20,266	19,852	21,729	21,538	21,657
Non-scientific staff	24,584	26,433	27,148	28,454	29,442	29,651	30,162

|¹ Without colleges of public administration. - |² In full-time equivalents, without third-party means. - |³ Including colleges of education, colleges of theology and art academies. - |⁴ Including the dual university Baden-Württemberg.

Selected groups of subjects Universities (without colleges of public administration)	Humanities	Law, econom- ics, social sciences	Mathematics, natural sciences	Medicine, health sciences	Engineering
First-year students (2024)	49,550	175,830	52,445	28,200	133,655
Students (2024)	290,085	1,058,465	297,890	212,690	748,585
Non-German students (2024)	39,625	133,530	55,565	23,555	204,050
Degrees (2024) ¹	46,530	187,630	46,910	26,980	124,615
at universities ²	44,980	91,600	43,500	15,705	53,535
of which bachelor degrees ³	12,600	38,115	15,970	1,300	22,425
of which master degrees ⁴	8,440	33,130	14,785	1,750	29,180
of which teaching degrees ⁵	22,800	10,635	10,850	405	655
at universities of applied sciences	1,550	96,030	3,410	11,270	71,075
of which bachelor degrees ³	1,140	68,955	2,170	8,730	46,610
of which master degrees ⁴	400	26,560	1,245	2,440	21,835
Ph.D. students (2024)	21,132	33,301	47,714	60,324	39,239
Doctorates (2024)	1,655	4,020	8,055	8,490	4,870
Habilitations (2024)	203	166	177	908	64
Staff (FTEs without third-party means, 2024)	17,087	44,353	34,623	143,560	46,321
Professors	4,378	13,650	6,247	4,632	12,773
Other scientific staff	9,991	24,118	16,420	48,819	20,600
Non-scientific staff	2,717	6,585	11,956	90,109	12,948
Students per scientific staff (2024) ⁶	20.2	28.0	13.1	4.0	22.4
Students per professor (2024) ⁷	66.4	77.5	47.7	45.9	58.6
Graduation rates (2023) ⁸	67.3	80.9	57.8	81.3	64.4
Third-party means/prof. in Euro (2023) ⁹	143,321	93,166	368,605	551,905	251,221

|¹ Without doctorates. - |² Including colleges of education, colleges of theology and art academies. - |³ Without B.Ed. - |⁴ Without M.Ed. - |⁵ Including B.Ed. and M.Ed. - |⁶ Students per scientific staff in full-time equivalents; the overall ratio was 14.9. - |⁷ The overall ratio was 59.3. - |⁸ Including colleges of public administration; share of students graduating in 2023 and before in relation to first-year students 2015. The overall share was 71.3%. - |⁹ The overall relation was 223,662 Euro.

3 | 4

Reference date 1 st september	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Degree programs at universities ¹	13,535	13,822	13,868	14,061	14,292	14,613	14,613	13,595
of which bachelor degree programs	5,212	5,307	5,351	5,383	5,487	5,613	5,619	5,304
of which master degree programs	6,706	6,906	6,951	7,089	7,173	7,341	7,345	6,844
of which state and church degrees	1,284	1,284	1,281	1,296	1,344	1,350	1,363	1,323
Degree programs at universities of applied sciences ²	6,157	6,323	6,491	6,776	7,033	7,279	7,438	7,559
of which bachelor degree programs	3,655	3,733	3,817	3,956	4,109	4,253	4,349	4,444
of which master degree programs	2,446	2,536	2,626	2,772	2,876	2,979	3,048	3,074

|¹ Including colleges of education, colleges of theology and art academies. - |² Including the dual university Baden-Württemberg; without colleges of public administration.

States	First-year students (incl. public admin. colleges)					R&D share in GDP 2023 ³	Share of R&D staff 2023 ⁴
	at state universities			all universities			
	2024	Prognosis ¹ 2025	2030	2035	2025 ²		
Baden-Württemberg	63,787	60,833	62,326	65,003	68,167	5.71	33.2
Bavaria	74,425	57,585	71,174	75,392	69,704	3.41	20.6
Berlin	27,584	27,397	28,960	30,940	36,289	3.07	20.7
Brandenburg	7,764	7,649	8,162	8,661	11,666	1.48	9.9
Bremen	5,611	5,276	5,478	5,825	7,652	2.84	17.4
Hamburg	11,546	11,180	11,642	12,557	20,521	2.65	17.7
Hessen	35,885	33,333	34,586	37,320	43,816	3.01	18.0
Meckl.-Vorpommern	5,284	5,319	5,696	6,028	5,866	1.37	8.3
Lower Saxony	29,379	28,425	28,882	31,369	32,950	2.74	15.5
North Rhine-Westphalia	90,841	89,596	92,827	102,081	109,770	2.28	12.7
Rhineland-Palatinate	17,608	17,224	17,133	18,612	18,892	3.56	14.3
Saarland	4,422	4,229	4,044	4,580	5,449	1.64	10.4
Saxony	18,656	17,888	19,415	20,512	24,198	2.26	13.7
Saxony-Anhalt	8,314	8,107	8,437	8,764	9,329	1.44	8.3
Schleswig-Holstein	8,770	8,658	8,646	9,396	10,293	1.53	8.6
Thuringia	8,345	8,162	8,591	8,946	17,088	2.60	13.2
Germany	418,216	390,861	415,999	445,986	491,650	3.13	17.9

|¹ Prognosis from the year 2025 by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, state universities only. - |² Including private and church universities. E.g. in Thuringia, where the largest private university has its headquarters, the numbers are higher than in the preceding columns. - |³ Share of total expenditure for R&D in the GDP of a state in percent. - |⁴ Per 1,000 working population.

Science funding (selection) in million Euro	Target 2024			Target 2025		
	Federal	States	Total	Federal	States	Total
German research foundation – basic funding	1,594.9	961.2	2,556.1	1,620.6	1,012.2	2,632.8
Excellence initiative	399.8	133.3	533.0	399.8	133.3	533.0
Future Contract	-	-	-	2,080.8	2,080.8	4,161.5
Research construction projects at universities, major research instrumentation and national HPC	316.8	316.8	633.5	316.8	316.8	633.5

4 | 4

Extra-university research organisations (selection)	Number of institutes	R&D Staff 2024 ¹	of which scientists	Institutional Funding ²		
				Federal	States	Total ⁷
Federal Research Agencies with R&D tasks	48	10,844	6,156	2,657.6	-	2,657.6
State and communal research institutes ³	.	2,593	1,423	-	.	.
Helmholtz Centres ⁴	18	38,324	20,723	3,763.9	461.2	4,225.1
Max Planck Society ⁵	85	17,093	9,979	1,261.8	1,014.4	2,276.2
Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft ⁴	74	23,339	10,795	859.9	174.6	1,034.5
Leibniz Association ⁵	96	13,746	7,248	788.3	659.1	1,447.5
Academy Programme ⁵	8	.	.	39.9	39.9	79.7
German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina ⁶	1	.	.	11.2	2.7	13.9
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin ⁵	1	.	.	3.8	3.8	7.7

| 1 Full-time equivalents. - | 2 Target 2025 in million Euro (Federal Research Agencies with R&D tasks: Target 2024). - | 3 Without Leibniz Association. - | 4 Funding ratio Federal Government : States 90 : 10. - | 5 The MPG, the Academy programme, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and most of the Leibniz institutes are financed fifty-fifty by the Federal Government and the states. - | 6 Funding ratio Federal Government: States 80 : 20. - | 7 Rounding differences.

Key figures on higher education and R&D expenditure (OECD data for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 und 2025)

	Students per teaching staff	Student Ratio ¹	Ratio of graduates ²	Higher education expenditure/GDP	Share of R&D Staff ³	R&D Expenditure				
						in billion Euro ⁴	Percentage of GDP	Percentage Industry ⁶	Percentage State ⁶	of which Defence ⁷
Australia	19	37	57	1.8	.	28.8	1.68	.	.	7.6
Belgium	22	41	51	1.5	21.3	25.4	3.36	1.95	0.59	1.5
Canada	.	33	69	2.0	15.7	43.5	1.81	0.89	0.47	2.8
Denmark	14	36	51	1.9	22.3	12.5	3.01	1.70	0.84	0.4
Finland	15	40	39	1.6	22.8	10.1	3.22	1.76	0.80	2.0
France	15	36	53	1.6	17.0	79.9	2.18	1.18	0.72	7.8
Germany	11	33	40	1.3	18.3	165.5	3.13 ⁵	1.96	0.93	7.6
Italy	20	37	32	1.0	13.2	43.4	1.38	0.70	0.51	0.6
Japan	.	.	48	1.4	13.6	165.5	3.62	2.81	0.61	5.9
Netherlands	14	41	56	1.8	19.3	30.3	2.29	1.35	0.67	3.4
Norway	9	40	59	1.9	17.6	8.8	1.80	0.84	0.79	4.5
Sweden	12	30	56	1.5	19.4	22.9	3.56	2.31	0.80	4.1
Switzerland	14	31	51	.	18.2	22.2	3.10	1.98	0.81	0.4
Spain	12	40	53	1.4	13.4	36.4	1.50	0.72	0.57	3.8
UK	14	30	60	2.1	.	98.2	2.75	1.60	0.55	15.6
USA	13	33	52	2.3	17.0	863.7	3.44	2.37	0.66	51.5
OECD	14	34	48	1.5	14.9	2,023.7	2.72	1.74	0.63	21.7
China	21	.	.	.	10.3	880.1	2.69	2.14	0.45	.
Russia	13	.	62	1.0	10.6	41.6	1.10	0.32	0.74	.

| 1 Percentage of 20-to-24-year-olds enrolled in higher education among the population of the same age. - | 2 Percentage of 25-to-34-year-olds with a degree in higher education among the population of the same age. - | 3 Per 1,000 working population. - | 4 US-\$ Purchasing Power Parity. - | 5 The target by 2030 is 3.5 % according to the coalition agreement 2025. - | 6 Based on GDP; the remainder is financed by the private sector. - | 7 Percentage of Defence Budget compared to the total of R&D expenses by the Federal Government and the states.