

Study in Germany

A 12-month application timeline for Nigerian students

BRIX ONLINE ACADEMY / STUDY ABROAD GUIDES

Germany's public universities charge no tuition fees to international students in most states — only a semester contribution, usually a few hundred euros. That makes it one of the most affordable destinations in the world for a recognised degree. It is also one of the most administratively demanding, and almost every failed application fails for the same reason: the student started too late.

This guide works backwards from a target intake. Use it as a planning document, not a checklist to rush through in the final month.

Two intakes, two deadlines

Intake	Teaching begins	Typical application window
Winter semester (the larger intake)	September / October	Applications generally close around 15 July . Many universities open from late spring.
Summer semester	March / April	Applications generally close around 15 January . Fewer programmes available.

Deadlines vary by university and programme. The dates above are the common pattern, not a rule. Check each university's own page and, where it applies, uni-assist. Some competitive programmes close months earlier.

The 12-month timeline

Counting back from the start of teaching. If you are aiming at a winter semester beginning in October, Month 12 is roughly the October before.

When	What you should be doing
12 months out	Decide your field and shortlist programmes. Check whether each is taught in German or English. Begin German classes now — language is the longest lead time in the whole process and cannot be compressed at the end.
11 months	Check how your qualifications are assessed. A Nigerian secondary school certificate alone is usually not sufficient for direct entry to a German bachelor's degree; you may need a Studienkolleg foundation year or completed study at a Nigerian university. Confirm your own position before anything else.
10 months	Build your document file: WAEC/NECO results, transcripts, degree certificates if any, international passport. Start the process for anything that must be requested from an institution — transcripts are the most common cause of delay.
9 months	Confirm language requirements per programme. German-taught programmes typically require TestDaF or DSH at a high level. English-taught programmes typically require IELTS or TOEFL. Book the test you need now, not later.
8 months	Narrow to a final list — five to eight programmes is a workable spread across ambitious and safe choices. Note each one's deadline, portal and document list separately; they differ.
7 months	Draft your motivation letter and CV. Ask for academic references early and give referees a deadline well ahead of the real one.
6 months	Sit your language test. Leave room for a resit — assume you may need one, and you will not be caught out if you do.
5 months	Have documents certified and translated where required. Submit through uni-assist or the university portal as soon as applications open.
4 months	Submit everything remaining. Track each application and respond immediately to any request for missing documents — this is where places are lost.
3 months	Admission decisions begin arriving. On receiving an offer, open a blocked account (Sperrkonto) to show proof of financial means, and arrange health insurance.
2 months	Book your visa appointment the moment you have an admission letter. Appointment slots at the German embassy are the single most common bottleneck for Nigerian applicants.
1 month	Attend the visa interview with your full file. Begin arranging accommodation — student housing has long waiting lists in most cities.
Arrival	Register your address (Anmeldung), enrol at the university, activate your bank account and health insurance, and

The document file

Assemble these once, keep certified copies, and reuse them across every application.

- International passport, valid well beyond your intended arrival
- WAEC or NECO certificate and statement of result
- University transcripts and certificates, if you have studied at tertiary level
- Language certificate — TestDaF, DSH, IELTS or TOEFL as required
- Motivation letter, tailored to each programme rather than reused
- Curriculum vitae in the European format
- Academic or professional references
- Proof of financial means — normally a blocked account
- Health insurance confirmation
- Passport photographs to biometric specification

Money: what to plan for

Cost	What to expect
Tuition	None at most public universities for most programmes. Private universities and some master's programmes do charge.
Semester contribution	A few hundred euros per semester, often including a local transport pass.
Blocked account	A fixed annual sum set by the German authorities, deposited before the visa and released to you monthly. The figure is revised periodically — confirm the current amount with the embassy.
Living costs	Varies sharply by city. Munich, Frankfurt and Hamburg are considerably more expensive than smaller university towns.
Health insurance	Compulsory. Public student insurance is the usual route and must be in place before enrolment.

Five things that go wrong

- **Starting German too late.** Reaching B2 or C1 takes most learners well over a year of consistent study. It cannot be done in the final term.
 - **Assuming a WAEC certificate is enough.** Check the entry route that applies to your qualifications before you build a plan around it.
 - **Missing the visa appointment window.** Slots are limited. Book as soon as you hold an admission letter.
 - **Applying to one university.** Admission is competitive and often decided on grade averages. Spread your applications.
 - **Reusing one motivation letter.** Admissions committees recognise a generic letter immediately.
- Verify everything with the official source.** Deadlines, financial requirements, visa procedures and recognition rules change, and they differ between federal states and universities. Confirm current details with the German Embassy in Abuja, the DAAD, uni-assist and each university directly before acting on this timeline.