

Germany feedback

A significant increase in the average number of weeks spent on a language course and a rise in the number of Asian students were key trends noted in this issue's Feedback survey of students studying German in Germany.

Germany feedback at a glance

Total number of students:	72 female 46, male 24, (unknown 2)
Average age:	25.4 years
Top nationalities:	1 Swiss (14%) 2 Chinese (11%) 3 Spanish (8%) 4 Polish/ American (7%) 5 Swedish (6%)
Average length of programme:	14.9 weeks
Average number of students per class:	10
Average no. of hours of language tuition per week:	22.7
% of students who found their course through an agent or adviser	19%
% of students who booked through an agent:	25%
% of students who had been on another language programme:	24%
% of students who would recommend their school:	96%

Respondents by world region of origin

Africa (7%)
Asia (18%)
Central & Eastern Europe (19%)
Western Europe (35%)
North America (7%)
Latin America (7%)
Middle East (4%)
Unknown (3%)

What was the standard of your accommodation?

Excellent (21%)
Good (46%)
Satisfactory (11%)
Poor (2%)
Unsatisfactory (1%)
Unknown (19%)

How will you use your German in the future?

For college study in Germany (38%)
For college study in my home country (14%)
For current or future work (36%)
For pleasure only (11%)
Unknown (1%)

In my class there are...

Too many students (3%)
Too many students who speak my language (14%)
Too many students from one other country (7%)
None of these (71%)
Unknown (5%)

At 14.9 weeks, the average length of stay of our German Feedback respondents was almost double that of last year's survey when the figure stood at 8.1 weeks (see *Language Travel Magazine*, November 2000, pages 22-23). The likely reason behind this increase is the high proportion of students who took part in this issue's survey who were going on to study at a university in Germany – 38 per cent this year compared with 23 per cent last year – and these students generally study for longer than those with other language goals.

Germany is increasingly becoming a popular destination for university studies, particular among Chinese students – indeed, all our Chinese respondents were going on to study at university in Germany – as there are no tuition fees for overseas students. The high number of Chinese students this year, making them the second largest student nationality, helped boost the proportion of Asian students by 12 percentage points this year compared with last year. In fact, no Asian nationalities appeared the top five last year.

Swiss students were the largest single nationality this year ahead of Chinese and third-placed Spanish students. American and Polish students were in joint-fourth place, each nationality accounting for seven per cent of the total number of students. Swedish students, who were absent from last year's top five line-up, were in fifth place this year. Given these results, it is no surprise that Western Europe provided the bulk of our respondents, making up 35 per cent of the overall number, although this figure is down four percentage points on last year.

The results of our survey confirm that long-term German language courses are particularly popular among university students. Forty-seven per cent of those who gave university student as their occupation were enrolled on language courses of 16 weeks or more, in contrast to business people, all of whom were studying for between one and 10 weeks.

In terms of length of stay by student nationality, the majority of Swiss students who took part in our survey were enrolled on courses of between six and 29 weeks, while Swedish students were enrolled on courses that ranged from 13 to 16 weeks in length. Two students, one from China and one from Poland, mentioned that they were studying for more than 40 weeks, while at the other end of the scale, 80 per cent of Americans and 50 per cent of Spanish students indicated that they were studying for eight weeks or less.

When asked whether or not they would recommend their school to others, 96 per cent of our respondents said they would, indicating high levels of overall satisfaction among students. Individual aspects of the programme also received high praise from our respondents, including the teachers, who were rated excellent or good by 93 per cent of students. Eighty-nine per cent thought the same of their academic programme, while a slightly lower 61 per cent described their social programme as at least satisfactory. Accommodation standards also varied and, although 67 per cent of students rated their accommodation as excellent or good, three per cent described it as either poor or unsatisfactory.

Thirty-seven per cent of our respondents were staying in residential accommodation, while host family accommodation was favoured by 24 per cent of students, and



38 per cent had other living arrangements. Of those staying with a German host family, 76 per cent rated it as excellent or good, compared with 56 per cent of those who were staying in other forms of accommodation. In terms of students' nationality, host families were the accommodation choice of 70 per cent of Swiss and 40 per cent of American students, while 88 per cent of Chinese respondents were in residential accommodation.

For the second consecutive year, over half of our respondents found the cost of living in Germany to be higher than in their home country, including 100 per cent of Russian, Chinese and Mexican students and 80 per cent of Spanish students. In contrast, all of our Japanese respondents found Germany to be less expensive than Japan, while Israeli students found the cost of living in Germany to be the same as in their home country. When asked about their weekly expenditure, our respondents estimated a sum per week that they spent on tuition and accommodation. The average figure was DM335 (US\$153) per week.

Agent usage in the German market remained relatively low in 2001, with only 25 per cent of our respondents booking their courses through agencies. Although this figure is seven percentage points higher than last year, it represents an overall decline of 10 percentage points since our 1998 survey (see *Language Travel Magazine*, November 1998, pages 20-21). Among all the students who took part in our survey, 53 per cent had chosen their course because it had been recommended by a friend or relative, while 17 per cent found their course on the Internet, a fall of six percentage points compared with last year's survey.

While 76 per cent of our Feedback respondents had a clear idea about the country in which they wanted to study prior to booking their language course, and 50 per cent said they had already decided on the town or city, only 38 per cent had decided on the language school. Class sizes at some of the schools that took part in our survey were relatively large with up to 21 students in some classes. Nevertheless, the average across all institutions was 10 students per class. Seventy-one per cent of students were happy with the nationality mix of their classes, including 100 per cent of Spanish students and 80 per cent of Polish students.

When we asked students to place a number of aspects about Germany in order of preference, the people appeared in last place, which could be linked to the fact that only 32 per cent of our respondents found it quite easy to practise their language skills with native German speakers. No one indicated that they found it very easy to communicate with the local people. The culture was the most popular aspect of the country, followed by the language and then the countryside.

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What do you like most about Germany?

1 Culture	4 Nightlife
2 Language	6 Food
3 Countryside	7 Shopping
4 Sport	8 People

What was the standard of your social programme?

Excellent (8%)
Good (32%)
Satisfactory (21%)
Poor (8%)
Unsatisfactory (8%)
Unknown (23%)

How easy was it to practise German with native speakers?

Quite easy (32%)
Quite hard (35%)
Very hard (32%)
Unknown (1%)

Before looking for your course, did you know where you wanted to study?

Country	Yes (76%)
	No (1%)
	Unknown (23%)
City/town	Yes (50%)
	No (28%)
	Unknown (22%)
School	Yes (38%)
	No (40%)
	Unknown (22%)

Did you book your course through an agent?

Yes (25%)
No (75%)

What was the standard of your academic programme?

Excellent (28%)
Good (61%)
Satisfactory (8%)
Unsatisfactory (3%)

How did you choose your programme?

I saw it advertised (8%)
I found it on the Internet (17%)
Recommended by an agent (19%)
Recommended by a friend (53%)
Unknown (3%)

What was the standard of the teaching?

Excellent (74%)
Good (19%)
Satisfactory (4%)
Unsatisfactory (2%)
Unknown (1%)

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