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THE INTERNATIONAL
STUDY EXPERIENCE
IN GERMANY

Findings from the International
Student Barometer 2016

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THE INTERNATIONAL STUDY EXPERIENCE IN GERMANY

Findings from the International Student Barometer 2016

NANNETTE RIPMEESTER

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/ 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the fourth quarter of 2016, the International Student Barometer (ISB) 2016 was carried out at 37 higher education institutions in Germany. This report provides a summary of the research findings as well as the main conclusions and suggestions for further improvement, set against a global and continental European benchmark.

The main message is that internationalisation at German higher education has progressed over time. However, there still seems to be some room left for improvement when Germany is viewed in a global context. Looking at how international students recommend their international study experience, we see a positive development over time. In particular, integration in local communities is mentioned in the open comments as a factor that supports this. International students opting for Germany are strongly career-oriented in making their decision to study abroad. This is of relevance when looking at the ISB data as it impacts not only on the choice process but also on how international students evaluate the learning experience and the support services at their institution in Germany.

The arrival process of international students at their German institutions is an area where the ISB can indicate to Germany how universities across the globe are investing time and energy in improvement. Picking international students up from the airport or train station, assisting them in finding their accommodation and providing support through organisations such as the *Studierendenwerke* as part of this process is an area where there is room for general improvement at German institutions.

Considering the learning area, German institutions perform close to par with the global benchmark regarding learning satisfaction. Germany provides a high-quality education and the learning facilities are ranked highly. However, online facilities and connections to the job market fall short (i.e. learning that will help a person get a good job, as well as advice and guidance from academic staff relating to long-term job opportunities and careers). Given the high importance of selecting Germany as a study destination with a future career in mind, this is one of the areas to which German institutions need to pay greater attention.

The ISB asks a series of questions about what is described as the living area and when it comes to both living costs and accommodation costs, Germany outperforms the global and continental European benchmark considerably. This is an area where German institutions can make more of what they have to offer international students. In order to fully capitalise on the relatively high marks in the living area, better provision of visa advice is needed as well as more attention to social activities and facilities so as to enhance links between international and domestic students.

The level of satisfaction with support services at German institutions has improved considerably over time. For every element surveyed, satisfaction levels have gone up. Questions relating to support were only put to respondents who had actually made use of the services. Hence it also makes sense to see whether students are aware that a service is offered by their institution. Given the importance of careers and employability for international students selecting Germany, it is relevant to note the high number of international students who indicate that they are unsure how to access the careers service, though at the same time they emphasise its importance.

The main purpose of the ISB is to understand how a higher education institution is performing in comparison with global and continental European benchmarks. This makes it possible to identify potential measures to improve the level of support towards international students and make an institution an institution of choice. The ISB feedback presentations per institution suggest both easily attainable targets and more long-term measures for enhancement. This report focuses on the overall German situation and provides an overview of how German higher education institutions are performing in terms of internationalisation in the academic year 2016-17. The aim is to provide valuable input as well as enhancing the discussion of Germany as a country of choice for international students.

/ 2 METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED

Essential to any discussion of the international student experience is an understanding of what students want and how they regard their international study experience. The International Student Barometer™ (ISB) is an indicator of how successful institutions are in meeting the hopes and ambitions of international students who decide to study at the institution in question. It is the largest annual survey of international students in the world and since 2005 has been used by over 1,400 higher education institutions in 33 countries including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Germany.

The International Student Barometer is a benchmarking survey aimed at providing higher education institutions with information on how they perform in a multitude of aspects in comparison to both national and international benchmarks. Carried out annually at the beginning of the academic year, the survey asks international students to provide feedback on their experience studying at their higher education institution, as well as insights into why they chose to study in a particular country. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, the ISB was carried out in Germany in cooperation with GATE-Germany. In 2016 the survey was once again implemented Germany-wide, with 37 institutions taking part: this report is based on the 2016 survey.

The ISB tracks and compares the decision-making, expectations, perceptions and intentions of international students from application to graduation. It enables institutions to make informed decisions to enhance the international student experience and drive successful recruitment and marketing strategies. Most importantly, it helps identify whether international students would recommend their German institution to others.

The international student experience at the participating German institutions was compared at both institution and national level against the global ISB benchmark in order to gain insights into each institution's performance as well as Germany-wide issues. The dimensions of the international student experience include arrival, learning, living and support services. Within each of these areas, students were asked to rate their satisfaction with several elements, including the following: quality of teaching, social activities and facilities, the surroundings outside the university, library facilities, internet access, quality and cost of accommodation, making friends with residents, German and foreign students. They were also asked about their use of and satisfaction with the support services provided by their university.

The ISB focuses on information provision with the objective of improving the standard of educational services by the higher education institutions and national higher education governmental bodies that i-graduate works with. The data from the ISB survey is re-

ported to each institution involved, including both institution-specific and international results. Each ISB partner institution can use their results comparatively to understand their strengths and weaknesses in the international market, enabling them to put in place the necessary structure and finance for improvement. Participating institutions can customise their survey to a certain extent.

The International Student Barometer's legitimacy is bolstered by the number of respondents, having received over 3 million student responses to date. By drawing on statistics and results which are more indicative and practically-oriented than typical ranking systems, institutions are able to improve their services without fear of public awareness of their institution's results. The focus lies on working with results which are personalised and confidential to each higher education institution, allowing them to judge for themselves the areas for improvement and the most beneficial strategies to implement.

How are respondents sourced in the International Student Barometer?

The ISB can be completed by all currently enrolled international and EU students at all years and levels of study, including study abroad and exchange students. Each higher education institution contacts its own international student body during the live period of the survey, which in this case was from 26 September to 2 December 2016.

How is data captured?

The ISB primarily seeks to collect data on the following issues:

- / What do international students regard as important in choosing their study destination?
- / How satisfied were they with their actual study experience?

In the questionnaire, students are asked to rate certain aspects of the student experience. Satisfaction is calculated on a 4-point scale for a mean score. The categories "important" and "very important" are combined with the categories "satisfied" and "very satisfied" to provide a percentage figure for "satisfaction". For the learning and living elements, students' satisfaction ratings are correlated with the likelihood of recommending their institution. The support services satisfaction questions are only asked of those students who actually used the services in question. For the decision-making questions, respondents are also asked about the importance they attach to a certain element based on a 4-point scale.

In the four main areas of the survey (arrival, learning, living and support services), each section starts with the general question "Overall, how satisfied are you with the ... experience at this stage in the year?" in order to gain a general initial impression from students.

This is captured as “overall” in the infographics, whereas the average scores per main area are based on the average of all the answers given in that section of the questionnaire.

For benchmarking purposes, respondents are asked to choose from a pre-selected set of items for a large part of the questions. Open comments from respondents are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding and allow a certain level of interpretation of the scores.

All analysis is conducted centrally by i-graduate and reported back to the participating ISB institutions. Data analysis begins on the official close date of the survey (2 December 2016) and takes the i-graduate research team approximately six to eight weeks to complete.

The data from all institutions is then aggregated into the German ISB index prior to running the institution-specific reports. Each institution is also benchmarked against the global ISB index and a continental European benchmark in order to provide an international perspective.

Participating higher education institutions must meet two criteria to be eligible for ranking purposes:

- / Minimum of 100 responses
- / Minimum response rate of 10%

Who took part in the International Student Barometer 2016?

- / 159,959 international students took part globally from a total of 196 higher education institutions in 17 countries across the globe (see Appendix B for further details).
- / 18,265 of these international students were studying at 37 German institutions.
- / Those studying at German higher education institutions came from a variety of countries, with the largest proportions being: China (11%), India (8%), Russia (4%), Iran (4%), Italy (4%) and Turkey (3%).

In terms of level of study, the sample was split as follows:

- / 36% BA level students
- / 48% MA level students
- / 12% PhD level students
- / 4% Other categories of students

3 RECOMMENDATION: THE KEY FACTORS DETERMINING THE QUALITY OF AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY EXPERIENCE IN GERMANY

The internationalisation of higher education in Germany is not motivated by high tuition fees, hence the incentive for German higher education institutions to attract international students follows a different pattern from that of many other countries. The appeal of Germany as a foreign study location has increased tremendously over the years. A comparison of the 2011 and 2016 ISB data shows an increase of 7% in terms of international students actively recommending Germany as a study destination. Of all international students in Germany, 42% stated that they would actively encourage other students to apply. A more detailed examination of the data reveals that this increase over time is visible at all study levels. Of the 7,526 international MA students, 40% would actively encourage others to apply. Students at bachelor level are most enthusiastic: of the 5,480 international BA students, 44% said they would actively encourage other international students to apply. Of the 1,835 international PhD students who answered this question, 40% stated they would actively encourage others to apply to a German higher education institution. Interestingly, the bachelor-level students are also more negative. At the international level, 1% of foreign students would actively discourage others from applying, while in Germany, international BA-level students are slightly more negative at 2%. More anecdotal evidence suggests that bachelor-level students start with high expectations of their study abroad experience but have little to compare their experience with: they may be either thrilled or more disappointed than those international students who have had more exposure to higher education.

As mentioned before, the overall willingness to recommend Germany as a study destination has increased over time, with a 7% increase between 2011 and 2016 ISB data. Looking back further in the ISB dataset, however, there is an even greater increase from 29% in 2009 to 42% in 2016 in terms of international students actively encouraging others to apply. In previous years students were more inclined to opt for less outspoken answers: either they would neither encourage or discourage others (17% in 2009 to 13% in 2016), or they would only encourage others to apply when asked (49% in 2009 to 41% in 2016). This greater willingness to encourage others is supported by more positive remarks made by international students in the open comments sections of the ISB surveys about creating a strong student community in most German higher education institutions.

“... In the beginning, there were numerous events organised for international students so that we met each other, got to know the culture of Germany and also each other’s countries. This was excellent and it made me feel part of a great community, which continued throughout my whole time studying at the university.”

International student from Australia

In most cases, international students in Germany are highly satisfied with the level of integration in local communities. Integration remains an area that is considered difficult across the globe, however, and Germany is no exception.

“Start your own community because most probably you won’t be accepted nor respected by a lot of German students sadly.”

International student from Syria

Despite the increase, there remains room for improvement in this area of recommendation for German higher education institutions. The following are mentioned in particular as being in need of improvement:

- / English language skills of both academic teaching staff as well as administrative staff
- / Awareness among academic staff of the (cultural) adaptation difficulties experienced by international students
- / Support at all levels of the international experience, irrespective of whether the service is being offered by the institution itself or by other institutions or parties (including i.e. accommodation and visa support)

“... there are few professors who can express themselves in English ...” (Iran)

“Stop treating students as if they are a nuisance and deserve ‘a plunge into cold water’. There is nothing unprofessional about offering help/compassion.” (Israel)

“I would discourage people to apply for a traineeship in ..., because I received no assistance in finding accommodation and for that I had to go back to my own country.” (Italy)*

“I would recommend other students this university due to the high teaching level. However, I would also acknowledge them about the difficulties of communicating in English with various administration services.” (Poland)

International student quotes

*For privacy protection reasons names of higher education institutions were deleted from all student quotes.

The recommendation question in the ISB is on a 5-point scale, with Germany scoring 4.19 and ranking 6th in an international comparison of nine countries in the 2016 ISB¹. A look at specific nationalities shows that students from India (93%), Russia (89%), China (89%), Italy (88%) and Iran (80%) seem to be most satisfied with their study experience in Germany. At 91%, faculties of engineering at German higher education institutions enjoy the highest satisfaction rating, followed by mechanical engineering (89%) and medicine (87%). When asked how satisfied they are with all aspects of their study experience in Germany, 88% of all international students said they were satisfied, with 25% very satisfied – a figure that is 2% lower than the global benchmark.

3.1 GOOD PRACTICE (1)

What international students appreciate at Hochschule Osnabrück*

<p>Hochschule Osnabrück founded 1971 Public university of applied sciences</p>	<p>4 faculties and 1 institute of music bachelor's and master's degree programmes</p>	<p>13,500 students incl. 646 international students (460 international degree and 186 exchange students)</p>	<p>ISB participation 2011 and 2016</p>
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What we are most proud of is the broader-scale internationalisation that we have achieved in the internal network of our university. Our internal peer-to-peer communication has improved a lot and it seems to me that this makes colleagues, staff and professors alike, feel more appreciated and part of a larger group within the university. As a result, more of our colleagues now want to contribute and make it a success as we can see in our 'International Forum'. This I find very satisfying.

The ISB helped us understand where we excel and outperform the benchmark. Our BA-MA retention rate is very high, but how do we keep such a high retention rate if we increase the number of students? We aim to spread our way of working throughout the university. For instance, the Registrar's Office had less of a close connection with international students and in general, the need to speak English with applicants and students on English-medium programmes was not fully recognized. This has changed now that we have been able to support our arguments with data collected outside the university. Our working relationship with the Registrar's Office has improved a lot.

The reason for us achieving such a high score on recommendations is probably due to the way in which we manage expectations. We are very clear and transparent to our international students – they know upfront what they can expect from us and we strive

¹ Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States – where each country has enough institutions taking part in the 2016 ISB to provide a country benchmark.

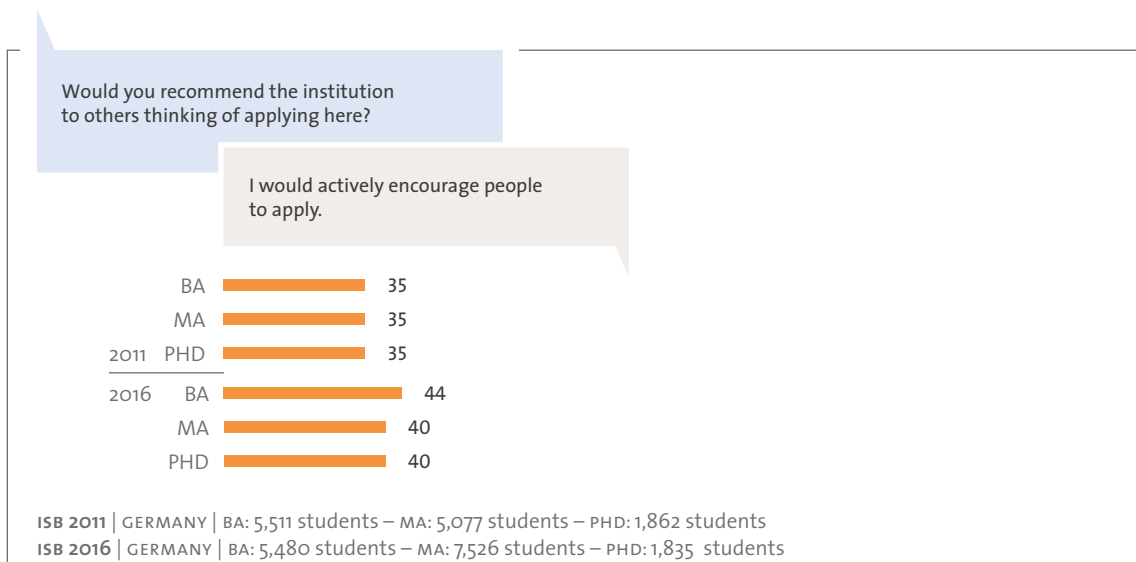
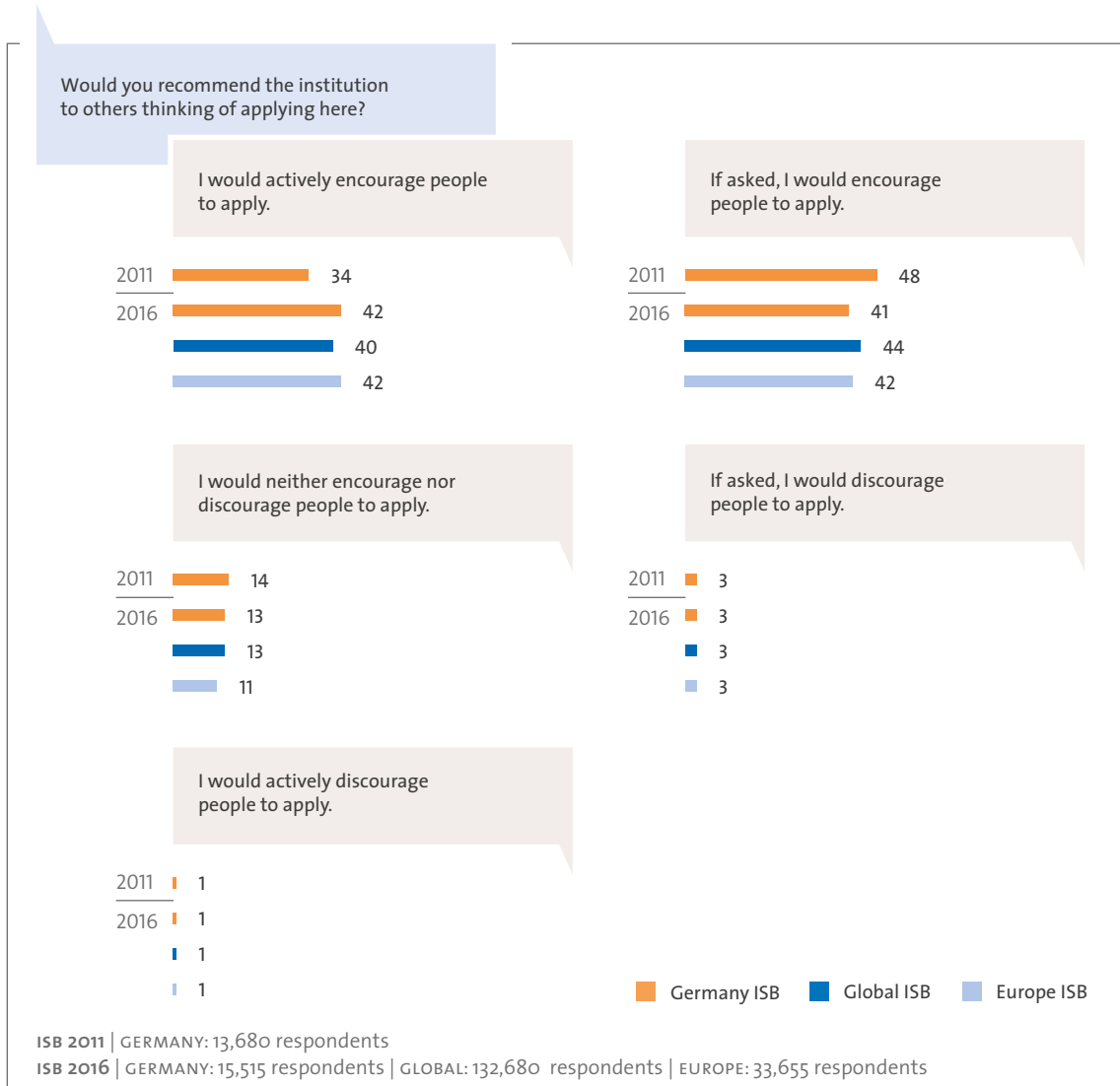
to deliver on that promise. All our international students whose German is not at a high level have a buddy at the beginning and the opening hours of our international centres have been extended, but we also tell them we will not answer their requests at weekends, and the international students are completely OK with this. And of course, Osnabrück is a beautiful small city where students quickly feel safe and at home, so this helps them adapt more quickly.

Our decision to take part in the ISB was driven by the fact that we wanted to collect data and start a process of internal restructuring. We did realise Osnabrück is not the most well-known city in Germany. Although we are deeply rooted in our region, we are not very well-known beyond it. So if we wanted to attract international students we had to know how they viewed us and our programmes and whether there were starting points for improvement. As part of this restructuring, we opened a Center for International Students that takes care of international degree-seeking students, and a separate Center for International Mobility that is truly aimed at supporting exchanges and partnerships together with our colleagues in the faculties.

Based on the ISB results in 2011, we made a few changes. In the open comments, we noticed that the only faculty that uses a buddy system got substantially higher satisfaction rates, hence we introduced a buddy system in all our faculties, as well as English-medium programmes. We also noticed that students made comments about the clarity of the grading system. These comments combined with our relatively low score helped us send a message to our university and that area has improved now considerably according to the ISB of 2016. We also realised the importance of an intercultural exchange for our international students and we are now organising meet-and-greets between international and domestic students. How to meet people was a topic discussed at the last meeting we organised!

** Many thanks to Kerstin Frodl, Director Center for International Students, Hochschule Osnabrück, for the interview.*

3.2 INFOGRAPHIC “RECOMMENDATION”*



* Please note that all figures in the infographics are in percent. Deviations from 100% are due to rounding.

4 ARRIVAL: FINDING YOUR WAY AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN GERMANY

A student's arrival experience is one of the first they have of the institution. There is no need to underline the importance of 'first impressions' – they always count, and this very much holds true for international students arriving at their host institution. It is important for institutions to understand that the experience starts before the actual start of classes – it begins with the information-gathering and enrolment process, the visa process (where applicable) and actual arrival in the country and city – all adding to how welcome international students feel. Having travelled hundreds or thousands of miles to reach their study destination, a friendly welcome should be guaranteed.

The arrival part is the crucial start of the relationship between student and institution: this will establish a lasting impression for the duration of the study period (and hopefully beyond). It is key to ensure certain requirements are taken care of, such as directions to the first night of accommodation, accommodation being organised before arrival, and some kind of temporary accommodation being made available until regular office hours if the student arrives late in the evening or early in the morning. It is ultimately the same experience all those involved in the internationalisation of higher education would like to have when travelling for work.

“International students should be given directions from the airport to Uni ... because many of us have no idea about the German transport system.”

International student from Bangladesh

All in all, the German benchmark regarding the arrival experience is good. Of the 84% of students who state they are satisfied with their arrival experience, 18% confirm they are very satisfied, as compared to 66% who say they are just satisfied. The overall German figure is slightly below the global benchmark: according to the latter, 67% of students are satisfied with their overall arrival experience, while 23% say they are very satisfied. Germany is underperforming in terms of the continental European benchmark: understanding how one's course of study would work (-1.7%), finding accommodation on the first night (-2.4%), making contact with host friends, i.e. the starting point of integration between international and domestic students (-0.7%), and the actual welcome/meet and greet (-4.2%).

When students decide to study in Germany, they expect help from their institution in finding accommodation, obtaining information on how to apply for housing and finding their way the moment they arrive. The situation in Germany with *Studierendenwerke* being (largely) responsible for housing may on the surface change the situation in comparison with other countries. Most German higher education institutions are not campus universities and in many cities the university housing available only provides room for a small percentage of all students, so most students have to find housing off-campus. The *Studierendenwerke* provide support but do not cover the housing market entirely. In most other countries, institutional housing support is a lot more elaborate, ranging from providing dormitories on campus to working with (commercial) housing providers to ensure all international students have accommodation upon arrival. However, international students are not concerned with who provides this service: whether it is the university housing office, a commercial housing agent or the *Studierendenwerke* does not make any difference. The student wants a clean room to sleep in on arrival and may hold the university accountable if this is not provided.

The ISB's work with German higher education institutions over several years has shown that those institutions that provide transparent information about what students can and cannot expect obtain higher satisfaction levels. Institutions that focus on the services relating to the moment of arrival in particular obtain the highest scores. Making sure that people have a place to stay if they arrive after office hours and having a buddy pick them up from the train station or the airport and show them around the city and university – this is exactly what makes a good arrival experience. When international students apply for student housing, they not only expect there to be a bed, sheets and toilet paper but perhaps even something for dinner if they arrive late, on a Saturday afternoon or evening when the shops are closed. Universities across the globe are becoming more aware of the importance of the initial arrival process and are paying a lot of attention to getting this first impression of their institution, their city and their country right.

For German higher education institutions this is a relatively new area, but there have been some good practices cases of *Studierendenwerke* and the institution concerned tackling the issues here together. Managing expectations and providing transparent information is a good first step.

“This time was not my first time here in ... so I offered myself to help other newcomers to find their place from the airport. It would aid a lot if the IO provides in a table basic contact data and arrival info about each student so they could contact and help each other. At least for me it would have helped. Also the staff in ... could try to be more helpful and understandable that newcomers are not used to ... and it can be difficult sometimes to do the things that we need to arrange.”

International student from Brazil

Looking at the different aspects of the arrival experience, German institutions clearly score well on the institution-related arrival aspects but not so well on less formal aspects such as accommodation, welcome, opening a bank account and making friends with German students upon arrival. This is precisely where International Offices can support their international students by providing information on such things as how to open a bank account and other practical matters. Integration between international and domestic students should be tackled from the start. There are many good examples of this at German institutions, ranging from cultural evenings and sporting events to working together in project groups. The most successful examples have one thing in common: they are of interest to both German and international students.

“The admission letter came really late and that made it difficult to find an accommodation. Orientation days were very helpful for me. The tutors were kind.”

International student from Bulgaria

4.1 GOOD PRACTICE (2)

What international students appreciate at Ruhr-Universität Bochum*

Ruhr-Universität Bochum founded 1962 Public university	20 faculties bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes	42,500 students incl. nearly 6,000 international students	ISB participation 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016
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Our motto is: “You can only concentrate on your academic studies if you feel welcome at our university and in our city”. To put this into practice, we provide a great deal of orientation and a range of facilities for our international students. We also aim to deliver all of this with a personal touch – not the standardised or bureaucratic service you might expect at a large university but individualised support. We are able to provide this by streamlining our processes very carefully and by making them a part of the whole university support service experience.

What we are most proud of is the welcoming atmosphere we have created during the arrival phase, despite the fact we are such a large university. The ISB helped us to identify what changes would offer us most value. When I look out of the office window at the start of the new academic year, I can see many green welcome bags on campus. Each of those bags represents an international student that has been given that welcome bag in person by one of my colleagues. As a true team effort, everybody working in the International Office is out on campus talking and welcoming international students to our university. It feels good to know that we will make it work and ensure a personal and individual welcome for each of our international students.

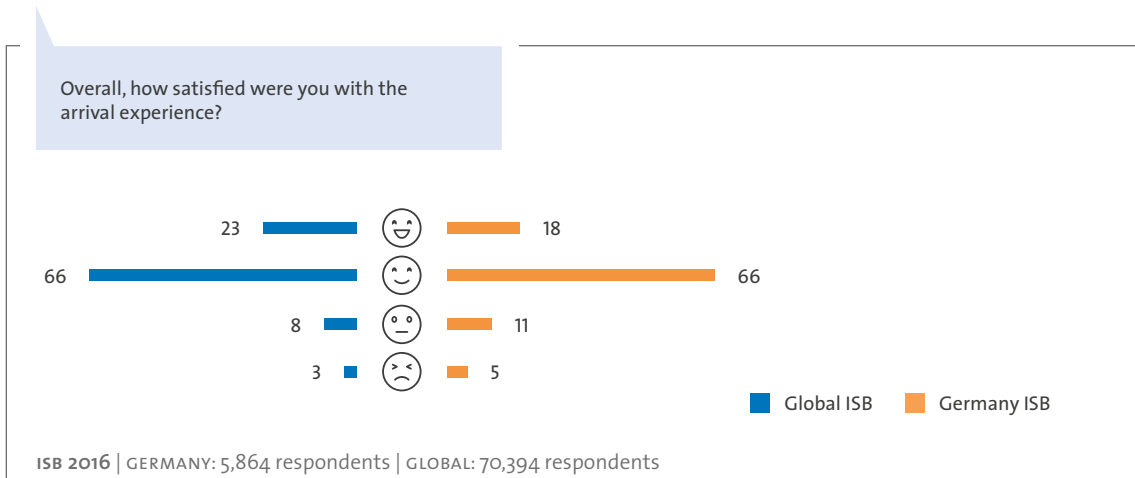
We took part in the ISB survey for the first time in the year 2010. The ISB was not the reason for starting our strategy, but it has certainly fuelled our internationalization strategy. The most important outcome of this whole process is the more holistic approach we take on student support services and international student support services in particular. We are thinking nowadays about the entire picture. It is not just the International Office that deals with international students, and for this reason we should consider the entire university. Internationalisation of a university is not just an administrative change: the entire university has to be taken on board for the journey: We cooperate with our colleagues in other support service areas as well as with the academics at faculty level.

The ISB showed us two main areas where we might increase our level of support: 1) employability and 2) making friends with German students. Both are big issues and recurring challenges for our institution and for Germany as a whole. Regarding the first, we

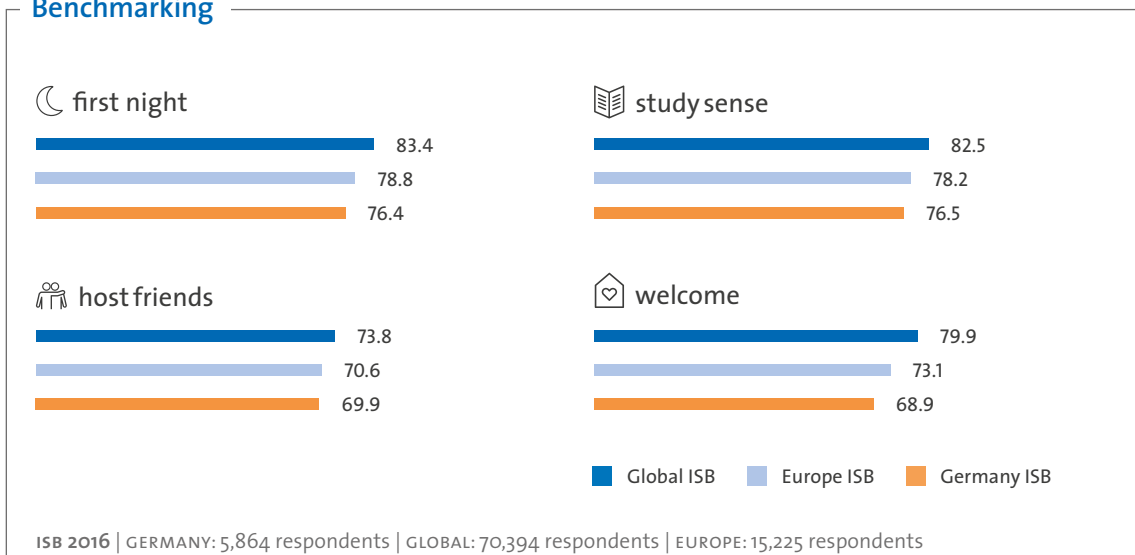
now provide a workshop for our international students on how to apply for a job in Germany. More activities are planned in order to facilitate their access to the German labour market. The topic of integration of German and international students' needs to be tackled from the beginning. For this reason, we have come up with 'campus guides' – buddies from the same degree programme or from the same faculty that act as your guide during at least the initial welcome period. We have also made some changes regarding registration for the sports courses that make it easier for international students to enroll in sports courses and to ensure not all places are taken up by domestic students only.

** Many thanks to Ulrike Herrlich, International Office, Team coordinator of RUBiss International Student Services, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, for the interview.*

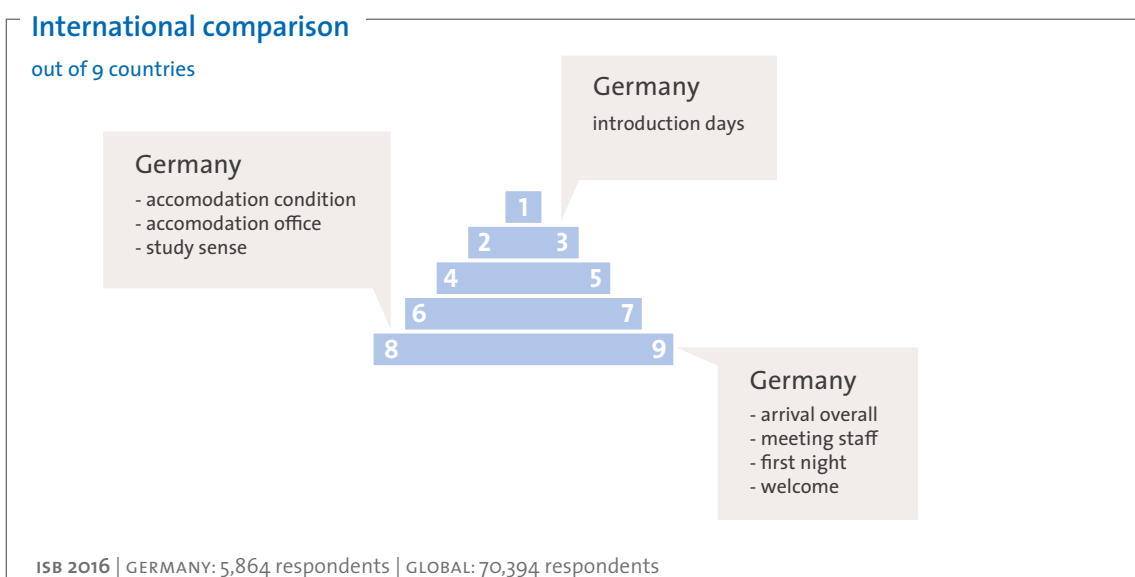
4.2 INFOGRAPHIC “ARRIVAL”



Benchmarking



International comparison



5 LEARNING UNDERSTOOD: HOW DO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS LEARN IN GERMANY?

Learning obviously forms a crucial part of the international study experience and involves areas such as the expertise of the lecturers and the academics' level of English as well as transparency of marking criteria and the online and physical library. This chapter considers student expectations and satisfaction regarding these aspects.

The overall satisfaction with learning in Germany is high, with 85% being either very satisfied (20%) or satisfied (65%), but falls behind when compared internationally: the global benchmark shows a slightly higher satisfaction rate of 87%. The areas where Germany is underperforming in terms of the global comparison mainly relate to making the connection between education and the world of work. Employability, gaining work experience whilst studying and receiving career-related information from academics score low in comparison to the global benchmark. Compared to eight other countries², Germany ranks 7th when it comes to the possibility of gaining work experience, 8th regarding careers advice from academic staff and last in terms of employability.

During the ISB feedback presentations, it became clear that German academics are not always in favour of students doing side jobs as they believe there is no time for this and it distracts them from their studies. However, many international students opt to study in Germany with a career in Germany in mind and they appreciate the legal possibility to do side jobs during their studies within a certain hours' contingent. As such, the opportunity to form a local network of work-related contacts may be a useful first step in making the transition to the world of work. In general, universities of applied sciences perform better in this area than research universities.

In the ISB, the learning experience question is split into three areas: teaching, studies and facilities. Each of these will be considered in more detail below.

“More practical sessions are needed. Course content should direct to professional careers.”

International student from Eritrea

² Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States – where each country has enough institutions taking part in the 2016 ISB to provide a country benchmark.

5.1 TEACHING

German academics are considered good teachers (88.6%) who provide good course content (87.2%). Lecturers are considered experts in their field (92.7%), but international students studying in Germany indicate a strong desire to know how they are faring in their course. In fact, 80.7% see performance feedback as being an important aspect of their study experience. It can be difficult for teaching staff to know exactly what each student from each region of the world prefers as their form of feedback, particularly considering that some areas of the world are far less direct than others – especially when taking into consideration hierarchical relations between students and lecturers. This is apparent in classes where grades are based partially or fully upon class participation and where some international students feel less able to contribute frequently to class debate.

Nevertheless, providing clear, transparent feedback and explaining marking criteria support a student's academic experience. International students often find themselves outside their educational comfort zone and may be less aware of what is expected of them than in their home country. The examination format with a major exam towards the end of a semester can be unfamiliar to students from countries where testing takes place throughout the semester with smaller exams. Each small exam provides the opportunity to test your knowledge and subsequently improve based on the feedback. Making sure students are aware of what is expected of them will help them maximise their learning potential. Whether this is through examination or essay feedback, or more generally through one-to-one meetings with academics, the idea of this kind of academic support is associated with a feeling of satisfaction in a more general sense. After all, not knowing why a certain mark was given or confusion over a series of grades leads to unhappiness for a student, especially when large amounts of time have been spent on a particular topic.

Looking at the results of the ISB, satisfaction with this area has improved in comparison with the previous ISB wave in 2011. However, performance feedback is still 3.7% behind the international benchmark. The good news is that Germany is currently doing 0.8% better than the continental European benchmark (see Fig. 5, Appendix 9.1, p. 47). Although this may be seen as a minor improvement at aggregate national level, the personal feedback presentations at German institutions indicated that many institutions are paying attention to this area, and that those institutions who have acted on a need for development in this field are reaping the benefits.

“... I found the satisfaction of the learning experience largely dependent on whether you can be well guided by friendly and skillful staff in your institute from the very first beginning of accessing these facilities.” (China)

“Most of my courses are in English; however, when the evaluation forms are provided to give feedback they are always in German. It really makes you feel as though your feedback doesn't count.” (USA)

International student quotes

Along with career advice and work experience, the demand for feedback is growing as students seek improved results in competitive labour markets. So if German higher education institutions can set a high standard in terms of performance feedback, they will produce more content international graduates.

5.2 STUDIES

Studying in a foreign country holds many exciting new benefits for international students – not least the opportunity to acquire the so-called employability skills that employers seem to be looking for around the globe. But for international students to be able to capitalise on this, they require support in their studies from their institutions. The reasons for this need are numerous: they may come from another country that has an altogether different attitude towards study or courses, they may be familiar with alternative forms of teaching, or they may have different ideas of standard class times and what to expect regarding course structure. Taken together, these factors can influence the feeling of support an international student experiences.

When it comes to language support, German higher education institutions have some room for improvement. The figures here are 5.3% below the international benchmark and 3.3% below the continental European benchmark (see Fig. 6, Appendix 9.1, p. 47). Over time, from 2009 to 2016, the German higher education sector has improved by 18% in the area of language support and 12% in learning support. These changes are significant and the German higher education sector can be proud of its achievements in this area.

“More career guidance and better international student support in the form of scholarships and accommodation and language learning.” (India)

“Fluency, confidence of lecturer and immediate feedback are really important, absence of them harm studying motivation. The same for getting to know about future working perspectives. All ... should be explained right at the beginning. Absence of this makes a student nervous and his/her life unpredictable.” (Ukraine)

International student quotes

5.3 FACILITIES

The facilities for learning at German higher education institutions score relatively high, apart from the online areas. Online library and virtual learning respectively score 2.5% and 3.3% lower than the global benchmark. However, both still show a high satisfaction rate at 87.6% and 87.1% respectively. Laboratories at German institutions score well on average, ranking 4th out of nine internationally and scoring a satisfaction rate of 91.9% (see Fig. 7, Appendix 9.1, p. 48).

Libraries are known to be an important factor for students in their learning experience, but libraries nowadays are not simply a place where you can borrow a book: they are a study space where students meet other (international) students over a cup of coffee and enjoy excellent wi-fi access. As such, satisfaction with the library (88.9%) is about more than the collection of books.

Library opening hours are another area students often complain about. Particularly around exam time, students appreciate the chance to use dedicated institution facilities for long stretches of study.

Both library facilities and learning spaces have improved over time, but it is particularly the learning spaces that are more appreciated according to international student opinion, with 9% more satisfaction in 2016 than in 2009. German institutions provide good learning services in general: 89.2% of students are satisfied with the learning spaces provided by their institution, which is only slightly below the global ISB average of 89.9%. Apparently German institutions generate a higher level of international student satisfaction in relation to learning spaces than in terms of library functions.

“Not enough facility e.g. not enough learning place in the library. Short open time of the faculty library. No floor map (where to find what) in the building.”

International student from Indonesia

5.4 GOOD PRACTICE (3)

What international students appreciate at the Universität Bayreuth*

Universität Bayreuth founded 1975 Public university	6 faculties bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes	13,5306 students	ISB participation 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2016
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We are most proud of the high level of employability of our alumni. Our interdisciplinary approach combined with close contact with employers is paying off. Also, our higher ranking gets noticed by employers. It makes me feel proud that we are able to close the full circle from prospective student to qualified alumnus, equipped with the right skill set that leads to high levels of employability. This is what makes us truly proud.

Based on the ISB we have made some procedural changes in our welcome and orientation programme; we have enhanced our pick-up service, we are trying to pay more attention to the first three nights at our university and we have improved communication with our students. In none of these areas were we performing particularly badly, on the contrary. In ISB terminology we scored light green, but we came to understand the importance of getting those first few days right. Since this is an area where we can make changes as an international office, we have done so. In other areas, particularly the area of academic study, it is more difficult. But we do use the ISB to start discussions, for instance regarding the level of English among our academics, and come up with suggestions for further enhancement.

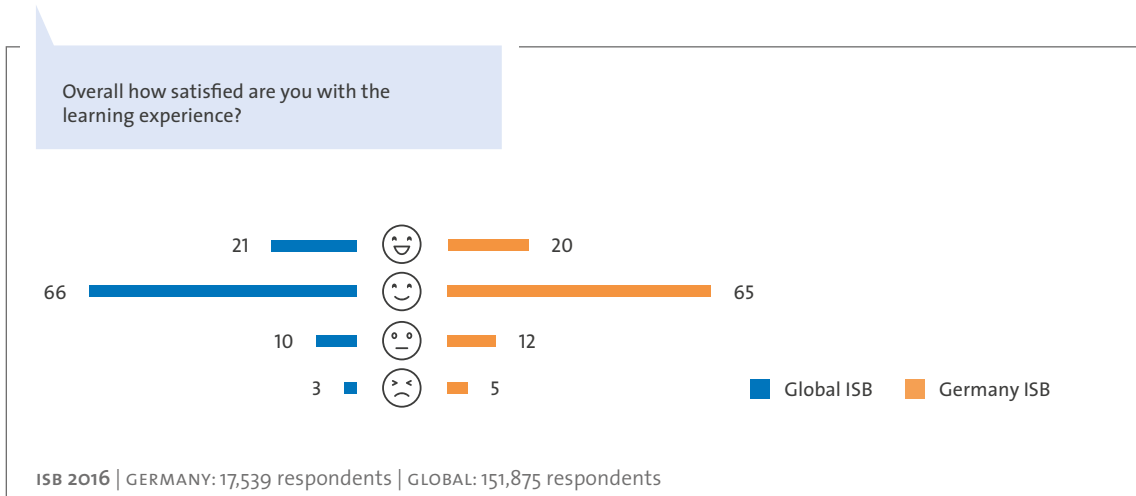
Bayreuth University scores very well in the learning section, but that is by no means a reason to be complacent in this area. We use the ISB to monitor closely how we are performing and how we compare with the rest of the world. Our interdisciplinary study approach, our language tutorships and our professor study ratio all contribute to achieving high satisfaction levels. But this needs ongoing monitoring. The strong focus we have in our interdisciplinary programmes on the specific needs of our students, the importance

of improving language competence and the opportunity to meet in person with supervisors and get structured feedback all enhances our learning. Of course, the size of both the institution and the city enhance the focus on a supportive learning environment. Everything is geared towards maximising this learning environment.

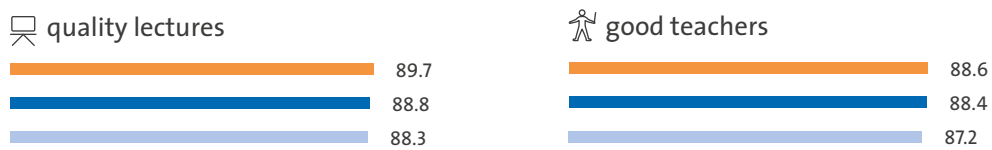
The ISB is a very useful instrument for a university in many ways. Firstly, it helps you with the internal conversation in your own institution. You can have a conversation with other units, both academic and administrative, backed up by data. The ISB gives you evidence of what works and what does not work within your institution and it provides evidence in case you need to discuss changes that are not working out as planned, for instance in the enrolment process. Secondly, it provides you with a way of interacting with your customers – the international students. They feel taken seriously and when you get back to them with ISB results and follow-up actions you are planning to undertake, so the discussion with them can be very fruitful. Thirdly, at the academic level you are able to raise awareness among professors about what works well in learning and where improvements can be made. And last, but certainly not least, it is good to know where you stand as an institution in a competitive field.

** Many thanks to Dr Arnim Heinemann, Director International Office, Universität Bayreuth, for the interview.*

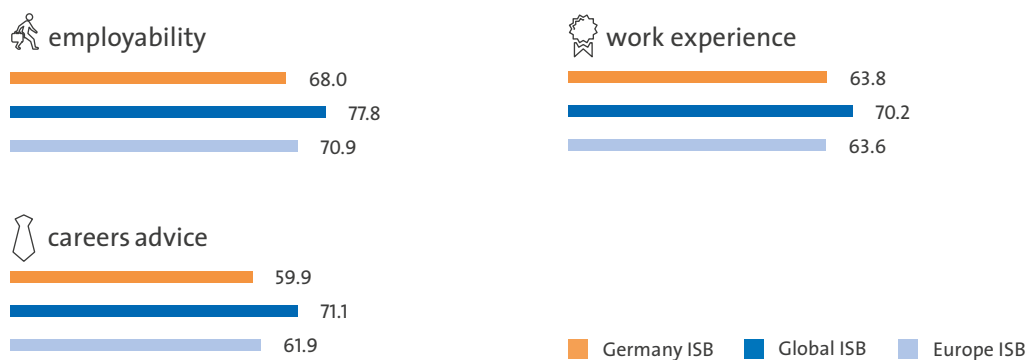
5.5 INFOGRAPHIC “LEARNING”



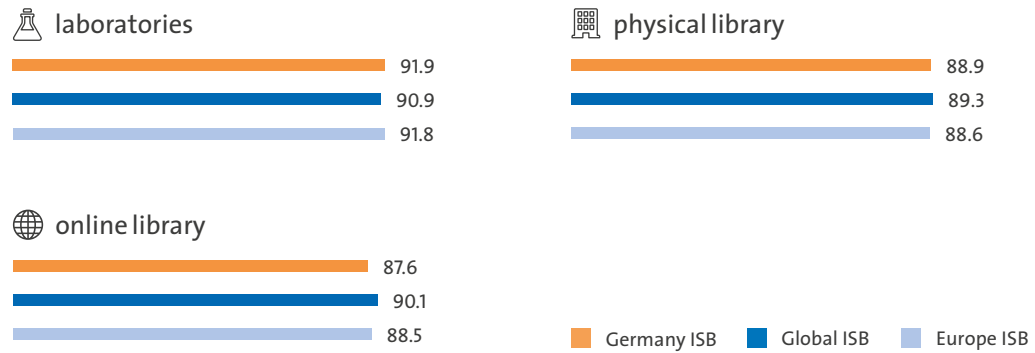
Benchmarking Teaching



Benchmarking Studies



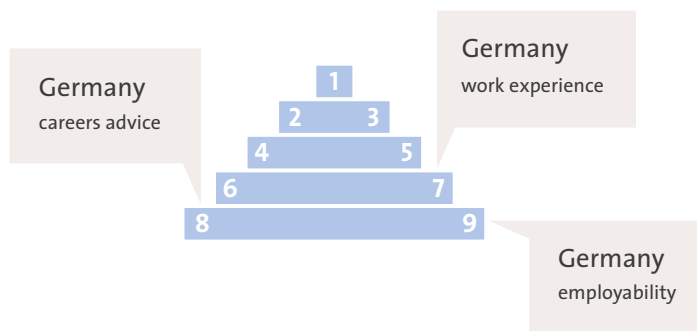
Benchmarking Facilities



ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 17,539 respondents | GLOBAL: 151,875 respondents | EUROPE: 37,911 respondents

International comparison

out of 9 countries



ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 17,539 respondents | GLOBAL: 151,875 respondents

6 LIVING IT UP: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' VIEW OF LIVING IN GERMANY

For international students, living aspects form a major part of their international student experience. 84% of international students in Germany are satisfied with their living experience, compared to 88% globally. The difference does not lie in the group of very satisfied students, with both the global and German benchmark showing a rate of 21%, but in the 63% of international students stating they are satisfied as compared to 67% of international students in the global benchmark. This difference is mainly due to the social aspects and day-to-day life, since the situation in Germany with regard to accommodation and living costs is considered to be very good in comparison with the other countries surveyed. In terms of both the cost of living and the cost of accommodation, Germany ranks first in a global comparison with eight other countries³. On the other hand, campus buildings, social facilities and visa advice rank 9th in this global comparison.

In the ISB, the section considering living aspects is split into three areas: accommodation and living costs, social, and day-to-day life. Each aspect will be dealt with in more detail below.

6.1 ACCOMMODATION AND LIVING COSTS

The cost of living scores remarkably well, with international students rating their satisfaction (84.5%) much higher in comparison to the global (70.9%) and continental European benchmarks (72.2%). The cost of accommodation in Germany shows a similar picture. The cost of student housing is considered highly positive at a 72.9% satisfaction rate, compared to 63.3% in the global benchmark and 64.7% in the continental European benchmark (see Fig. 8, Appendix 9.1, p. 48). Over time, living costs improved by 12% between 2009 and 2016. During the same period, accommodation costs improved by 2%. But even with 45% of student housing priced at EUR 200-299 per month (in continental Europe⁴, only 32% find student accommodation in this price bracket), there are still students who complain about the price level as well as the financial support offered, which is 7.9% lower than in the global benchmark. German institutions are advised to provide transparency about what they offer and where they or their affiliated organisations can help international students in Germany in terms of accommodation. Many international students have no idea how student housing is organised or what price level can be expected. Providing this kind of information, even before arrival, will help manage expectations regarding both services offered and prices.

³ Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States – where each country has enough institutions taking part in the 2016 ISB to provide a country benchmark.

⁴ Please note that the question regarding accommodation cost (i.e. actual amount paid) is a continental European question only. This question is not part of the global survey.

“No help to find an apartment at all. German renters do not even talk to people who don’t speak German. Uni ... should offer some German speakers to talk to housing owners on behalf of international students.” (Brazil)

“There needs to be more help for foreign students to get into a decent place for their first year. The campus is very nice, but the upkeep could be better.” (USA)

“The living cost is quite high; hence I need to work very hard to meet up with my monthly expenditure and this negatively affects my studies.” (Cameroon)

International student quotes

6.2 SOCIAL

In the ISB, the area that deals with social aspects covers making friends, both domestic and foreign, social interaction, sports facilities, an international classroom and good contacts for the future. German higher education institutions do well in this area when it comes to connecting international students to German culture, ranking fourth internationally and with an 85.5% satisfaction rate. However, sports facilities, social activities and social facilities offer some room for improvement, with German institutions underperforming against the global benchmark. The availability of social facilities is 5.9% lower than the global benchmark (81.9%) (see Fig. 9, Appendix 9.1, p. 49). Meanwhile sports, social facilities, activities and creating a general feeling of well-being among the student population provide a useful platform for integration between German and international students, so these areas should receive adequate attention.

The availability and quality of sports services vary from institution to institution, as some institutions focus more specifically on sport than others. The same goes for social activities organised through the institution: again, these are important in terms of the integration of students. They offer students the chance to meet and find common ground in a variety of ways, depending on what is available to them both on and off campus. Social activities can allow an exchange of experiences, a chance to meet and greet new friends, as well as the indirect benefits to institutions in supporting more content students.

6.3 DAY-TO-DAY LIFE

Day-to-day life covers a variety of issues impacting the daily life of students, such as safety, campus environment, eco-friendliness, transport, worship facilities and visa advice. With regards to visa advice, the satisfaction rate of international students at German institutions is 75.2%, which is 6.1% lower than the global satisfaction rate, leading to Germany ranking 9th in the international comparison of nine countries (see Fig. 10, Appendix 9.1, p. 49). In the discussions following ISB survey feedback presentations, this is regularly discussed with institutions underperforming against the German benchmark, and institutions point out that this is not the responsibility of a higher education institution. However, for international students it is not a matter of who is responsible for what service – they view their international study experience as a total package and in order for it to be successful they need the right papers to study in their host country. Against a national score which is lower than the global and continental European benchmark, there is evidence of a few German higher education institutions scoring very well in the area. They either understand the value of providing good information with links on where to go for what service or they have taken it a step further and have established close ties with the municipality service that deals with visas. Over time, this important part of the international study experience has improved by 9% from 2009 to 2016.

In the ISB dataset it can be seen that most areas in the living section have improved, with one remarkable item standing out as deteriorating over time: internet access in the dormitories (-7%). The availability of wi-fi has probably not declined, but students' expectations have increased over time.

“I believe the international office needs to improve their communication about the visa procedures. For instance, by including in the orientation handbook the link for making an online appointment for the city registration.” (Brazil)

“It is not normal in 21st century not to provide good internet connection in the dorms. Almost every weekend the internet is gone and I am supposed to do some research for my studies. How I am supposed to do it without internet?” (Bulgaria)

International student quotes

6.4 GOOD PRACTICE (4)

What international students appreciate at Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena*

Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena founded 1558 Public university	10 faculties bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes	Over 18,000 students incl. 2,386 international students (13%)	ISB participation 2010, 2011, 2014 and 2016
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What we are most proud of is that students value our mentoring programme and changes in the areas of accommodation and communication. The ISB data and the feedback presentations certainly helped us understand how to cater for international students more effectively.

We learnt that we had to improve our enrolment and arrival process. We did so by providing better online information (i.e. an enrolment guide and a modernised website). We also changed our mentoring programme and offered arrival support for all incoming students who requested it. But most importantly we changed the way we communicate with students. We intensified pre-arrival communication, pointing out what admitted students should do step-by-step and what they can expect in Jena. Our style of communication has also undergone a change: we've become less formal and strict, and adopted a more inviting tone instead; it is still the same message but in a very different packaging. And this pays off.

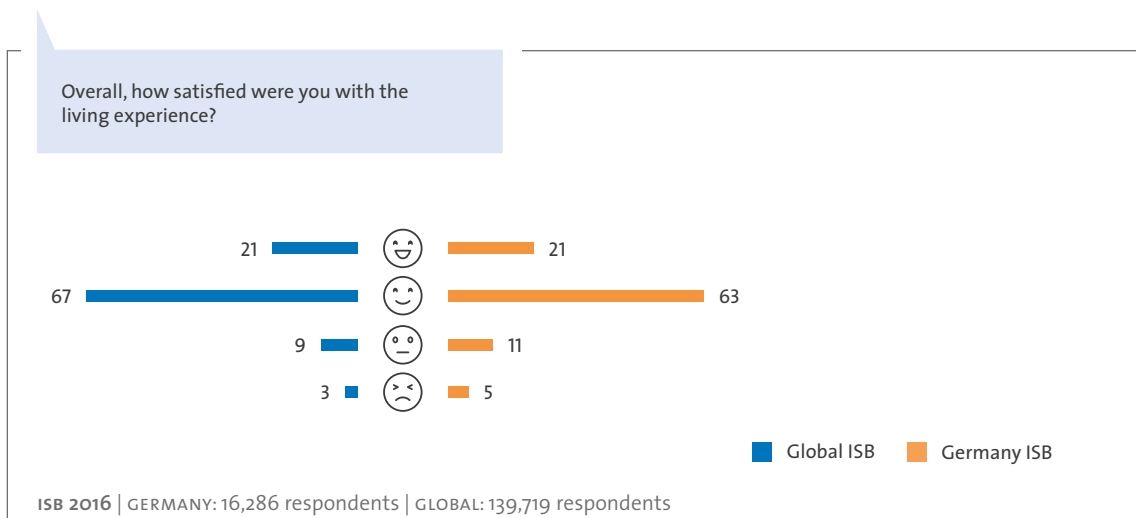
The ISB shows clearly that we have paid more attention to the topic of living and that we have extended the international influence to include the dormitories and the cafeteria. As a result, international students feel welcome and integrated in our study environment. For instance, we serve international menus or so-called "motto menus" with our international students' recipes. We have German and international student dorm tutors, integrated activities for domestic and international students during the Welcome Days and throughout the year. Our good cooperation with the Immigration Office also pays off for our international students, as we have done our bit to make sure visa processes work well. For example, we offer workshops and mentors' help to assist with filling out forms. On top of the above we have started providing intercultural training for both international and domestic students as well as staff. This training is a true highlight as it helps everyone involved to be more aware and more sensitive to cultural diversity. We believe that this has also contributed to our students feeling more welcome on campus.

At FSU Jena, the ISB has helped us identify our strengths, such as good living conditions, accommodation and support facilities, and use these strengths for our international mar-

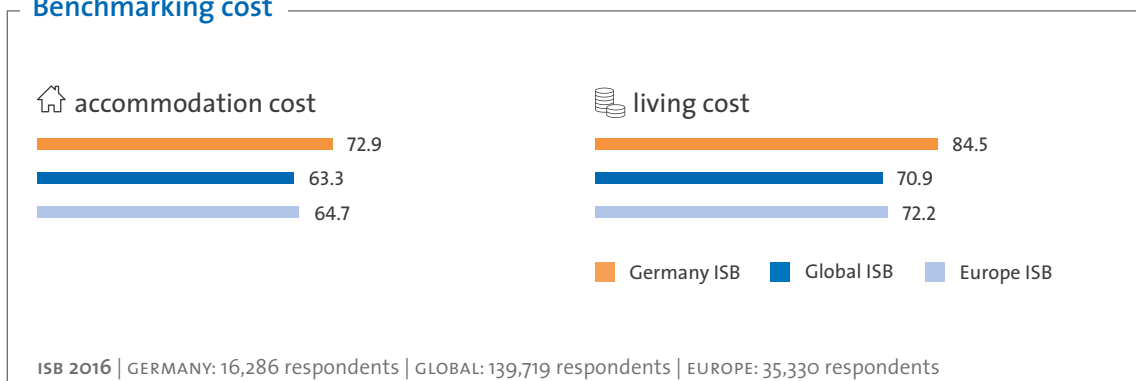
keting. But apart from this it has also helped us understand tendencies and developments better and find out where we are able to improve. With data, it is easier to identify the issues and to initiate or influence internal discussion of these issues. The ISB data also helped identify problematic areas and find internal partners to improve matters.

** Many thanks to Dr Britta Salheiser, International Office, Support International Students, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, for the interview.*

6.5 INFOGRAPHIC “LIVING”

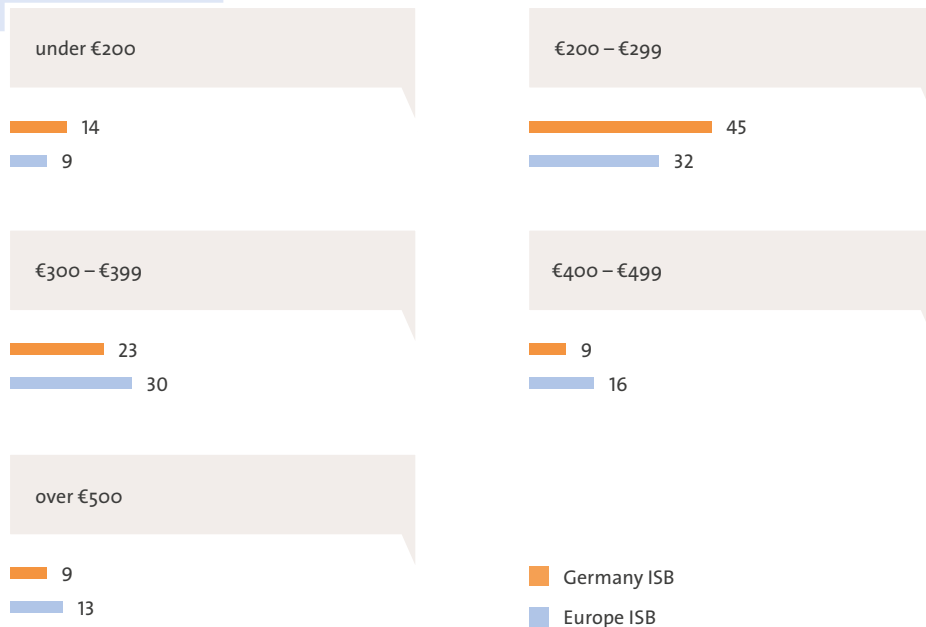


Benchmarking cost



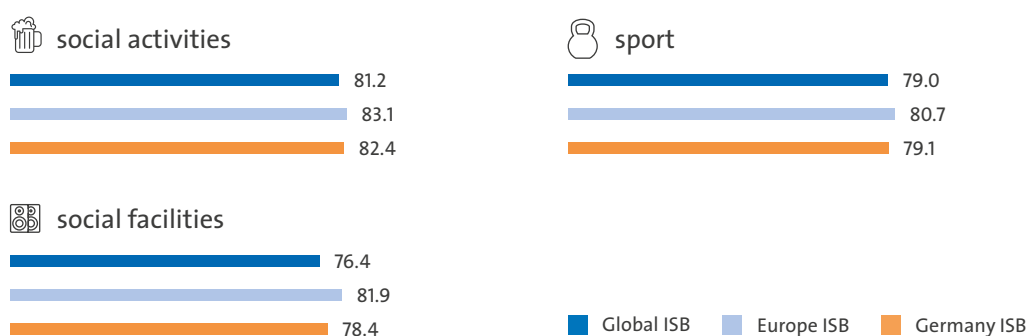
Accommodation cost

How much do you pay for your accommodation monthly?



ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 17,744 respondents | EUROPE: 33,214 respondents

Benchmarking social



ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 16,286 respondents | GLOBAL: 139,719 respondents | EUROPE: 35,330 respondents

Benchmarking day to day life

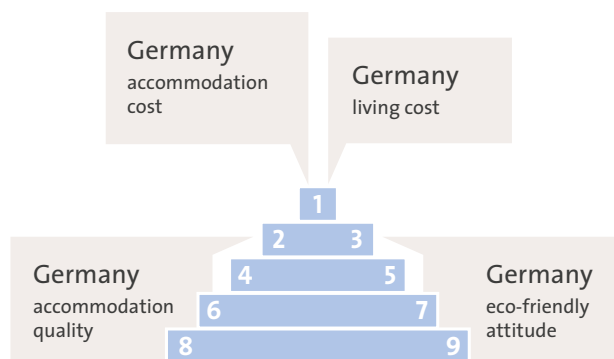
 visa advice



ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 16,286 respondents | GLOBAL: 139,719 respondents | EUROPE: 35,330 respondents

International comparison

out of 9 countries



ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 16,286 respondents | GLOBAL: 139,719 respondents

7 SUPPORT SERVICES: HOW TO SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN GERMANY

Support in the ISB encompass services ranging from the cafeteria and accommodation office to the careers advisory service. Across the globe, it is difficult to provide services that thrill students, but it can do a lot of damage to an international study experience and to the reputation of the institution if students feel they lack support. In Germany, the vast majority of students are satisfied (74%) against a global benchmark of 75%, while 11% are very satisfied (global benchmark 14%) and another 11% are dissatisfied (global benchmark 8%), with 4% being very dissatisfied (global benchmark 3%). The ISB does not allow students who have not used the service to answer these questions, so only if a student has used the service can they record their level of satisfaction. Another important question asked in the ISB is whether students are aware of the provision of certain services. The group that indicates they are unaware of a certain service but would have liked to have had access to it is of particular relevance. Careers advisory services at German higher education institutions need to be mentioned in this context: 38% of international students indicate they are unaware of this service but would like to have used it if they had known it was offered at their institution. Only 10% of international students use the careers services, 35% indicate they are aware of the careers service but have not yet used it (not surprisingly given the timing of the survey at the beginning of the academic year) and 17% indicate this service is not relevant to them (see Fig. 12, Appendix 9.1, p. 51). German institutions underperform the global benchmark (-2.7%) on a comparison of careers advisory services (see Fig. 11, Appendix 9.1, p. 50).

Careers advisory services may be a comparatively new aspect of the German higher education service provision, but they have grown to be one of the most important to many students. Activities of the careers service can include the organisation of careers events, promotion of such events, and the availability of general information regarding careers, workshops, seminars and all other forms of careers advice which are now seen as a standard form of education to be provided by an institution. Use of careers services in Germany has grown over time and so has the satisfaction rate – from 77% in 2009 to 87% in 2016. It is important to note that students who do use careers services are pleased with them, but overall usage is rather low. The focus should therefore be upon the promotion of the careers advisory service as a useful tool for student development and as a link to the step after graduation. Thinking back to the reasons why students chose Germany as the destination for their international study – 80% mention work opportunities as an important factor against 75% of international students mentioning this in the global benchmark – the importance of careers services becomes more evident (see Fig. 2, Appendix 9.1, p. 45). During ISB feedback presentations it became clear that raising awareness of these kind of services is not costly, but it requires students to be targeted directly: there

have been great examples of using social media as well as a simple A4 print-out advertising a workshop in the student cafeteria and on doors when entering the building.

In terms of careers support at German institutions, students were asked which kind of employment and careers support they expected from their institution: advice, interaction or recruitment. It turns out that advice is what international students are after: 62% expect advice, 56% expect information, and 49% expect more support. What international students seek is a local network of employer contacts, an understanding of how to write a successful CV that gets them invited to a job interview and what questions to expect once they are at that interview – things a person who has grown up in a particular country might take for granted.

“It would be the best if Career Services have English versions of documentation.” (China)

“There are many services that we don’t even know. I always have to ask my German friends or classmates about how to do ‘everything’” (China)

“Always there to help out, but it would be nice to get sometimes a bit warmer/friendlier approach.” (Croatia)

“The staff in the Accommodation office and some in the international office doesn’t speak English and their attitude to non-German speakers is horrible.” (Estonia)

“Service ... did a really great job, thanks to them!” (France)

International student quotes

The ISB also asks what would make international students leave their host country⁵. Some have family commitments in their home country (31% in Germany vs. the continental European benchmark of 30%), while others mention visa restrictions (35% vs. the continental European benchmark of 27%), or work permit restrictions (28% vs. the continental European benchmark of 25%), but also a lack of information on the job market (23% vs. the continental European benchmark of 24%). The following are at the top of the list both in Germany and in continental Europe, however: feeling unwelcome as a

⁵ Please note that the questions about leaving the host country are only asked in the continental European survey. They do not form part of the global ISB survey in 2016.

foreigner (41% vs. the continental European benchmark of 35%) and employers not being interested in foreign candidates (36% vs. a continental European benchmark of 35%) (see Fig. 13, Appendix 9.1, p. 52).

As the only country in the 2016 survey, Germany included some questions relating to perceived xenophobia in the ISB questionnaire. 28% of international students surveyed in the Germany ISB said they rarely encountered reservations/prejudice towards people of non-German origin and 43% said they had never come across this. 25% had rarely been confronted with verbal xenophobic attacks and 60% had never faced such attacks. 10% rarely experienced physical xenophobic attacks, with a large majority of 85% who had never experienced them (see Fig. 14, Appendix 9.1, p. 53). These results led to a heated debate in the discussion of the survey results at national level: should there be a focus on the fact that 85% have never experienced physical xenophobia? Or isn't it even more important to try to improve support for the 4% of international students who have occasionally come across this? The ISB works as a barometer, keeping a finger on the pulse of the internationalisation of higher education: the willingness to look into this sensitive topic already indicates that Germany is taking the internationalisation of its higher education very seriously.

7.1 GOOD PRACTICE (5)

What international students appreciate at Hochschule Furtwangen*

Hochschule Furtwangen founded 1850 Public university of applied sciences	9 faculties bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes	6,300 students incl. 1,017 international students (16%)	ISB participation 2009, 2011 and 2016
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What we are most proud of is the industry fair we organise twice a year. It is not just for our international students, but it has helped them get internships with local companies and in this way it also brings the world to Furtwangen. The ISB helped us see where our strengths were and capitalise on things we may not necessarily have done without the support of the data.

Furtwangen University is a very small university, with three campuses in the Black Forest region, and that has its challenges but also its advantages. We had to identify what international students experience as a challenge and what they see as the benefits of such a small institution. Neither our location nor our university would automatically attract

students from abroad, but by learning what our attraction factors are, we have been able to build on these.

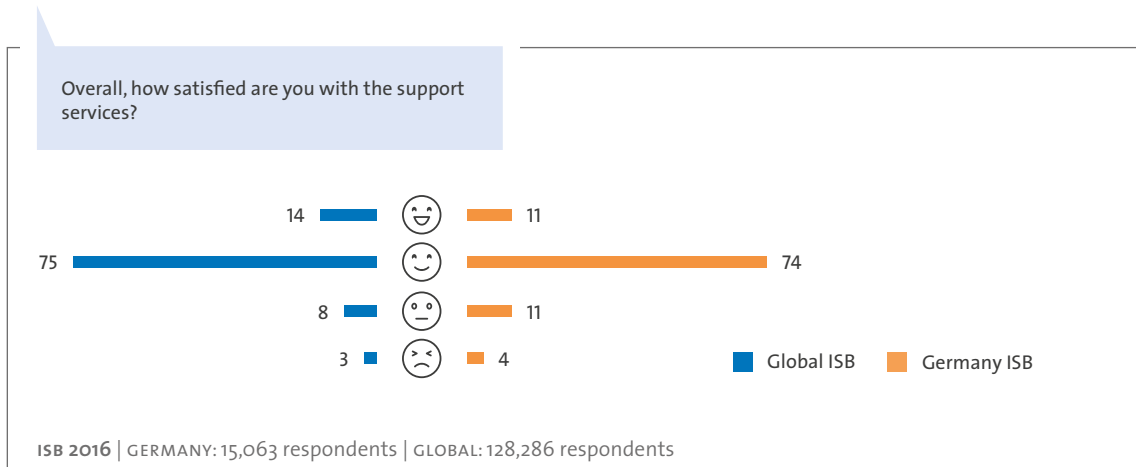
We have considered ways of how we might expand our family culture in Furtwangen; how can we welcome our international students in such a way that they integrate more effectively in our local community? The international festival that we have at our university each semester is now a festival for our entire community once a year in the summer, for example. The mayor of Furtwangen hosts it on the main square in the city and international students prepare food representing their local culture, perform national dances and sing national songs. The local community joins in and gets to appreciate the cultural diversity represented by the international students.

We really aim to bring the world to Furtwangen and seek to ensure that the international students meet both other international students and German students. To achieve this, we have a very intense two-week introduction programme along with a buddy programme. We start the term with a welcome evening dinner for all international students and their buddies at a local restaurant serving traditional food. And as we have no railway station in Furtwangen, we had to come up with a way for our international students to explore Germany. We have turned this disadvantage into a positive feature by organising lots of bus excursions. Our international students now come back to us and say they have seen a lot of Germany and met many students from across the globe in a relatively short time.

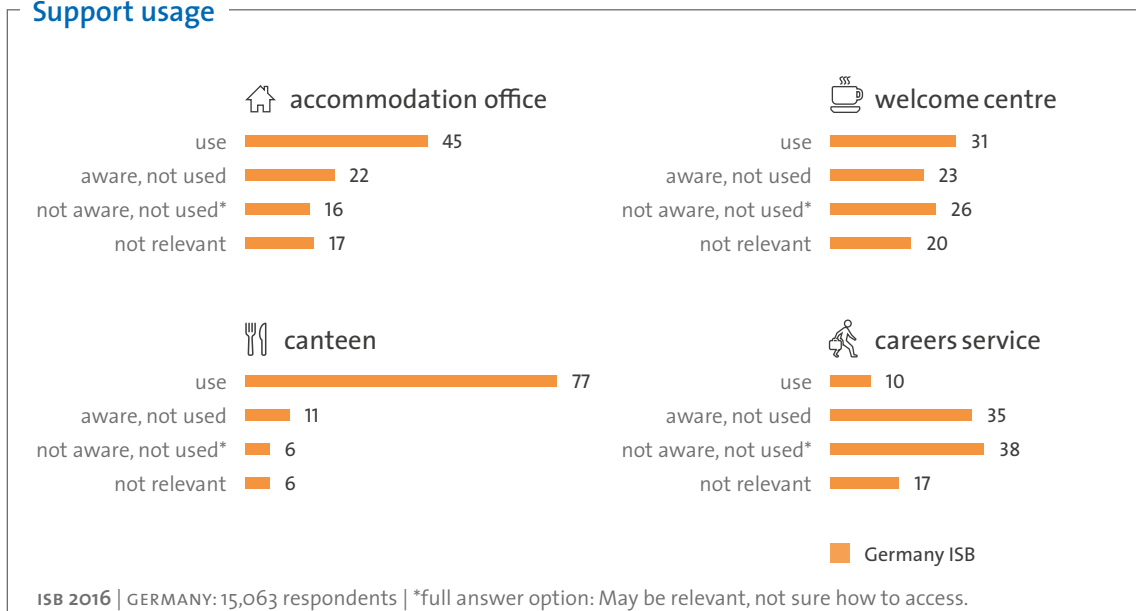
The ISB formed a good basis for us to improve our support services. We had an idea about the strategic direction, but to further improve certain things, particularly at faculty level, it was good to provide ideas backed up by the ISB data set. For an International Office, dealing with international students is their daily bread and butter, but for faculty staff it may be more difficult to understand both the strengths and the weaknesses of an institution. The ISB data helped us see where we outperform the benchmark and where we provide excellent services for international students. Building on those strengths, we were able to grow our support in faculties, and as a next step we were able to make some changes that do require academic support at faculty level. For instance, we made our module descriptions more transparent and brought in tutors and mentors.

** Many thanks to Brigitte Minderlein, Director International Center, Hochschule Furtwangen, for the interview.*

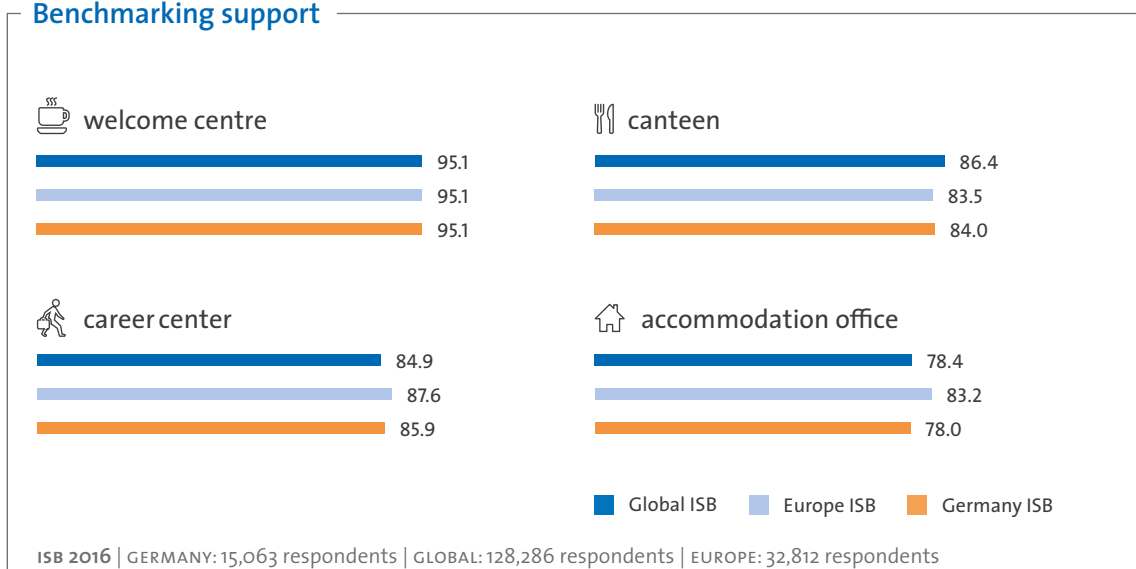
7.2 INFOGRAPHIC “SUPPORT SERVICES”



Support usage



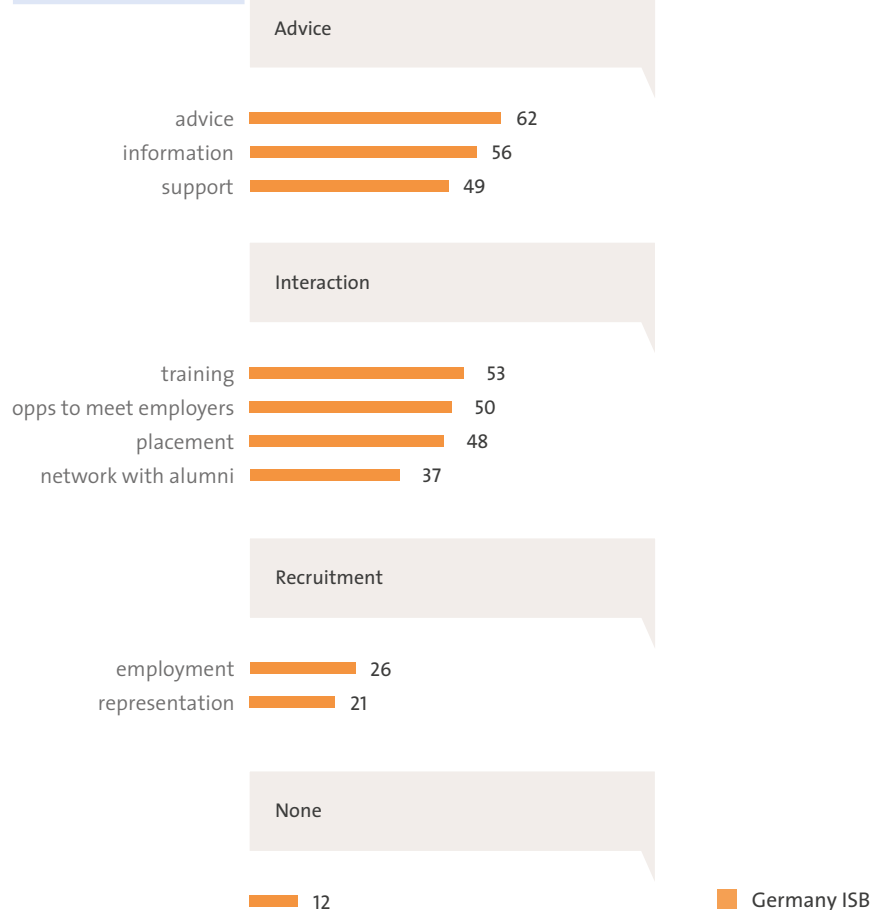
Benchmarking support



Expectations of careers support

multiple answers possible

What employment/careers support do you expect from your institution?



ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 15,062 respondents

Support satisfaction

careers service



counselling



student advisory



Germany 2009 ISB

Germany 2011 ISB

Germany 2016 ISB

ISB 2009 | GERMANY: 8,568 respondents

ISB 2011 | GERMANY: 12,575 respondents

ISB 2016 | GERMANY: 15,062 respondents

8 MAIN OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

The main insight from the nationwide International Student Barometer 2016 is that Germany has improved in many areas as compared to previous years. However, the other countries where comparative benchmarks are available for similar years have demonstrated even greater improvement. Based on the data, it is not possible to conclude whether this difference is due to the gap in surveying international students – the last nationwide survey in Germany was in 2011 – and therefore not having a constant finger on the pulse.

The propensity to recommend Germany has gone up by 7% across the national benchmark. 42% of international students say they would actively encourage others to apply to their German institution, whereas the global benchmark is 40%. Internationally, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom all do better, but Germany outperforms Australia, Hong Kong and the United States of America in terms of recommendations.

International students opting for Germany as an international study experience mention 5% more often that they chose the country because of work opportunities (see Fig. 2, Appendix 9.1, p. 45). Hence, integrating information on career prospects into curricula as well as paying attention to intercultural skills and how to deal with ‘the Germans’ is important as far as this group of students is concerned. To fully support the student recruitment cycle in marketing, attention should not only be paid to prospective students, but also to current and even past students. There has been a definite increase in the importance of talking to alumni as a key factor in the choice process of prospective students. Moreover, word-of-mouth advertising should not be underestimated. Of the top five influencers in terms of choice of institution, four out of five are human.

TOP 10 KEY INFLUENCERS IN THE CHOICE OF INSTITUTION

1. **Friends**
2. **Institution website**
3. **Family**
4. **Alumni**
5. **Current students**
6. **Host government advisory service**
7. **Teacher/tutor where you studied previously**
8. **Institution visit**
9. **Institution prospectus**
10. **League table or rankings**

Since international students seem to opt for academic studies in Germany with a clear focus on career opportunities afterwards, it will be important for each German higher education institution to look at how they could improve the aspect of employability in their curricula. It is also crucial for academic staff to understand and support this goal.

In terms of the welcome and arrival process, there is room for improvement at nationwide level. In general it is an area where many German institutions can still do better. However, based on the personal ISB feedback presentations that i-graduate has given at participating higher education institutions throughout Germany, many international offices clearly do work hard to provide students with a better experience. In order to be more successful here they need support from their hierarchies and their academic staff. The institutions whose ISB data indicates that the welcome, orientation and arrival process works well all have a clear focus on service orientation in supporting the academic achievements of their international students.

Over time there have been major improvements in all support services. In comparison with 2009, overall support has gone up by 13%. Satisfaction levels are high for support services, but international comparisons do suggest more can be done. In short, German higher education institutions have improved, but the improvements elsewhere have been even better. Careers services are worth noting here. Over time the satisfaction level in this area has increased gradually. In the ISB 2016 10% say that they have used this service. However, the number of students indicating they are unfamiliar with it even though they are keen to use it is also high at 38% (see Fig. 12, Appendix 9.1, p. 51). Moreover, where satisfaction with the career service is concerned, Germany falls 2.7% behind against the global benchmark and 1% behind against the continental European benchmark (see Fig. 11, Appendix 9.1, p. 50).

It is impossible to talk about the internationalisation of German higher education without bringing up the cost aspect. There are no (or very low) tuition fees. But it is the low cost of living in Germany combined with the high quality of education where the additional value sets in. In an international comparison of nine countries⁶, Germany ranks first in terms of both living costs and accommodation costs. In a world dominated by high tuition fees, the fact that international students can get a highly regarded academic qualification at a relatively low cost is a major selling point for German higher education, providing the emphasis is on the quality of academic study. There is always a risk that 'expensive equals quality': Germany needs to be aware of this and ensure its marketing emphasises the benefits of low living and accommodation costs. The Germany brand in higher education is perceived as very robust outside of Germany (see Fig. 3, Appendix 9.1, p. 45). People associate German qualifications with high quality, and German higher education institutions should use this to their advantage.

⁶ Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States – where each country has enough institutions taking part in the 2016 ISB to provide a country benchmark.

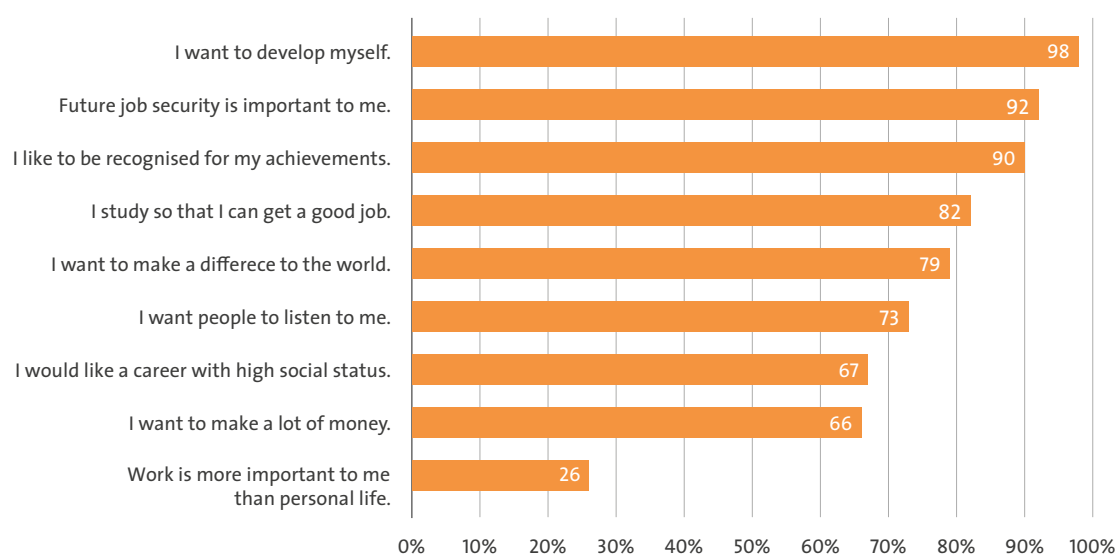
9 APPENDICES*

9.1 SELECTED GRAPHS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BAROMETER 2016

Figure 1

Motivations for international study choice

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:



GERMANY ISB: 14,905 respondents

* Please note, i-graduate data is calculated to several decimal places. When reporting, numbers are rounded to the nearest 1 decimal place for easy interpretation, which means that figures can appear to not add up to 100%, or the +/- score may appear to be out by 0.1%.

Figure 2

Top 10 factors in study decision

How important were the following factors when deciding where to study?

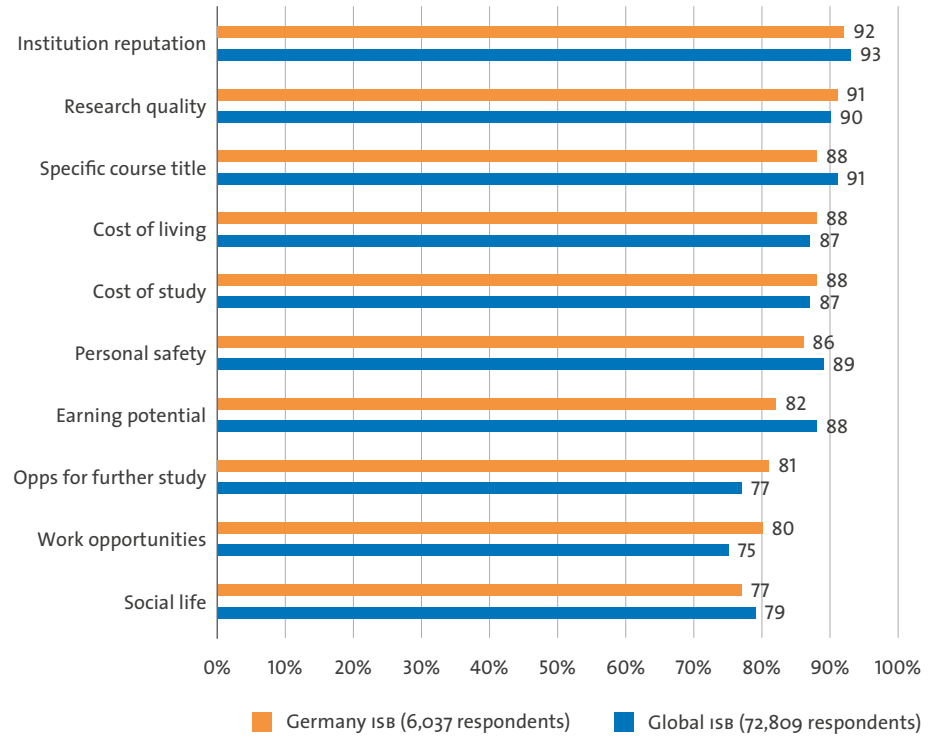
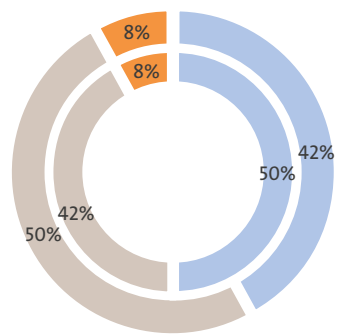


Figure 3

Choosing for Germany: Country Brand Strength

Which was most important in your decision of where to study?

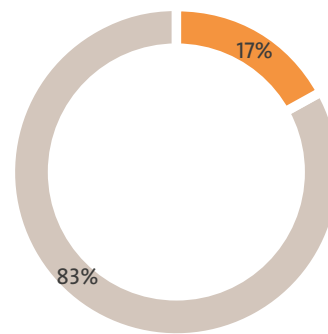
Germany ISB (4,987 respondents): inner circle
Global ISB (60,950 respondents): outer circle



■ The country ■ The institution
■ Don't know

Was this country your first choice for international education?

Germany ISB (4,970 respondents)

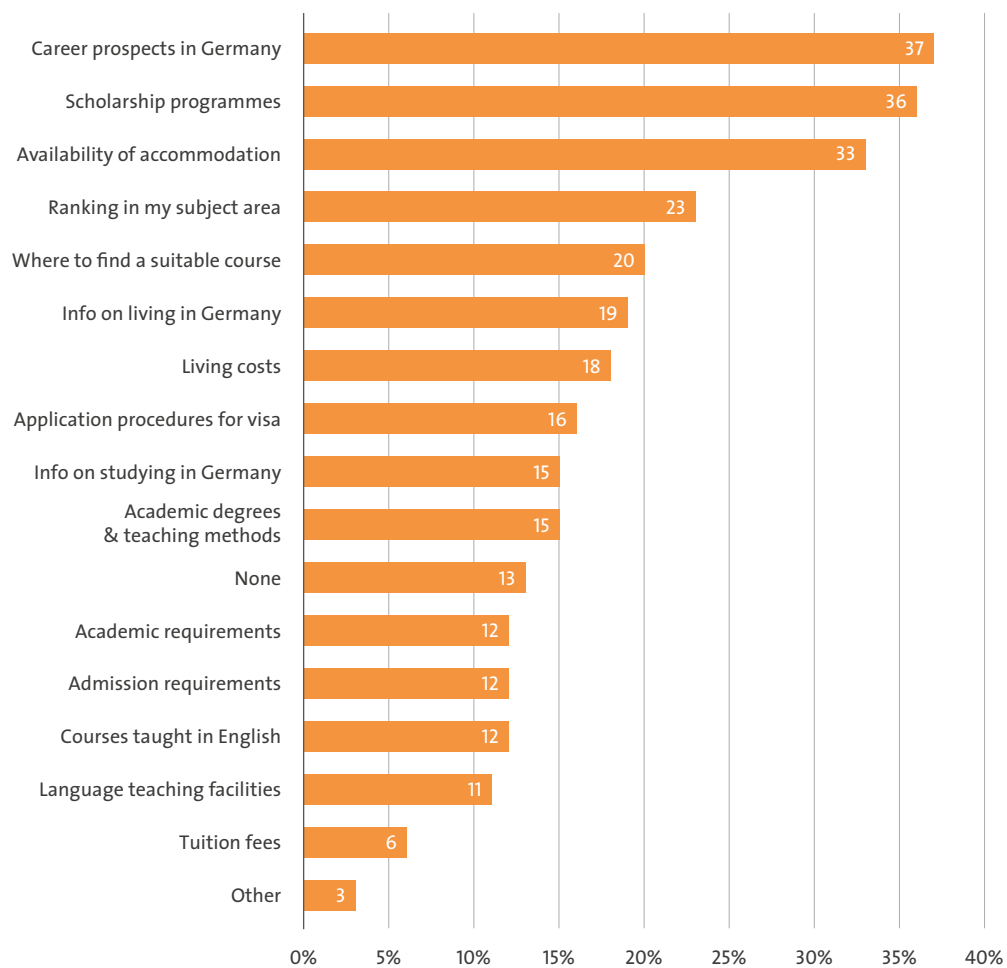


■ No ■ Yes

Figure 4

Getting information

For which of the following issues was it difficult to get information?



GERMANY ISB (18,061 respondents)

Figure 5

Benchmarking Learning – Teaching

	Germany ISB %	ISB %	Europe ISB %	ISB +/-	Europe ISB +/-
LEARNING AVERAGE	83.1	84.9	83.7	-1.9	-0.7
LEARNING OVERALL	85.1	86.5	85.1	-1.4	0.0
TEACHING					
Expert lecturers	92.7	92.9	92.7	-0.3	-0.1
Academics' English	92.0	92.1	92.3	-0.1	-0.2
Academics' German	90.0	90.0	90.0	0.0	0.0
Quality lectures	89.7	88.8	88.3	0.9	1.5
Good teachers	88.6	88.4	87.2	0.2	1.4
Course content	87.2	88.6	86.7	-1.4	0.5
Learning support	85.3	89.1	86.7	-3.8	-1.4
Assessment	84.8	88.2	85.7	-3.4	-1.0
Research	84.3	87.2	85.2	-2.9	-1.0
Performance feedback	80.7	84.3	79.9	-3.7	0.8
Course organisation	79.5	84.0	79.4	-4.4	0.1
Marking criteria	77.9	83.2	78.0	-5.3	-0.1

Figure 6

Benchmarking Learning – Studies

	Germany ISB %	ISB %	Europe ISB %	ISB +/-	Europe ISB +/-
LEARNING AVERAGE	83.1	84.9	83.7	-1.9	-0.7
LEARNING OVERALL	85.1	86.5	85.1	-1.4	0.0
STUDIES					
Multicultural	89.1	90.4	90.4	-1.3	-1.3
Class size	87.1	89.4	89.2	-2.3	-2.1
Managing research**	85.9	89.6	86.9	-3.7	-1.0
Language support	83.2	88.4	86.5	-5.3	-3.3
Topic selection**	81.0	86.7	83.1	-5.7	-2.0
Language support (German)	76.1	76.1	76.1	0.0	0.0
Employability	68.0	77.8	70.9	-9.8	-2.9
Opportunities to teach**	65.1	71.5	68.5	-6.4	-3.5
Work experience	63.8	70.2	63.6	-6.4	0.2
Careers advice	59.9	71.1	61.9	-11.2	-1.9

** Postgraduate students only

Figure 7

Benchmarking Learning – Facilities

	Germany ISB %	ISB %	Europe ISB %	ISB +/-	Europe ISB +/-
LEARNING AVERAGE	83.1	84.9	83.7	-1.9	-0.7
LEARNING OVERALL	85.1	86.5	85.1	-1.4	0.0
FACILITIES					
Laboratories	91.9	90.9	91.8	1.0	0.1
Learning spaces	89.2	89.9	89.5	-0.7	-0.3
Technology	89.0	89.8	89.3	-0.8	-0.2
Physical library	88.9	89.3	88.6	-0.4	0.3
Online library	87.6	90.1	88.5	-2.5	-0.9
Virtual learning	87.1	90.4	88.1	-3.3	-1.0

Figure 8

Benchmarking Living – Accommodation and living costs

	Germany ISB %	ISB %	Europe ISB %	ISB +/-	Europe ISB +/-
LIVING AVERAGE	78.8	79.9	78.5	-1.0	0.4
LIVING OVERALL	83.5	86.8	84.4	-3.3	-1.0
ACCOMMODATION & LIVING COSTS					
Accommodation quality	84.8	84.7	83.7	0.1	1.1
Living cost	84.5	70.9	72.2	13.6	12.3
Internet access	77.0	80.3	78.3	-3.3	-1.3
Accommodation cost	72.9	63.3	64.7	9.6	8.3
Finding accommodation	62.0	60.9	60.9	1.1	1.1
Earning money	55.8	53.5	45.3	2.3	10.5
Financial support	47.5	55.4	48.5	-7.9	-1.0

Figure 9

Benchmarking Living – social

	Germany ISB %	ISB %	Europe ISB %	ISB +/-	Europe ISB +/-
LIVING AVERAGE	78.8	79.9	78.5	-1.0	0.4
LIVING OVERALL	83.5	86.8	84.4	-3.3	-1.0
SOCIAL					
Other friends	88.2	87.7	89.3	0.4	-1.1
Host culture	85.5	85.8	85.7	-0.4	-0.3
Home friends	84.4	85.3	85.2	-0.9	-0.8
International class	82.4	82.5	82.5	0.0	0.0
Social activities	81.2	83.1	82.4	-1.9	-1.2
Sport facilities	79.0	80.7	79.1	-1.8	-0.1
Social facilities	76.4	81.9	78.4	-5.5	-2.0
Good contacts	73.4	78.5	76.1	-5.1	-2.7
Host friends	67.5	73.2	67.4	-5.7	0.1

Figure 10

Benchmarking Living – day to day life

	Germany ISB %	ISB %	Europe ISB %	ISB +/-	Europe ISB +/-
LIVING AVERAGE	78.8	79.9	78.5	-1.0	0.4
LIVING OVERALL	83.5	86.8	84.4	-3.3	-1.0
DAY TO DAY LIFE					
Eco-friendly attitude	91.6	90.3	90.2	1.4	1.5
Good place to be	90.5	91.5	92.5	-0.9	-2.0
Safety	90.5	92.5	92.6	-2.0	-2.1
Campus environment	90.3	91.8	92.3	-1.5	-2.0
Transport links uni	83.9	84.6	84.7	-0.7	-0.8
Campus buildings	83.4	88.5	86.8	-5.1	-3.4
Transport links	83.1	83.1	84.0	0.1	-0.9
Worship facilities	79.9	85.4	81.8	-5.5	-1.9
Visa advice	75.2	81.3	77.1	-6.1	-1.9

Figure 11

Benchmarking Support

	Germany ISB %	ISB %	Europe ISB %	ISB +/-	Europe ISB +/-
SUPPORT AVERAGE	90.1	90.9	90.1	-0.8	0.0
SUPPORT OVERALL	86.0	88.4	87.2	-2.4	-1.3
Welcome Centre	95.1	95.1	95.1	0.0	0.0
IT Support	94.5	93.7	93.8	0.8	0.7
Multi-faith provision	93.8	94.6	95.2	-0.8	-1.4
Int'l Office (Central)	93.1	92.6	92.9	0.5	0.2
Graduate School**	93.1	94.2	93.7	-1.1	-0.6
Int'l Office (Faculty)	92.9	93.4	93.4	-0.5	-0.5
Student Secretariat/ Administration	92.4	92.4	92.4	0.0	0.0
Faculty Dep. Advisors	92.1	93.5	91.7	-1.4	0.3
Students' Union (AStA)	91.9	93.1	92.6	-1.2	-0.7
Clubs/Societies	91.3	92.8	92.7	-1.5	-1.4
Disability Adv. (AStA)	90.3	93.6	93.0	-3.3	-2.7
Finance/Accounting	90.2	89.6	90.5	0.6	-0.3
Uni Medical Center	90.1	89.7	87.8	0.4	2.3
Student Advice Centre	89.9	92.3	91.1	-2.4	-1.2
Examination Office	87.9	87.9	87.9	0.0	0.0
Counselling	87.4	89.2	87.7	-1.7	-0.3
Dining halls (Mensa)	86.4	83.5	84.0	2.9	2.4
Tutor within Buddy- Program	86.0	86.0	86.0	0.0	0.0
Career Center	84.9	87.6	85.9	-2.7	-1.0
Housing Office	78.4	83.2	78.0	-4.8	0.4

**Postgraduate students only

Figure 12

Support usage

Please indicate your use/knowledge of the following...

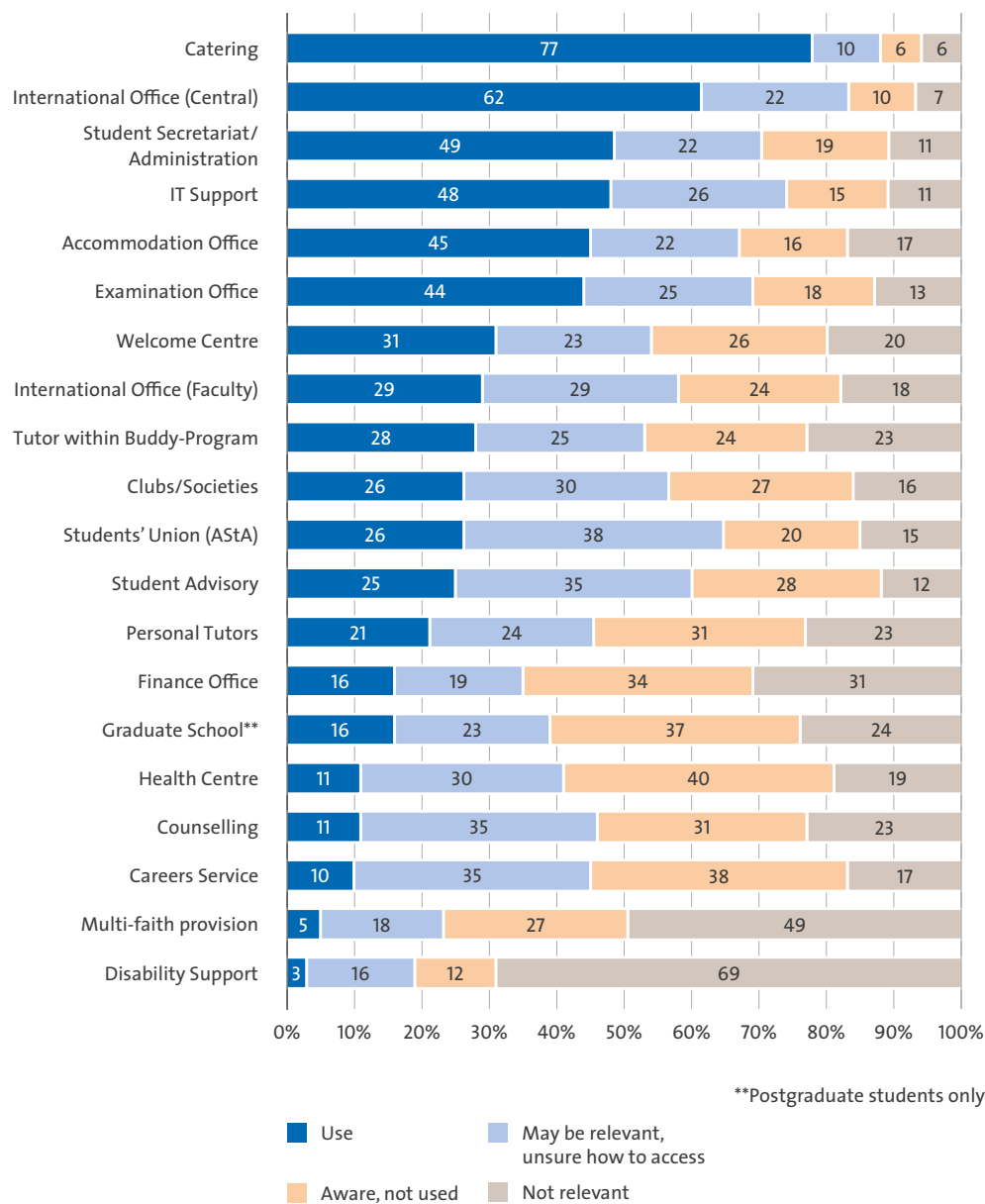


Figure 13

Reasons for leaving

What would make you leave your host country after graduation?

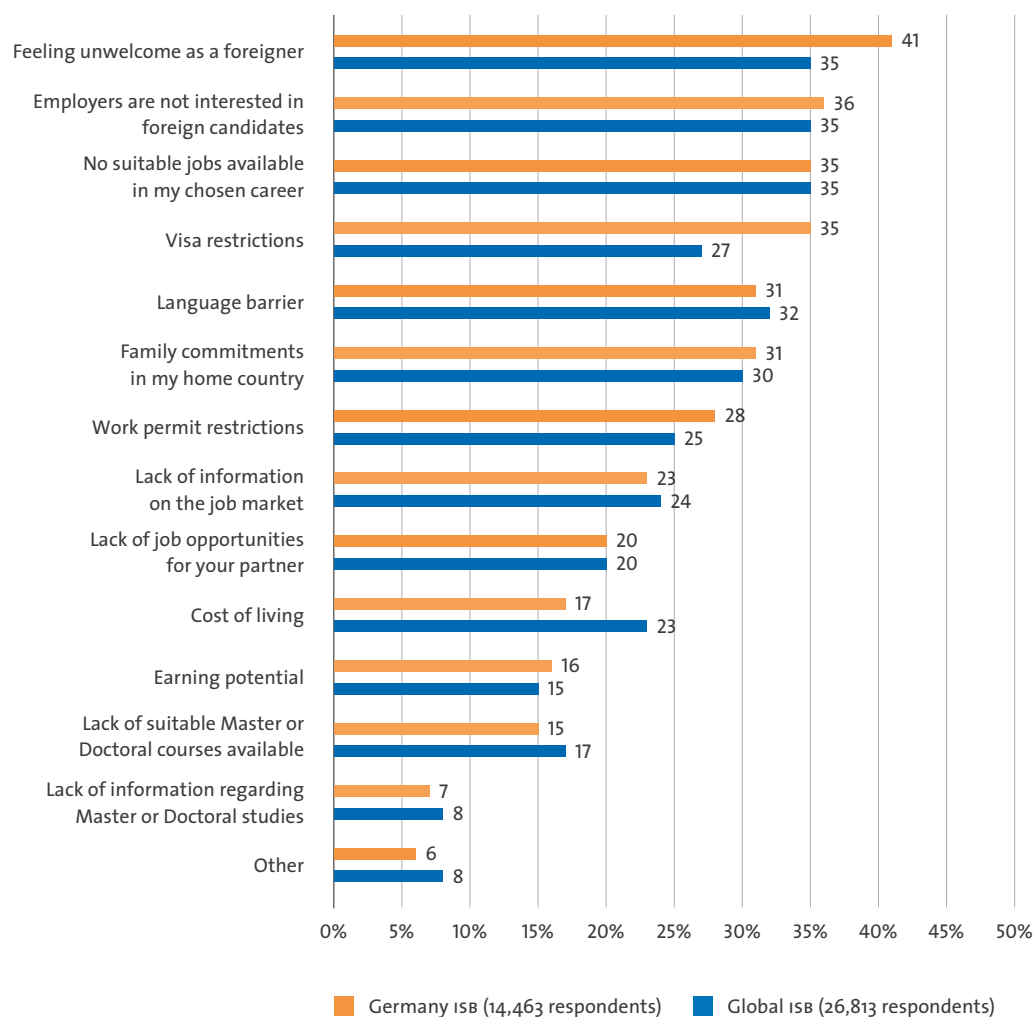
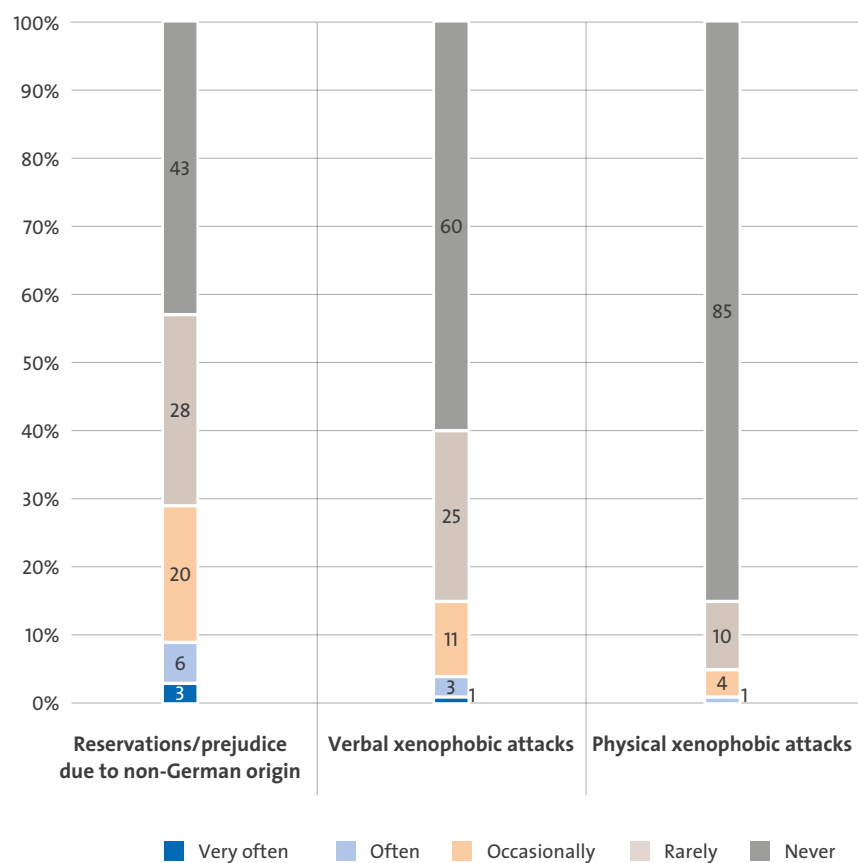


Figure 14

Xenophobia in Germany

How often have you personally experienced physical or verbal attacks motivated by xenophobia in Germany?



Germany ISB (15,752 respondents)

9.2 OVERVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BAROMETER 2016

9.2.1 Germany ISB

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar	Philipps-Universität Marburg
Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus - Senftenberg	Ruhr-Universität Bochum
Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel	RWTH Aachen University
European University Viadrina	Technische Hochschule Köln
Fachhochschule Dortmund	Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg
Fachhochschule Frankfurt am Main	Technische Universität Chemnitz
Freie Universität Berlin	Technische Universität Clausthal
Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena	Technische Universität Dresden
Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf	Technische Universität Kaiserslautern
Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg	Universität Bayreuth
Hochschule Deggendorf	Universität Bielefeld
Hochschule Furtwangen	Universität Hamburg
Hochschule Koblenz	Universität Hohenheim
Hochschule Neu-Ulm	Universität Konstanz
Jade University of Applied Sciences	Universität Leipzig
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz	Universität Paderborn
Martin-Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg	Universität Stuttgart
Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences	Universität zu Köln
Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Regensburg	

9.2.2 Continental Europe ISB

University of Oulu	Finland	Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg	Germany
Communaute Universite Grenoble Alpes	France	Hochschule Deggendorf	Germany
Bauhaus-Universität Weimar	Germany	Hochschule Furtwangen	Germany
Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg	Germany	Hochschule Koblenz	Germany
Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel	Germany	Hochschule Neu-Ulm	Germany
European University Viadrina	Germany	Jade University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Fachhochschule Dortmund	Germany	Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz	Germany
Fachhochschule Frankfurt am Main	Germany	Martin-Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg	Germany
Freie Universität Berlin	Germany	Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena	Germany	Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Regensburg	Germany
Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf	Germany		

Philipps-Universität Marburg	Germany	University of Limerick	Ireland
Ruhr-Universität Bochum	Germany	Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	Italy
RWTH Aachen University	Germany	HAN University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
Technische Hochschule Köln	Germany	Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen	The Netherlands
Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg	Germany	Leiden University	The Netherlands
Technische Universität Chemnitz	Germany	Saxion University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
Technische Universität Clausthal	Germany	University of Groningen	The Netherlands
Technische Universität Dresden	Germany	University of Twente	The Netherlands
Technische Universität Kaiserslautern	Germany	Utrecht University	The Netherlands
Universität Bayreuth	Germany	Chalmers University of Technology	Sweden
Universität Bielefeld	Germany	Jönköping University	Sweden
Universität Hamburg	Germany	Karolinska Institute	Sweden
Universität Hohenheim	Germany	Linköping University	Sweden
Universität Konstanz	Germany	Linnaeus University	Sweden
Universität Leipzig	Germany	Lund University	Sweden
Universität Paderborn	Germany	Mid Sweden University	Sweden
Universität Stuttgart	Germany	Stockholm University	Sweden
Universität zu Köln	Germany	Swedish Institute of Agricultural Sciences	Sweden
Dublin City University	Ireland	Umeå University	Sweden
Maynooth University	Ireland	University of Gothenburg	Sweden
National University of Ireland, Galway	Ireland	Uppsala University	Sweden
Trinity College Dublin	Ireland		
University College Cork	Ireland		
University College Dublin	Ireland		

9.2.3 Global ISB

Australian Catholic University	Australia	The Australian National University	Australia
Bond University	Australia	The University of Adelaide	Australia
Charles Darwin University	Australia	The University of New South Wales	Australia
CQUniversity Australia	Australia	The University of Queensland	Australia
Curtin University	Australia	The University of Sydney	Australia
Deakin University	Australia	The University of Western Australia	Australia
Edith Cowan University	Australia	University of Canberra	Australia
Federation University Australia	Australia	University of Melbourne	Australia
Flinders University	Australia	University of New England	Australia
Griffith University	Australia	University of South Australia	Australia
James Cook University	Australia	University of Southern Queensland	Australia
La Trobe University	Australia	University of Tasmania	Australia
Monash University	Australia	University of Technology Sydney	Australia
Murdoch University	Australia	University of the Sunshine Coast	Australia
Queensland University of Technology	Australia	University of Wollongong	Australia
Southern Cross University	Australia	Western Sydney University	Australia

Universiti Brunei Darussalam	Brunei	University of Kent	England
Algonquin College	Canada	University of Leeds	England
Cambrian College	Canada	University of Nottingham	England
Camosun College	Canada	University of Oxford	England
Centennial College	Canada	University of Strathclyde	England
College of the Rockies	Canada	University of Surrey	England
Fanshawe College	Canada	University of Sussex	England
George Brown College	Canada	University of York	England
Georgian College	Canada	University of Oulu	Finland
Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning	Canada	Communaute Universite Grenoble Alpes	France
Mohawk College	Canada	Bauhaus-Universität Weimar	Germany
New Brunswick Community College	Canada	Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg	Germany
Niagara College	Canada	Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel	Germany
RMIT University	Canada	European University Viadrina	Germany
Sheridan College	Canada	Fachhochschule Dortmund	Germany
St. Lawrence College	Canada	Fachhochschule Frankfurt am Main	Germany
University of Calgary	Canada	Freie Universität Berlin	Germany
Peking University	China	Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena	Germany
University of Nottingham (China)	China	Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf	Germany
Bath Spa University	England	Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg	Germany
Bournemouth University	England	Hochschule Deggendorf	Germany
Coventry University	England	Hochschule Furtwangen	Germany
Goldsmiths, University of London	England	Hochschule Koblenz	Germany
Leeds Beckett University	England	Hochschule Neu-Ulm	Germany
Liverpool John Moores University	England	Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz	Germany
London South Bank University	England	Martin-Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg	Germany
Loughborough University	England	Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Manchester Metropolitan University	England	Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Regensburg	Germany
Newcastle University	England	Philipps-Universität Marburg	Germany
Northumbria University	England	Ruhr-Universität Bochum	Germany
Oxford Brookes University	England	RWTH Aachen University	Germany
Royal Holloway, University of London	England	Technische Hochschule Köln	Germany
Teesside University	England	Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg	Germany
The University of Sheffield	England	Technische Universität Chemnitz	Germany
University of Bedfordshire	England	Technische Universität Clausthal	Germany
University of Bradford	England	Technische Universität Dresden	Germany
University of Bristol	England	Technische Universität Kaiserslautern	Germany
University of Cambridge	England	Universität Bayreuth	Germany
University of Central Lancashire	England	Universität Bielefeld	Germany
University of Derby	England	Universität Hamburg	Germany
University of Gloucestershire	England	Universität Hohenheim	Germany
University of Greenwich	England	Universität Konstanz	Germany
University of Huddersfield	England		
University of Kent	England		

Universität Leipzig	Germany	Stockholm University	Sweden
Universität Paderborn	Germany	Swedish Institute of Agricultural Sciences	Sweden
Universität Stuttgart	Germany	Umeå University	Sweden
Universität zu Köln	Germany	University of Gothenburg	Sweden
Chinese University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Uppsala University	Sweden
HKU Space Community College	Hong Kong	Mahidol University	Thailand
HK Community College (HKCC)/School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED)	Hong Kong	HAN University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hong Kong	Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen	The Netherlands
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	Hong Kong	Jade University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
THEi / IVE / HKDI	Hong Kong	Leiden University	The Netherlands
University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Saxion University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
BINUS University	Indonesia	University of Groningen	The Netherlands
Dublin City University	Ireland	University of Twente	The Netherlands
Maynooth University	Ireland	Utrecht University	The Netherlands
National University of Ireland, Galway	Ireland	Adelphi International	USA
Trinity College Dublin	Ireland	Auburn Global	USA
University College Cork	Ireland	FIU Global First Year	USA
University College Dublin	Ireland	Indiana University Bloomington	USA
University of Limerick	Ireland	Indiana University East	USA
Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	Italy	Indiana University Kokomo	USA
Penang Medical College	Malaysia	Indiana University Northwest	USA
Sunway University and Sunway College	Malaysia	Indiana University South Bend	USA
Swinburne University of Technology (Sarawak Campus)	Malaysia	Indiana University South East	USA
Taylor's College	Malaysia	Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis	USA
Taylor's University, Lakeside Campus	Malaysia	International Accelerator at American University	USA
University of Nottingham (Malaysia)	Malaysia	Kent State University	USA
Glasgow Caledonian University	Scotland	KU Academic Accelerator Program	USA
The University of Edinburgh	Scotland	Lane Community College	USA
University of Dundee	Scotland	LSU Global	USA
University of Glasgow	Scotland	Northeastern University	USA
University of St Andrews	Scotland	UCF Global Achievement Academy	USA
University of Stirling	Scotland	University of Nebraska–Lincoln	USA
University of the West of Scotland	Scotland	University of South Carolina IAP	USA
James Cook University Singapore	Singapore	Western Michigan University	USA
SIM Global Education (SIM GE)	Singapore	Cardiff Metropolitan University	Wales
Chalmers University of Technology	Sweden	University of South Wales	Wales
Jönköping University	Sweden	University of Wales, Trinity Saint David	Wales
Karolinska Institute	Sweden		
Linköping University	Sweden		
Linnaeus University	Sweden		
Lund University	Sweden		
Mid Sweden University	Sweden		