FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Your guide to applying

FOR A PLACE ON A MASTER’S DEGREE COURSE AT HAW HAMBURG

Step by step to your place with us
Welcome

Located at the heart of a fabulous, dynamic city which people from right across the globe call home, HAW Hamburg is Germany’s fourth largest vocationally-focused higher education institution, with a wide range of Bachelor’s and Master’s degree courses on offer in subjects as diverse as engineering, business studies, life sciences, design, media and practice-based social sciences. We’d love to welcome you soon as one of our approximately 17,000 students.

Studying at HAW Hamburg means small classes, plenty of practical experience, and lecturers with strong track records in the real world of work. You’ll benefit from teaching in accordance with the latest insights, innovative research methods, down-to-earth explanation of complex issues, and an environment where your ideas count – whether you want to design aeroplanes, develop computer games, care for people or conduct nutritional research. Our students and staff are looking forward to you joining us.

We’ve compiled this guide specially to help you, as an international student, navigate the application process for a place on a Master’s degree course at HAW Hamburg. Our Student Center teams are always on hand if you need a little extra help – you can contact us by email, give us a call, meet us at one of our information events, or make an appointment for a one-to-one chat.

Our Student Admissions and Registration Office (Studierenden­sekretariat, StS) can help you on all admissions-related matters, while our Student Counselling Team (Zentrale Studienberatung, ZSB) can guide you in picking the course that’s right for you. The International Office (IO) has all the answers on issues like funding your studies, residence permits, finding accommodation, life on campus, and language courses. If you are or have been a refugee, our Centre for Migration Research and Integration Practice offers courses and programmes to help you prepare for your studies and support with the transition to full student life.

Your application journey: ready, set, go!
YOUR WAY TO JOINING HAW HAMBURG

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Thank you for applying – all the best for your future

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HAW Hamburg: all about us

HAW Hamburg is northern Germany’s leading higher education institution with a focus on real-world, sustainable solutions to today’s and tomorrow’s societal challenges, undergirded by academic reflection and first-class research. Delivering outstanding degree courses via top-quality teaching is our key priority and commitment to our students, and we are also currently consolidating our growing research reputation. People from over 100 nations across the globe are shaping our institutional present and future – we believe that our diversity is our strength.

HAW HAMBURG: WHO WE ARE IN 120 SECONDS

https://youtu.be/q0h51om5sw

HAW HAMBURG IN FIGURES

37
Bachelor’s degree courses to choose from (three in cooperative form and a further ten available as cooperative programmes)

3
Bachelor’s degree courses run jointly with the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology

35
Master’s degree courses (including four continuing education courses)

17,000
students

about 2,200
international students from over 100 countries

170
partnerships with higher education institutions worldwide

468
employed research and teaching lecturers

412
professors

552
technical and administrative staff

(figures correct as of winter semester 2022/23)
1. KNOW THE DATES AND DEADLINES

Please make sure you check our website to find out the periods in which we accept applications and current application deadlines for your chosen degree course.

Don’t forget to check whether new entrants can join the course in summer or winter semester or both.

General application periods and deadlines:
- For the winter semester: 1 June – 15 July
- For the summer semester: 1 December – 15 January

Please note: Some degree courses have different application periods and deadlines. Make sure to check them specifically for your chosen course!

Important info:
Applicants for some degree courses in the Faculty of Design, Media and Information need to take a test of artistic aptitude. This takes place before the application period begins. Make sure to check the dates in advance!

2. GET PROOF OF YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS

Before you apply, you need to have the required level of proficiency in the language your degree course is taught in, and you need to be able to demonstrate this in your application. Click on your chosen degree course on our website and check which language it is taught in and what level of proficiency you need. With your application, you will have to submit proof of German or English proficiency in one of a number of approved forms.

Make sure you know the dates of proficiency tests in the relevant language. You need to take the test at least one month before the application period begins in order to ensure you receive your certificate of proficiency in time to submit it online with your application. You can find details of accepted proof of language proficiency on pages 26 and 27 of this guide.

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Sara: I’d like to go on to a Master’s degree when I’ve finished my Bachelor’s course. How do I apply?

HAW Hamburg: There are various different application processes for the degree courses offered by HAW Hamburg. Please check the website of the course you’re interested in to find out the details of the procedure. For some degree courses in the Faculty of Design, Media and Information, you will also need to take a test of artistic aptitude. This guide sets out the key stages of getting your application ready and submitting it online to us.

Ahmad: I’m hoping to do my Master’s degree at HAW Hamburg.

HAW Hamburg: Great – we’re really pleased you’re interested in joining us. Do you know which Master’s degree courses would work best with your Bachelor’s degree? Are you thinking about applying for a particular course? Why not reach out to our Student Counselling Team? They’ll be happy to help you with your choices.

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Decisions, decisions

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Getting ready
3. CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY

You can find details of the documents you will need to upload with your online application on the website of your chosen degree course under the heading Bewerbungsvoraussetzungen (admission requirements). In general, the documents you’ll need to submit when applying for a place on a Master’s degree course with us are:

- Your Bachelor’s degree certificate and your Diploma Supplement/Transcript of Records
- Your Vorprüfungsdokumentation (VPD) from uni-assist (see point 4 below)
- Proof of the required level of proficiency in the language of instruction (see point 2 above). Some Master’s degree courses that are taught in English additionally require proof of proficiency in German.
- APS: Applicants from China or Vietnam who studied in those countries have to have their application documents checked by the Akademische Prüfstelle (APS) of the German Embassies in Peking, Shanghai or Hanoi. Please then submit a copy of the certificate issued by the APS to uni-assist.

The principal use of the GMAT is as an entrance examination for MBA programmes. You can find practice tests on the GMAT website. As a rule, the test can only be taken online.

4. APPLY FOR YOUR VPD FROM UNI-ASSIST

Uni-assist is an association of German higher education institutions whose principal task is to check qualifications attained outside Germany for purposes of admission to institutions in Germany. Uni-assist will check your academic qualifications to determine whether they meet HAW Hamburg’s entry requirements, and translate the grade you achieved into its German equivalent.

Applicants to HAW Hamburg who attained their first degrees outside Germany need to make sure they apply for ‘preliminary review documentation’, or Vorprüfungs­dokumentation (VPD), from uni-assist eight weeks before the application period commences.

A VPD documents the process of checking that the qualifications held by an applicant make them eligible for admission to the Master’s degree course. You will need to present certified copies and certified translations (into German or English) of the certificates of all your qualifications that you attained outside Germany – that includes your school-leaving qualifications, the certificate of your first degree (Bachelor’s degree), and your Diploma Supplement/Transcript of Records. ‘Certified’ means that an official authority, such as an embassy, has confirmed that the copies of the certificates are true and accurate copies of the originals.

You will need to register for the VPD process, pay the required fee, and send your certified copies of your documents to uni-assist in Berlin. Applicants from China or Vietnam will additionally need to have their documents checked by the Akademische Prüfstelle (APS) of the German Embassies in Peking, Shanghai or Hanoi. Once this is done, you will receive an APS certificate which you will need to send to uni-assist.

Note: Some institutions use uni-assist for their entire applications and admissions procedures. HAW Hamburg doesn’t; all uni-assist does is issue the VPD. You apply online to HAW Hamburg.
5. APPLYING FOR AN ART OR DESIGN COURSE?

Applicants for Master’s degree courses in art and design subjects have to take a test of artistic aptitude before submitting their regular application online. Part of the test involves submitting a portfolio of approximately 20–30 samples of your work (such as drawings, sketches or compositions in colour). Deadlines for portfolio submission differ from course to course, so make sure you check them on your chosen course’s website: bewerbung.design.haw-hamburg.de/.

You’ll be notified if you pass the test of artistic aptitude – but this doesn’t mean you’ve been accepted for a place on the course yet. You’ll then still need to submit your regular application via our myHAW gateway. Check the application processes for art and design courses by using the links below.

6. ENTRY AND RESIDENCE RULES

If you are a national of a non-EU country, you will need to book an appointment to apply for a ‘prospective student visa’ (Visum zum Zweck der Studienbewerbung) as soon as you have begun the application process for your chosen degree course. In some instances, you will have to wait for around three months for your visa application to be processed.

We recommend commencing this process as soon as you can, to give yourself a good chance of being able to enter Germany in time for the beginning of your course. Once you are admitted, you will be able to have your prospective student visa converted into a visa for study purposes (Visum zu Studienzwecken).
ON TO THE NEXT LEVEL …

Time to apply

7. SUBMIT YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION

You need to make sure you submit your online application within the relevant application period. To submit an online application, you will need to create a myHAW account.

You can only apply for one degree course with us. The online application system is only available within the published application periods.

Before submitting your application, you should make sure that your first degree makes you eligible to study your chosen Master’s degree course. You can check this in the Admissions and Selection Regulations for the course.

You will now need to complete the online application process, for which you will need copies of all the required documents in PDF format. You can save your application during the process and come back to it later. Don’t forget, though, that the online application gateway is only available during the published application periods. Make sure to take a note of your application number and remember your password, as you will need both of these later on.

The application process now takes place online for all of our courses. Please make sure you upload all of your application documents.
1. ACCEPTING YOUR PLACE

Once you have submitted your online application, our colleagues in the Student Admissions and Registration Office will check it carefully and process it. We receive several thousand applications each semester, so this may take some time. There is also an admissions committee for non-EU applicants made up of a range of HAW Hamburg members, whose job it is to choose applicants for the available places. Please be patient and understand that this process takes time. As soon as your application has been decided upon, you will receive notification to check your application account in the myHAW system, for which you'll need your login data from step 7 of the application procedure.

If you're among those who receive an offer of a place, you will need to accept it within a specific timeframe, by filling in the acceptance form (don't forget to sign it!) and submitting any further documents requested – the Student Admissions and Registration Office will tell you if this is the case and what you need to submit. You'll also need to pay your semester contribution. If you don't accept your place within the specified period, it will go to someone on the waiting list.

2. SORTING OUT FUNDING

You'll need to consider carefully how you are going to fund your course. Part of the visa application process involves proving you have sufficient funds (in a blocked account, via a scholarship or someone else’s formal declaration that they will support you). You will require funds of around 11,000 Euro per year for expenses like your rent, your health insurance (see below), food, your semester ticket, and so on. You will be allowed to undertake paid work for a few hours per week, but you need to remember that your studies will take up a lot of your time and you may not find a suitable job immediately.

3. HEALTH INSURANCE – A MUST

You need proof of adequate health insurance to register at a German higher education institution. Your insurance should meet the standard stipulated by Hamburg’s Ausländerbehörde (office for residents of non-German nationality). If you are privately insured, your insurer should complete a certification of private health insurance coverage to submit to the Ausländerbehörde.

You will need to submit confirmation of health insurance when enrolling as a student of HAW Hamburg. EU students who wish to remain with their home system or insurer will need to present their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to a German state health insurer, such as the Techniker Krankenkasse or AOK, which will then issue a Befreiungsbescheinigung (confirmation of exemption).

If you are from a non-EU country, you can present proof of travel health insurance when enrolling, but you will need to take out German health insurance within two months of your arrival in Germany. We strongly recommend you choose a state (as opposed to private) health insurer.

If you do choose a private insurer, you will need to additionally go to a state health insurer, show them proof of your private policy, and get a Befreiungsbescheinigung (confirmation of exemption), which you then submit to the Student Admissions and Registration Office. You can only get a Befreiungsbescheinigung in the first two months after you enrol at HAW Hamburg. If you miss this deadline, you may be deregistered, which will invalidate your visa or residence permit. (You’ll need to prove health insurance to get a residence permit – see below).

NB: Private and travel health insurance policies often fail to meet this standard. We recommend that international students take out state health insurance (gesetzliche Krankenversicherung, GKV). Make sure you are able to cover the premium, which in the case of GKV will be around 95 Euro a month. If you don’t pay for two months running, your insurer may inform us and we may be forced to deregister you, which will lead to the loss of your student status and consequently of your residence permit. In other words, your insurance will be one of your most essential bills while you are in Germany.
4. YOUR RESIDENCE STATUS AND APPLYING FOR THE CORRECT VISA

Students from EU countries don’t need a visa or residence permit to study in Germany, but they do (as do all Germans) need to register their address with their local Einwohnermeldeamt, which in Hamburg may be called a ‘customer service centre’. Students from outside the EU will need a residence permit in order to study in Germany. If you already have a student applicant visa (Visum zur Studienbewerbung) (see step 6 on page 11), you will now be able to convert it into a student visa (Visum zu Studienzwecken). If you don’t have any visa or residence permit yet, make an appointment as soon as possible with your nearest German Embassy or German Consulate-General.

5. FINDING ACCOMMODATION

Start looking as early as possible for somewhere to live during your course. It’s very difficult indeed to find affordable accommodation in Hamburg. You should register your interest in a room in the student residences (Studentenwohnheime) run by the Studierendenwerk as soon as you’ve sent off your application for a place at HAW Hamburg, because waiting lists are often up to six months long. You should also look for private rentals or rooms in privately rented shared flats or houses (called Wohngemeinschaften, or WGs). But never pay for a viewing and never transfer money to a landlord, prospective flatmate or agent until both you and they have signed a rental agreement. Ensure you understand the contract’s terms and ask the International Office or the AStA (HAW Hamburg’s student representation body) for help if you’re worried.

When you have registered your address with the Einwohnermeldeamt, which you need to do within two weeks of arriving in Hamburg, you will be given a Meldebescheinigung (proof of address, or proof of residence). This is an important document; you will need it for a lot of things as you set up your life in Hamburg, such as getting a mobile phone contract, sorting out health insurance, opening a bank account or accessing your blocked account. The Meldebescheinigung confirms that you have a fixed, registered address in Germany.
GETTING STARTED

Now you’ve arrived in Germany, are enrolled on your degree course with us, and have sorted out all the formalities – time to turn your attention to your studies.

YOUR TIMETABLE AND PREPARATORY COURSES

Shortly before the start of the new semester, your department will publish timetables and details of preparatory courses and induction and orientation events on their website. Make sure you check your HAW Hamburg email regularly, because you will receive important information this way.

Please note for the Information Engineering degree course: A preparatory course in mathematics will be offered at the beginning of September. Make sure to sign up for it.

OE WEEK

Each department puts on its own induction events, called Orientierungseinheiten (OEs). Often OEs last about a week (hence the name ‘OE Week’) and include information briefings, events to help you to get to know other students and staff, lectures and talks, faculty tours and leisure activities.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FUNDING

If you do well in your course, get good grades and are involved in supporting intercultural life at HAW Hamburg in particular or in Hamburg in general, you are eligible to apply for an academic scholarship (Leistungsstipendium) or an ‘Engagement-Stipendium’ for international students committed to helping others.

INTERNATIONAL WELCOME WEEK

The International Welcome Week takes place a week before the OE events. It gives you the chance to meet students from other faculties and home nations, explore Hamburg, and find out important information on issues relating to your degree course and your residence in Germany.

OUR WEBUDDY PROGRAMME

weBuddy is a programme that matches international students just starting their courses at HAW Hamburg with a ‘buddy’ – a more advanced student from the same faculty. Your buddy can help you find your feet here, answer any questions you might have, and support you in building your social life. There are numerous events each semester for participants in the scheme, helping you get to know people and perhaps make new friends.
We are here to help!
Useful links

General information for international applicants and students
https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/international/international-students/

HAW Hamburg’s Facebook page for international students
bit.ly/HAWHHFacebook-Seite

Information on admissions, admissions quotas, and admission criteria at HAW Hamburg (in German)*: https://www.haw-hamburg.de/fileadmin/Study/Studierendensekretariat/PDF/Vergabeverfahren.pdf

Information on student finance and funding, scholarships/support, and the HAW Hamburg semester contribution
https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/study/tuition-fees-living-expenses-and-scholarships/

Our faculties and departments
https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/university/

Forms for registering your address and applying for a residence permit
https://www.hamburg.com/welcome/forms/

Finding the appropriate Hamburg authority for your needs (in German)
bit.ly/Behoerdenfinder-Hamburg

Studierendenwerk website
(where you can register for a room in a student residence and find out about studying and living in Hamburg)
https://www.studierendenwerk-hamburg.de/en/

Browse ads for rooms in shared flats/houses here (in German)
bit.ly/Wohngemeinschaften

Website of Hamburg’s public transport service (HVV), with timetables, network and journey planner
https://www.hvv.de/en

Our faculties and departments
https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/university/

Dates of semesters and teaching periods (in German)
(A semester is the higher education term for half of the calendar year; there is the winter semester (1 September–28/29 February) and the summer semester (1 March–31 August). Within these, there are teaching periods (Vorlesungszeiten). The rest of the time is known as the vorlesungsfreie Zeit)
https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/study/organising-your-studies/

* The information in this link is valid only for Bildungsausländer*innen, that is, school leavers without German citizenship who attained their Hochschulzugangsberechtigung in Germany via the regular route (not at a Studienkolleg), and for citizens of EU states.
DEMONSTRATING YOUR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

You’ll need to make sure your language abilities meet the level required to study with us.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

We accept the recognised language proficiency certificates awarded on successful completion of the TOEFL, IELTS und Cambridge language exams. They are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Please check the Admissions and Selection Regulations for your chosen degree course to find out which tests are accepted and the required minimum score in each case.

TOEFL TEST

The TOEFL Test measures proficiency in academic English of the type and level you will encounter in the lectures and classes you will take during your degree course. This means that the institution you are applying to can use your result to identify whether you have the level of language proficiency you will need in order to study successfully. The test consists of four sections, Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing, with combined tasks that check your level in these skills.

IELTS TEST

The IELTS Academic Test is accepted for admission to Bachelor’s and Master’s degree courses. It assesses your ability to follow a degree course in English and covers language proficiency requirements that are typical of degree courses. Scoring is by a nine-band scale of proficiency. Note that there is a general and an academic version of the IELTS Test; the Academic Test is designed for degree course admissions purposes. You can take the IELTS Test by computer or on paper at a test centre. There are various ways to prepare for the IELTS Test.

CAMBRIDGE EXAMS

Cambridge English assessment exams, administered by the University of Cambridge, assess the language proficiency of speakers of English as an additional language. Around three million people from a total of 130 countries take one of the Cambridge exams each year. A Cambridge language certificate at the correct level demonstrates that you have an appropriate level of English for your course and is recognised by educational institutions and employers around the world. If you pass a Cambridge exam, you get a certificate specific to the test you took, which is valid indefinitely and shows that your English proficiency is at a particular level in line with the CEFR. You can take the test online at a Cambridge exam centre.

You can prepare to take a Cambridge exam using free-of-charge resources or by taking a preparatory course.

Other proof of English language proficiency that we recognise:
- a higher education entrance qualification issued by a school in an English-speaking country
- proof of at least two years of successful study at a higher education institution in an English-speaking country
- proof of at least two years of successful study at a higher education institution in an English-speaking country

GERMAN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

We accept the following certificates of German language proficiency for admissions purposes:
- Goethe Institut Zertifikat C1
- TestDaF (minimum scores 16 points overall, with at least 4 points in each section of the test)
- Telc C1 Hochschule
- DSH2 or DSH3 issued by a German higher education institution (please note that we do not accept DSH1)
- Deutsches Sprachdiplom (Zweite Stufe) issued by the Kultusministerkonferenz (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German States)
- Kleines or Großes Deutsches Sprachdiplom issued by the Goethe-Institut
- Proof of vocational training completed in Germany
- Proof of having completed year 7 (or higher) at a German-medium school
- Completion of a degree course in linguistics (i. e. with German as principal subject)
- Proof of completion of a Studienkolleg
WHERE TO GET ADVICE ON STUDYING AT HAW HAMBURG AND CHOOSING A COURSE

→ Student Counselling Team
Rooms 121/122
Stiftstraße 69 / 20099 Hamburg
T +49 151 212 548 93
studienberatung@haw-hamburg.de

Telephone counselling hours:
Mondays and Tuesdays 10 am – 1 pm
Thursdays 1 pm – 5 pm

INFORMATION ON APPLICATIONS, ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENT

→ Student Admissions and Registration Office
Ground floor
Stiftstraße 69 / 20099 Hamburg
T +49 40 428 75 - 9898
studierendensekretariat@haw-hamburg.de

For information on current office and opening hours please see
→ haw-hamburg.de/en/study/contact-form/contact-information/

All reasonable care has been taken to ensure the information in this guide is correct.

IMPRINT

HAW HAMBURG
Student Center
Stiftstr. 69 / 20099 Hamburg

Most recent update:
October 2022

Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

Design: Sandra Spitzer