

Institut für Anglistik / Amerikanistik
Information for Students
Compulsory Stay Abroad for Students of English¹
Official guidelines updated 26.01.2018

General Guidelines

It is strongly recommended that all students of English complement their studies with a stay abroad in an English-speaking country, where possible for a year. You will profit from this period on many different levels – an improvement in your language skills is only one of the benefits.

Students intending to qualify as English teachers for all types of government schools in the state of Lower Saxony **must** spend a period of at least three months (twelve weeks) abroad in an English-speaking country during their studies.² This must be completed before registering for the submission of a master's thesis. However, students aiming to graduate with the degree Master of Education (Grund-, Haupt- und Realschule) are advised to complete this stay abroad during their **bachelor** degree wherever possible. The official degree guidelines describe the stay abroad as follows:

*“Studierende mit dem Studienziel Master of Education (Lehramt an Grundschulen und Lehramt an Haupt-/Realschulen, Lehramt an Gymnasien, Lehramt für Sonderpädagogik und Lehramt an Berufsbildenden Schulen) müssen bis zur Anmeldung der Masterarbeit einen dreimonatigen studienrelevanten Aufenthalt im Ausland nachweisen. Besonders Studierenden mit dem Studienziel Master of Education (Lehramt an Grundschulen und Lehramt an Haupt-/Realschulen) wird empfohlen, diesen Auslandsaufenthalt **bereits im Bachelorstudium** zu absolvieren.”³*

Exception 1: Students who are studying two modern languages as potential teaching subjects only need to complete a stay abroad for one of the languages.

Exception 2: Native speakers of English who grew up in a country with English as an official language can apply for an exemption from the stay abroad. This does not apply to students who grew up speaking English in Germany (eg. with a parent who is a native speaker of English.)

Destinations

The stay abroad has to take place in an English speaking country. **An English speaking country is a country in which English is an official language or the main language spoken.** This does not include the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, or Sweden, even if you are planning to attend a university where all courses are in English.

If you are unsure whether a particular country is appropriate (this may be the case for certain destinations in Asia and Africa), then please consult an advisor in advance.

¹ Further information is available at: <https://www.uni-oldenburg.de/en/english-american/student-guide/working-and-studying-abroad/>

² This regulation is laid out in the *Verordnung über Masterabschlüsse für Lehramter in Niedersachsen (Nds.MasterVO-Lehr)*.

³ BPO der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, (4) *Fachspezifische Anlage für das Fach Anglistik*, 08.09.2017, #3 - Empfehlungen und Hinweise.

General Criteria, Duration, Timing, Activities and Restrictions

a) The setting abroad should enable you to have extensive contact with adult native speakers, which fosters the development of communicative competence. The following settings and activities generally ensure sufficient interaction with the target culture:

- educational institutions⁴
 - public, private and language schools, including pre-schools and formal childcare centres: teaching assistantships, internships, German language teaching, paid employment, formal language study
 - universities: studying (as an enrolled student), teaching assistantships, team-based research projects
- private sector firms, NGOs, government agencies, social organizations
 - team-based work (paid or otherwise), internships, volunteering

b) In order to qualify, the stay abroad should be a minimum of **three months** (12 weeks), encompassing the equivalent of **sixty full-time** days at work. For administrative purposes, a full-time work day is considered to be at least as long as a British/American/Australian school day – approximately 9am-3pm (six hours). This may or may not include lunch/coffee breaks. Minor deviations in the number of working days due to school/public holidays are acceptable, as is uninterrupted part-time work completed over a longer period.

Due to visa limits in certain countries, the period of **three months/12 weeks** will be considered complete as long as it is **84 days** (plus arrival and departure days) or more in length.⁵

c) The following restrictions apply to the **timing** of the compulsory stay abroad:

- The stay abroad needs to be completed **during** your studies – either during the BA or MEd degree, or between the two. (Due to the structure of the new GHR300 programme, we strongly recommended that these students go abroad as undergraduates.)
- Time spent as an au pair or at high school in an English-speaking country **before** you started university does not count.
- However, if you **attended university/college** or similar in an English-speaking country before coming to Oldenburg, then it **may** be recognised – you will need to ask one of the advisors directly. A completed degree from a country where English is the official language will obviously count. A completed degree or period of study in English from a country where English is not the main language spoken **will not usually count**.

e) The following restrictions apply to your **activities** during your stay abroad:

- Time spent in an English-speaking country with a ‘working holiday’ or ‘work and travel’ visa will only count as the compulsory stay abroad if it includes at least twelve weeks working at an appropriate job (or several), uninterrupted by any travel to a non-English speaking country.
- Time working as an au pair will only count if you **also** take a (part-time) language or other training course at the same time **or** if a period of time as an au pair is preceded or directly followed by a full-time language or other training course. The language course should be the equivalent of roughly two weeks full time study.
- Language courses will only count if they are at an appropriate level (C1+) and are **either** the equivalent of full-time study **or** in addition to a part-time job with substantial contact to native speakers (eg. working in a German-language call centre or German restaurant would not apply.)

⁴You can get credit for working as an assistant teacher or completing an internship at all types of schools, even if it is not the same school type you are studying in Oldenburg (ie. MEd Gym students can work in primary/elementary schools).

⁵Please check the [website](#) for country-specific regulations (esp. for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa).

e) The following restrictions apply to your **activities** during your stay abroad (*cont.*):

- It is possible to combine different options (language course; internship) as long as they take place consecutively, without a break in between involving travel to a non-English speaking country.
- Other types of non-language training courses **may** count as long as they are twelve weeks full time and involve substantial contact with native speakers in a semi-formal environment. Please talk to an advisor in advance.
- Visiting friends and relatives and taking an extended holiday **cannot** be recognized as the compulsory stay abroad.
- Farm work or jobs where there is little contact with native speakers will not be accepted – you are supposed to spend your time in an English-speaking environment where a certain level of language competence is required.

Information for students whose stay abroad was completed and credited while enrolled in another German university

If a stay abroad from an earlier course of studies does not meet the Oldenburg criteria (in terms of length, timing, activities or location), then you will usually need to go abroad again. However, in some cases you may be able to apply for special consideration. Please see a departmental advisor if this applies to you.

Exemptions from the Stay Abroad and Applications for Special Consideration

It is **not** possible to receive a complete exemption from the stay abroad *unless* you are a native speaker of English who grew up in an English-speaking country. In cases where students are genuinely unable to go abroad for a period of twelve weeks – for example due to chronic illness, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, their family situation, financial hardship, or visa issues for non-EU students - the Department of English and American Studies and the affected student will generally work together to find an alternative to the stay abroad. This may involve one or more of the following options:

- Dividing the time abroad into shorter periods of time.
- Spending a period of time in an English-speaking country and then completing the remaining time in an English-language working environment in Germany.
- Completing the equivalent of twelve weeks full-time in an English-language working environment in Germany or in a neighbouring non-English speaking country (eg. the Netherlands or Switzerland).
- Receiving credit for previous time abroad (prior to the commencement of studies in Oldenburg) and/or previous work experience in English-language working environments in Germany.

If there are **good academic reasons** for splitting the stay abroad (eg. two shorter school internships where it would not have been possible to work for a continuous period due to school holidays in the destination country and semester dates in Oldenburg), then it is also possible to apply for special consideration.

Requests for special consideration must be discussed in person with one of the departmental advisors in advance.

Their contact details are as follows (see Stud.IP for up-to-date office hours):

Sprachpraxis / Lecturers in Language Practice

Lauren Freede

A6 2-221

- General advising

- Special consideration/alternatives

Johanna Hasanen

A6 2-224

- General advising

- Pre-study au pair credit

Rachel Ramsay

A6 2-220

- General advising

- Assistance with application materials (CVs, letters of motivation etc)