Submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) for the List of Issues on the occasion of the examination of the 7thGerman State Report

June 2025

Education – a human right: also at university

Joint submission by the German Education Union (Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft – GEW) and the Free Association of Student Bodies (freier zusammenschluss von student*innenschaften – fzs)

The German Education Union (GEW) is the education sector union affiliated to the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB). The GEW organises teachers, researchers and other staff members at primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions, in early childhood education and in vocational and further education. The GEW represents over 270,000 members in Germany and is a member organisation of Education International (EI).
The Free Association of Student Bodies (fzs) is the non-partisan umbrella organisation of student representatives in Germany. As an umbrella organisation of 100 student representative bodies, fzs represents over one million students in Germany.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) is a multilateral treaty under international law that has been ratified by the majority of the member states of the United Nations, including the Federal Republic of Germany. With reference to the seventh state report of the Federal Republic of Germany in accordance with Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2023[1] , a number of key questions arise for the GEW and the fzs. These relate in particular to the right to education, for the realisation of which an appropriate scholarship system must be set up (Article 13 (2) b), c) and e) CESCR). The proposed questions relate specifically to the area of education funding in accordance with the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG) and higher education as well as the support for pupils provided by the BAföG.

With this submission in the ongoing state report process, the GEW and the fzs ask the Pre-sessional Working Group of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) to consider the questions below in their discussion of the List of Issues (LOI). The GEW and the fzs propose selected topics in the specific areas of student financing in Germany in which the GEW and the fzs have worked in recent decades and have developed correspondingly comprehensive expertise. This submission is deliberately focussed on these areas.

[1] German Bundestag, printed matter 20/9080.

1. Amount of educational support for students under the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG)

The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:

Does it constitute an appropriate fellowship system that the amount of scholarships under the Federal Act on Individual Support for Education (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz - BAföG)[2]

- a) has only been adjusted irregularly since the BAföG came into force in 1971 (not at all from 2010-2016) - unlike all other social benefits under the Social Code, to which the BAföG belongs in accordance with Section 68 No. 1 SGB I[3] - and then, despite inflation, often only every 2nd year[4] , and
  b) is significantly below the general minimum subsistence level (SGB II[5] and SGB XII[6]), whereby it should also be noted that the BAföG education grant, as the state scholarship system for higher education in Germany, is not only provided for living expenses but also for education in accordance with Section 11 (1) BAföG and is therefore also intended to cover the costs of education, which are not part of the general minimum subsistence level?[7]

- Why is the maximum BAföG rate of €835.00 (plus any flat-rate requirements for health and long-term care insurance contributions) lower than the civil law maintenance requirement for

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[2] of 26 August 1971 (BGBl. 1971 I p. 1409) in the version published on 7 December 2010 (BGBl. 2010 I p. 1952, corrected BGBl. 2012 I, p. 197), last amended on 19 July 2024 (BGBl. 2024 I No. 249).
[3] Social Code (SGB) First Book - General Part - of 11 December 1975 (BGBl. 1975 I p. 3015), last amended on 19 July 2024 (BGBl. 2024 I No. 245) - SGB I.
[4] An updated overview of the development of inflation (consumer price indices for the cost of living) since 1970 on the one hand and the development of BAföG benefit rates since 1971 with all changes is attached as an annex.
[5] Social Code (SGB) Second Book - Citizens' Allowance, Basic Security for Jobseekers - of 24 December 2003 (BGBl. 2003 I p. 2954) in the version published on 13 May 2011 (BGBl. 2011 I p. 850, 2094), last amended on 24 February 2025 (BGBl. 2025 I No. 57) - SGB II.
[6] Social Code (SGB) Twelfth Book - Social Assistance - of 27 December 2003 (BGBl. 2003 I p. 3022), last amended on 23 December 2024 (BGBl. 2024 I No. 449) - SGB XII.
[7] The BAföG maximum rate is far below the minimum requirement of students (FiBS, Forschungsinstitut für Bildungs- und Sozialökonomie (Dieter Dohmen, Maren Thomsen, Galiya Yelubayeva, Rocio Ramirez), Ermittlung der Lebenshaltungskosten von Studierenden: Updated calculation based on the 21st Social Survey of the Deutsches Studentenwerk, Berlin January 2019). While the BAföG basic requirement is €475.00, the standard requirement for single persons in SGB II and SGB XII is €563.00. This amount, which is supposed to be sufficient for the general minimum subsistence level, does not include training costs for studying. According to Section 5 para. 1 RBEG 2021 (Act on the Determination of Standard Needs pursuant to Section 28 of the Twelfth Book of the German Social Code from 2021 (Standard Needs Determination Act - RBEG) of 9 December 2020 (Federal Law Gazette 2020 I p. 2855), amended on 16 December 2022 (Federal Law Gazette 2022 I p. 2328)), €1.57 of the consumption expenditure of single-person households pursuant to Section 4 sentence 2 no. 1 RBEG was taken into account from the special evaluation for single-person households of the 2018 income and consumption sample from Division 10 (Education) to determine the standard requirement. This amount results from item "1050 900 Fees for courses (without acquisition of educational qualifications)". The explanatory memorandum states (Bundestag printed matter 19/22750, p. 32):
"As in the RBEG 2011 and RBEG 2017, only one item is taken into account from Division 10, as the other consumption expenditure included here is not relevant to regular requirements. Expenditure for the items "Childcare (excluding meals)" for persons in need of assistance is not incurred for single-person households. The costs of studying are regulated outside the legal sphere of SGB II and SGB XII and are therefore not to be taken into account for those entitled to benefits. Expenditure on private tuition is either irrelevant for adults or - if they attend school - constitutes a separate need in accordance with Section 28 SGB II or Section 34 SGB XII, as is the case for children and young people as learning support, so that this expenditure is also not relevant to the standard need. For 2018, this results in an amount of EUR 1.57 that is relevant to standard needs."

students of €990.00[8] (according to the Düsseldorfer Tabelle 2025 plus all health and long-term care insurance contributions and any tuition fees)?

The deduction of child benefit from the maintenance requirement cannot justify this, as child benefit is generally only paid up to the age of 25. Since almost half of all university students have reached the age of 25 (which also applies to first degree students), there is no room for a standardisation that there is usually still a claim to child benefit[9] and, incidentally, the amount to be paid by the parent entitled to child benefit includes BAföG partial support (the proportion of which has declined somewhat in recent years, although a considerable proportion of students still receive it). [10]

The GEW and the fzs also suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:

- Why has the Federal Government not implemented the recommendation of the Advisory Council for Educational Support, which in 2023 "in view of the current and predicted inflationary development, (considered) a clear and speedy adjustment of the allowances, need rates as well as the flat-rate housing allowance and social flat-rate allowances to be necessary in order to ensure confidence in the reliability of state educational support in the future" and had called for "a regular and speedy adjustment"?[11]
- What consequences is the federal government drawing from the ongoing inflation, which is particularly affecting the cost of food[12] , with regard to the level of education funding?[13]
- According to the coalition agreement between the CDU, CSU and SPD, why is the new federal government planning to modernise BAföG in a "major amendment", but does not want to adjust the basic requirement to the basic security level (SGB II and SGB XII) until the winter semester 2028/2029 and only increases the flat-rate housing allowance from the previous 380 euros to 440 euros per month as of the winter semester 2026/2027?[14]
- If it is constitutionally reasonable to expect university entrants to end or avoid poverty by taking up gainful employment that secures their livelihood, possibly by giving up their

[8] According to the Düsseldorf table, which is published by the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court based on coordination discussions that took place with the participation of all higher regional courts and the Maintenance Commission of the German Family Court Conference, it is possible to deviate upwards from the amount of €990.00 (which includes €440.00 warm rent) in the event of increased need or in consideration of the parents' position in life.
[9] see BVerwG, order for reference of 20.05.2021-5 C 11.18, para. 43.
[10] In 2020, the proportion of partial funding was 55.9%, in 2022 only 50% (Twenty-third report pursuant to Section 35 of the Federal Training Assistance Act of the Federal Government of 15 December 2023, Bundestag printed matter 20/9870, p. 34); in 2021, 467,595 students received BAföG, of which 200.369 full funding and 267,226 partial funding (BAföG statistics 2021 press release no. 342 of 12 August 2022); in 2023, 501,500 students received BAföG, of which 245,300 received full funding and 256,200 partial funding (BAföG statistics 2023, press release no. 297 of 5 August 2024).
[11] Bundestag printed matter 20/9870, p. 61.
[12] According to the Federal Statistical Office's press release no. 192 of 30 May 2025, the inflation rate in Germany is expected to be +2.1% in May 2025, and +2.8% for food.
[13] While, based on a price index of 100 in 1970, inflation up to 2010 was 307.3, the requirement rate for students excluding accommodation costs in accordance with Section 13 (2) no. 1 BAföG was only increased from DM 300.00 (= € 153.39) in 1971 to € 373.00 in 2010 to € 243.2, in 2014 the continuous price index since 1970 was 327.6, in 2015 328.5 and in 2024 414.6, while the requirement rate according to § 13 para. 2 no. 1 BAföG has been € 475.00 for all students since 1 October 2024, which represents an increase to € 309.7 compared to 1971. The gap between the BAföG requirement rate and the general development of the consumer price index for Germany thus remains enormous.
[14] Coalition agreement between CDU, CSU and SPD. Responsibility for Germany, 21st legislative period (2025), p. 75.

university studies[15], how is the right to free choice of educational institution guaranteed for these people?

The Federal Government's reference to loans[16] is incorrect. Student loans are not available to all students and there is no legal entitlement to them. A distinction must be made between the two programmes handled by KfW[17] (KfW student loan and education loan) on the one hand and student loans from private banks and education funds on the other. The latter are generally dependent on a credit check and are sometimes also made dependent on collateral (e.g. guarantees from parents), which many students are unable to provide. In the joint statement by lawyer Joachim Schaller, fzs and GEW dated 14.12.2022 in the BAföG proceedings at the Federal Constitutional Court, the conditions of the KfW student loan and the education loan programme of the Federal Office of Administration were presented in detail. Currently (since 01.04.2025) interest is charged: Education loan (maximum €300.00 for 24 months): 3.36% effective interest rateannual. KfW student loan (maximum € 650.00, whereby the interest is retained immediately upon disbursement, so that the disbursement amount decreases successively): 6.31% effective annual interest rate (previous periods: 01.10.2024: 6.85% eff. p.a.; 01.04.2024: 7.51% eff. p.a.).

The reference to the fact that students can work alongside their studies[18] also does not apply. Under maintenance law, there is no obligation to work. Students with enough money can go to courses and examinations rested, while students receiving BAföG who have to work to supplement their insufficient educational support have less time for their studies and often have to sit at an examination the next day after an evening or night shift. This means that the principle of equal opportunities under examination law is in fact not guaranteed for poor students. BAföG is only available if the course generally makes full use of the student's labour (§ 2 para. 5 sentence 1 no. 2 BAföG). 30 ECTS credits of 30 hours per semester, as regularly provided for in the examination and study regulations, correspond to 39.1 hours per week.

2 Housing costs and student financing

The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:

- In which student cities is the BAföG flat-rate housing allowance currently sufficient to finance an appropriate housing situation for students?
- And how does the Federal Government assess these results with regard to the free choice of university place?

The right to education, enshrined in Article 13 of the CESCR, explicitly demands in paragraph 2 c) that university education must be made accessible to everyone. The Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG) could be the central tool for this, see above. In view of the fact that housing costs are the

[15] BVerfG, decision of 23 September 2024 - 1 BvL 9/21, para. 39.
[16] BVerfG, decision of 23/09/2024 - 1 BvL 9/21 - para. 18.
[17] KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) is an institution under public law and the most important development bank in the Federal Republic of Germany, which holds the majority of the share capital.
[18] BVerfG, decision of 23.09.2024 - 1 BvL 9/21 - para. 18 and 39; the German Federal Government differed somewhat on 18.01.2018 in its answer to a minor interpellation by the parliamentary group DIE LINKE, where it was emphasised that students are not primarily obliged to make efforts to secure their living expenses through their own (possibly study-related) gainful employment as a prerequisite for the granting of educational support benefits under BAföG (Deutscher Bundestag Drucksache 19/498, p. 2f).

largest expenditure item for students[19], it is essential to take a critical look at the subsidisation of this area. The current BAföG flat-rate housing allowance is €380. However, surveys by the Moses-Mendelssohn-Institute show that in many German student cities this lump sum is not sufficient to finance an adequate housing situation. In some cases, the actual average rent for a room in a shared flat exceeds the flat rate by a factor of two.[20] When looking at these figures, it is important to realise that these are average rents, so there will certainly be some shared rooms below the value, but there are also some well above it.

This considerable discrepancy between the BAföG flat-rate housing allowance and the real rental costs means that students from low-income households who are dependent on BAföG are in fact considerably restricted in their choice of study location. This applies in particular to degree programmes with few study locations (e.g. medicine, veterinary medicine, social work), where these high local rents can mean a de facto exclusion from studying.

Publicly co-funded student halls of residence often do not help either. There is currently a very low accommodation rate with high utilisation of the available places. In no federal state was the accommodation rate above 17% in 2023, in more than half below 10% and in some cases even below 6%.[21] This situation exacerbates the pressure on students, who are forced to rely on the more expensive private housing market. For many students who only receive child support or BAföG, the rents are almost impossible to afford.

For a comprehensive analysis of the effects of rental price developments on social justice in access to higher education, a detailed presentation of the study locations where it would still be possible to afford a room in a shared flat with the current flat-rate housing allowance would be crucial.

The federal government has a responsibility to tackle the structural deficits in student housing. This is the only way to ensure equal opportunities in access to higher education and effectively counteract social segregation in the higher education system. It is therefore crucial to find out what concrete measures the Federal Government is taking to ensure that the availability and affordability of student housing does not restrict the right to education and the free choice of university place.

3. Standard period of study in BAföG and correlation with employment

The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:

- How many students in Germany complete their studies within the standard period of study? Are there differences between students who receive BAföG funding and those who do not? How does the Federal Government assess this data?
- What differences are there between students who are in employment and those who are not concerning BAföG funding? How does the Federal Government assess this data?
- How many of the students who are employed complete their studies within the standard period of study? How does the Federal Government assess this data?

[19] Deutsches Studierendenwerk, German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW), Die Studierendenbefragung in Deutschland: 22. Sozialerhebung. The economic and social situation of students in Germany 2021 (Berlin: Deutsches Studierendenwerk, 2023), p. 103.
[20] Moses Mendelssohn Institute, "Press Release: Housing Costs for Students Summer Semester 2025," 10 March, 2025.
[21] German Student Union. (2023). Housing 2023. Housing for students. Statistical overview 2023.

- At what regular number of hours of employment alongside their studies do students exceed the standard period of study? By how many semesters is the standard period of study exceeded in such cases? How does the Federal Government assess this data?
- To what extent is the fact that 63% of students in Germany are employed compatible with studying within the standard period of study?[22]

In principle, the maximum funding period in accordance with section 15a (1) BAföG corresponds to the standard period of study. However, the standard period of study is merely the duration in which a degree can be obtained (section 10 (2) sentence 1 HRG)[23] – this means that the university must have offered the examinations to be taken within this period. In reality, however, many students deviate from this standard period of study, for example because they have care responsibilities or have to do paid work. This work, which has to be done in addition to studying, can delay graduation, as students – depending on the number of hours they work – are no longer able to study full-time. Students who take on paid work usually do so in order to secure their livelihood – a task that is actually attributed to BAföG. This creates a dilemma due to the current amount of funding in BAföG: on the one hand, students have to pursue gainful employment in addition to receiving BAföG in order to secure their livelihood. On the other hand, they are forced to complete their studies within the standard period of study in order not to lose their entitlement to BAföG funding.

4. Changed scope of BAföG recipients

The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:

- What is the Federal Government's assessment of the fact that only 12% of all students still receive benefits under BAföG, with rates averaging 663 €[24] for students, thus far from the maximum rate?

According to current figures on student funding under the Federal Training Assistance Act for 2023, only around 12% of all students receive BAföG.[25] In comparison: When BAföG was introduced in 1971, the funding rate was around 44% of students and even reached over 50% in subsequent years. With the conversion of BAföG from a full grant to a loan system in 1983, there was a significant decline in funding. The funding rate has fallen continuously since then. The recent slight increase to 12.6% in 2023 does not represent a trend reversal. In light of the fact that both the distribution of wealth[26] and the risk of poverty[27] are currently declining slightly, but have remained largely unchanged since the 1990s at a depressingly high level for a very wealthy country like Germany, it is clear that the reduction in the number of recipients is a political decision and not an economic fact.

The situation becomes particularly serious when the cost of living, such as rents and food prices, which have risen in recent years, are considered alongside this development. This overall development calls into question more than ever the original purpose of BAföG, which was to create equal opportunities in the higher education system. The average grant of 663 euros per month is well below the maximum rate, which, as already described, is also inadequate. According to EU-SILC 2023, a good third (35%) of

[22] The Student Survey in Germany: 22nd Social Survey, p. 84.
[23] Higher Education Framework Act (HRG) of 26 January 1976 (BGBl. 1976 I p. 185) in the version published on 19 January 1999 (BGBl. 1999 I p. 18), last amended on 15 November 2019 (BGBl. 2019 I p. 1622).
[24] Federal Statistical Office; press release no. 297 from 05 August 2024.
[25] Centre for Higher Education Development: Only every sixth student uses state offers such as BAföG & Co.
[26] Federal Statistical Office; Press release no. 416 from 06 November 2024.
[27] Federal Statistical Office; Press release no. 036 from 29 January 2025.

all students were at risk of poverty[28]. The situation is clearer for students who no longer live with their parents: Here, the at-risk-of-poverty rate is 77%. Increased housing costs in particular leave most students with little financial room for manoeuvre: according to the Federal Statistical Office, students spend an average of 54% of their disposable income on housing costs. This is significantly more than the housing cost burden for the population as a whole (25%)[29]. Despite this, the BAföG housing allowance remains capped and in many cities is no longer even enough for a room in a shared flat.

5. Additional needs for students with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses

<u>The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee ask the State Party:</u>

- How can BAföG cover the actual needs of students with disabilities and/or chronic illness and provide them with equal opportunities if the same funding rates apply to everyone?

Many students with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses have to face additional costs during their studies due to additional requirements, such as higher rental costs, expenses for medication and therapies as well as additional time (e.g. regular therapy appointments). These additional costs are a considerable burden for those affected and cannot be saved.

However, unlike the welfare benefit (*Bürgergeld*), for example, BAföG provides for standardised funding rates for all entitled persons without taking individual additional needs into account. Additional needs due to a disability are not covered by BAföG. Instead, benefits according to § 27 para. 2 in conjunction with § 21 para. 5 and 6 SGB II, integration assistance or – for the few beneficiaries entitled to benefits according to SGB XII – an additional requirement of 35% according to § 30 para. 4 and § 42b para. 3 SGB XII as well as § 112 para. 9 and § 113 SGB IX[30] may be considered. Applying for these benefits involves considerable bureaucratic effort. In addition, costs can only be covered if no other organisation is responsible. The obligation to provide evidence also causes a disproportionate amount of additional work for those affected.

6. Educational support for pupils

<u>The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:</u>

- How can it be reconciled with the obligation contained in Article 13 of the UN Social Pact to establish an appropriate scholarship system that pupils at secondary schools only receive BAföG under very strict conditions (necessary accommodation away from home), i.e. usually receive no educational support at all?
- Why is educational support for attending secondary general schools and vocational schools, including classes of all forms of basic vocational training, from year 10 onwards, as well as technical and specialised upper secondary school classes that do not require a completed vocational training programme, only paid if the student does not live with their parents and
  a) a suitable training centre cannot be reached from the parents' home,
  b) runs his or her own household and is or was married or in a civil partnership, or

[28] Community statistics on income and living conditions EU-SILC 2023, DESTATIS.
[29] Federal Statistical Office; Press release no. 044 of 28 August 2024
[30] Social Code Book Nine - Rehabilitation and Participation of Persons with Disabilities - of 23 December 2016 (BGBl. 2016 I p. 3234) (Ninth Book of the Social Code - last amended on 22 December 2023 (BGBl. 2023 I No. 412) - SGB IX)

c) has their own household and lives with at least one child?[31]

- How are the specific needs for education (e.g. learning and work materials, specialist literature, copies, costs for hardware and software, school fees, travel costs to school and for family journeys home[32]) ensured for pupils in the case of need if they are not entitled to financial support in accordance with § 2 para. 1 No. 1 in conjunction with § 2 para. 1a BAföG?

According to § 7 para. 6 no. 1 SGB II, the exclusion of benefits under § 7 para. 5 SGB II for BAföG-eligible training does not apply to trainees who are not entitled to training assistance under § 2 para. 1a BAföG. They can therefore receive welfare benefit (German Bürgergeld) from the Jobcenter if they are in need. However, this does not include training costs, which means that the training costs must be financed from the standard benefit within the German Bürgergeld system.

The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee ask the State Party further questions:

- Why has the number of pupils receiving support under BAföG fallen from 189,900 in 2012 to 117,700 in 2019 to 84,000 in 2022[33] , while the number of pupils at schools eligible for support has only fallen from 976,343 in 2011 to 909,522 in 2019[34]?
- Why do the Federal Government's BAföG reports not show a funding rate for pupils, unlike for students[35]?

7 Socio-political and societal significance

The GEW and the fzs suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:

- How does the Federal Government assess the figures emerging from the so-called "education funnel" of the Higher Education Report and the unequal distribution of educational opportunities in higher education expressed therein? What conclusions does it draw from this with regard to student funding?

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[31] These are the requirements for this group of people in accordance with § 2 para. 1 no. 1 in conjunction with § Section 2 para. 1a BAföG (exempt from the additional requirement under Section 2 para. 1a BAföG under Section 2 para. 1 no. 2 BAföG are trainees in vocational school classes and technical school classes whose attendance does not require a completed vocational training programme, provided that they provide a vocational qualification in a training course lasting at least two years).

[32] In the case of the vocational training allowance for trainees in dual training courses, the travel costs for travelling to and from the place of residence of the trainee and for one monthly family trip home or, instead of the family trip home, for one monthly trip of a relative to the place of residence of the trainee are also recognised as a requirement if accommodation away from home is required in accordance with § 63 para. 1 sentence 1 no. 2 SGB III. The BAföG contained provisions in the Hardship Ordinance (in the version of the 2nd Hardship Ordinance Amendment of 11 August 1980 (BGBl. 1980 I 1293)) concerning school fees, tuition fees, travel expenses, trips home to visit family, learning and working materials, study trips, and boarding school and accommodation costst, almost all of which were abolished when its scope of benefits was restricted by the 2nd Budget Structure Act of 22 December 1981 (Federal Law Gazette 1981 I 1523), without any compensation in the form of higher benefit rates.

[33] Twenty-third report pursuant to Section 35 of the Federal Training Assistance Act of the Federal Government of 15 December 2023, Bundestag printed matter 20/9870, p. 16.

[34] DGB Youth, Alternative BAföG Report (June 2021), p. 16.

[35] Twenty-third report pursuant to Section 35 of the Federal Training Assistance Act by the Federal Government dated 15 December 2023, Bundestag printed paper 20/9870, p. 13: The student funding rate determined according to the Federal Government's calculation method fell from 18.5% (2020) to 14.9% (2022) despite the increase in the number of students receiving funding compared to the last reporting period. Even though the Federal Government has changed the calculation method for the student funding rate, it should be noted that 44.6% of all students were receiving BAföG payments in 1972 still .

- What are the socio-political and societal consequences of the fact that mainly students from economically better-off backgrounds are able to study at a university in Germany?

With regard to the "education funnel", as the higher education report[36] 2020 once again made clear, only 21 out of 100 children whose parents went to university in Germany enrol in higher education. In contrast, 74 out of every 100 children with an academic family background enrol at a university. The differences continue to mount up until the Master's degree, with only eight out of 100 children without academic family tradition going on to complete a Master's degree. At the same time, however, around six times as many children from academic families (45) go on to complete a Master's degree. This statistical reality may also reflect the unequal financial circumstances of the families of origin, which are linked to the educational qualifications of the parents: After all, academics earn better on average than non-academics[37]. Studies for school starters in an international comparison already show that in Germany, both parental education and household income explain inequalities, for example in language and maths skills – and that parental education is of particular importance.[38]

At every university in Germany students have to face financial costs. Among other things, semester fees, costs for learning materials and possibly study trips have to be paid regularly, and some state universities also charge application and enrolment fees, as well asadministrative fees.[39] In some federal states, state universities charge tuition fees for second degree programmes, for so-called long-term students, for senior study programmes and for international students, in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria also for part-time Bachelor's degree programmes; in addition, supplementary or additional postgraduate degree programmes as well as further training Master's degree programmes are often associated with tuition fees.[40] Students whose parents live in secure economic circumstances due to their own high educational qualifications can offer their children a financial safety net. Students whose parents do not have these opportunities must bear possible financial uncertainties and regular financial burdens themselves – especially if they do not benefit from sufficient BAföG funding or if the support provided by BAföG does not secure their livelihood. The experience of poverty among students can lead to dropping out of university. The number of dropouts in Germany and their distribution according to semester and motives suggests that dropouts are often due to the financial situation, especially in higher semesters.[41] A graduation grant in accordance with § 15 para. 3a in conjunction with § 17 para. 3 BAföG can be granted for a maximum of 12 months, but as an interest-free full loan that must be repaid accordingly. Students who have already exceeded the standard period of study by more than four semesters and are thus no longer entitled to BAföG can also not receive the graduation grant.

The GEW and the fzs also suggest that the Committee asks the State Party:

- How does the Federal Government assess the fact that students who receive sufficient support from their parents do not have to pursue an employment alongside their studies and therefore attend courses and examinations rested, while students who receive BAföG funding that does not cover their living expenses often have to be employed and therefore have less time to study, prepare for examinations and generally relax? Does the Federal Government see this as unequal treatment?

[36] Higher education report (2020): Opportunities for non-academic children.
[37] Federal Employment Agency (2024): Focus on the labour market. Academics and graduates. Chapter 1.6 Salaries.
[38] DIW Wochenbericht 14 / 2025, p. 209-215; Language and maths skills in Germany depend more on social background at the start of school than in other countries; ifo Schnelldienst, 2023, 76, No. 04, p. 29-47, Wie (un-)gerecht sind die Bildungschancen von Kindern aus verschiedenen Familien in Deutschland verteilt?
[39] https://www.studierendenwerke.de/themen/studienfinanzierung/kosten-des-studiums
[40] https://www.studis-online.de/studiengebuehren/
[41] Heublein et.al. (2017): Between study expectations and study reality. Page 33ff.

- How does the Federal Government assess the drop-out rates[42] in Germany and what connection does it see with the restrictive funding conditions of BAföG?

The current regulations in BAföG, in particular the strict orientation of the maximum funding period to the respective standard period of study of the degree programme, plus an additional flexible semester in either the Bachelor's or Master's degree programme[43], represent a further hurdle for BAföG recipients. According to § 48 BAföG, students at higher technical colleges, academies and universities must provide proof of their academic progress in order to receive further funding from the 5th semester onwards. At the same time, however, on average in 2023 only just under 30% of graduates actually completed their degree within the standard period of study.[44] Particularly in the difficult graduation phase, there is once again potential discrimination with regard to all those students who come from lower-income households and therefore have no financial network to fall back on in order to obtain their degree. Financial insecurity is an obstacle to both starting and successfully completing a degree programme in Germany.

As a result of possible social selection, society loses many students who could actually contribute to the major problems of our time by completing a university degree. One example of this is the shortage of skilled labour – which is difficult to remedy if potential future skilled workers are unable to train as such for financial reasons. It is also to be feared that a diversity of perspectives on scientific issues will be lost as a result. If access to higher education is de facto restricted on the basis of family background, there will ultimately be a lack of diversity in higher education and later in academia.

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[42] At German universities, the drop-out rate is 35%, at universities of applied sciences it is 20%. The calculation is based on the graduating class of 2020.
year 2020, the rate refers to first-year students with German citizenship from the 2016 and 2017 cohorts. Heublein, U., Hutzsch, C., & Schmelzer, R. (2022). The development of university dropout rates in Germany. (DZHW Brief 05|2022).
[43] The maximum funding period is regulated in § 15a BAföG.
[44] DESTATIS (2024): Graduates in the standard period of study.

Annex I:

Jahr	**BAföG**							
	Bedarfssatz für Studierende				Bedarfssatz für Studierende zzgl. Zuschlag, wenn diese nicht bei den Eltern wohnen			
	§ 13 Abs. 1 Nr. 2				**§ 13 Abs. 1 Nr. 2 + § 13 Abs. 2 Nr. 2**			
	DM	**€**	Fortlaufender Preisindex 1970 = 100	Prozentualer Anstieg des BAföG Satz	**DM**	**€**	Fortlaufender Preisindex 1970 = 100	Prozentualer Anstieg des BAföG Satz zzgl. Zuschlag
1970								
1971	300,00	153,39	105,1	100,0	420,00	214,74	105,1	100,0
1972								
1973								
1974	370,00	189,18	126,3	123,3	500,00	255,65	126,3	119,0
1975								
1976								
1977	430,00	219,86	145,1	143,3	580,00	296,55	145,1	138,1
1978								
1979	460,00	235,19	154,5	153,3	620,00	317,00	154,5	147,6
1980								
1981	480,00	245,42	172,9	160,0	660,00	337,45	172,9	157,1
1982								
1983								
1984	500,00	255,65	192,6	166,7	690,00	352,79	192,6	164,3
1985								
1986	515,00	263,32	196,2	171,7	710,00	363,02	196,6	169,0
1987								
1988	525,00	268,43	198,6	175,0	725,00	370,69	198,6	172,6
1989								
1990	540,00	276,10	209,8	180,0	750,00	383,47	209,8	178,6
1991								
1992	570,00	291,44	226,2	190,0	795,00	406,48	226,2	189,3
1993								
1994								
1995	595,00	304,22	245,3	198,3	830,00	424,37	245,3	197,6
1996								
1997								
1998	605,00	309,33	255,8	201,7	845,00	432,04	255,8	201,2
1999	615,00	314,44	257,3	205,0	860,00	439,71	257,3	204,8
2000								
2001	650,00	332,34	267,5	216,7	910,00	465,28	267,5	216,7
2002		333,00	271,1	217,1		466,00	271,1	217,0
2003								
2004								
2005								
2006								
2007								
2008		366,00	302,7	238,6		512,00	302,7	238,4
2009								
2010		373,00	307,3	243,2		597,00	307,3	278,0
2011								
2012								
2013								
2014								
2015								
2016		399,00	330,1	260,1		649,00	330,0	302,2
2017								
2018								
2019		419,00	345,9	273,2		744,00	341,1	346,5
2020		427,00	347,5	278,4		752,00	347,5	350,2
2021			358,3				358,3	
2022		452,00	383,0	294,7		812,00	383,0	378,1
2023			405,6				405,6	
2024		475,00	414,6	309,7		855,00	414,6	398,2
	DM	**€**	Fortlaufender Preisindex 1970 = 100	Prozentualer Anstieg des BAföG Satz	**DM**	**€**	Fortlaufender Preisindex 1970 = 100	Prozentualer Anstieg des BAföG Satz zzgl. Zuschlag
	§ 13 Abs. 1 Nr. 2				**§ 13 Abs. 1 Nr. 2 + § 13 Abs. 2 Nr. 2**			
	Bedarfssatz für Studierende				Bedarfssatz für Studierende zzgl. Zuschlag, wenn diese nicht bei den Eltern wohnen			

Preisindizes												**Jahr**	**Verbraucherpreisindizes für die Lebenshaltung**		
	1970 = 100	**1976 = 100**	**1980 = 100**	**1985 = 100**	**1991 = 100**	**1995 = 100**	**2000 = 100**	**2005 = 100**	**2010= 100**	**2015= 100**			**1995 = 100**	**2010 = 100**	**2015 = 100**
1970 = 100	100,0											**1970**	40,5		
	105,1											1971	42,6		
	110,7											1972	44,9		
	118,7											1973	48,1		
	126,3											1974	51,4		
	134,0											1975	54,5		
1976 = 100	140,2	100,0										**1976**	56,8		
	145,1	103,5										1977	58,9		
	148,8	106,1										1978	60,5		
	154,5	110,2										1979	63,0		
1980 = 100	162,6	116,0	100,0									**1980**	66,4		
	172,9	123,3	106,3									1981	70,6		
	182,1	129,9	112,0									1982	74,3		
	188,0	134,1	115,6									1983	76,7		
	192,6	137,3	118,4									1984	78,6		
1985 = 100	196,6	140,2	120,9	100,0								**1985**	80,2		
	196,2	140,0	120,7	99,8								1986	80,1		
	196,4	140,1	120,8	99,9								1987	80,3		
	198,6	141,6	122,1	101,0								1988	81,3		
	204,3	145,7	125,6	103,9								1989	83,5		
	209,8	149,6	129,0	106,7								1990	85,8		
1991 = 100	217,3	155,0	133,6	110,5	100,0							**1991**	89,0	70,2	65,5
	226,2	161,3	139,1	115,0	104,1							1992	92,5	73,8	68,8
	234,6	167,4	144,3	119,3	108,0							1993	95,8	77,1	71,9
	241,2	172,0	148,3	122,7	111,0							1994	98,4	79,1	73,8
1995 = 100	245,3	175,0	150,8	124,8	112,9	100,0						**1995**	100,0	80,5	75,1
	248,7	177,4	152,9	126,5	114,5	101,4						1996	101,3	81,6	76,1
	253,4	180,7	155,8	128,9	116,6	103,3						1997	103,2	83,2	77,6
	255,8	182,5	157,3	130,1	117,8	104,3						1998	104,1	84,0	78,3
	257,3	183,5	158,2	130,9	118,4	104,9						1999	104,8	84,5	78,8
2000 = 100	262,2	187,0	161,2	133,4	120,7	106,9	100,0					**2000**		85,7	79,9
	267,5	190,8	164,5	136,0	123,1	109,0	102,0					2001		87,4	81,5
	271,1	193,4	166,7	137,9	124,8	110,5	103,4					2002		88,6	82,6
	274,0	195,4	168,5	139,4	126,1	111,7	104,5					2003		89,6	83,5
	278,5	198,6	171,2	141,6	128,2	113,5	106,2					2004		91,0	84,9
2005 = 100	284,0	202,6	174,6	144,4	130,7	115,8	108,3	100,0				**2005**		92,5	86,2
	288,5	205,8	177,4	146,7	132,8	117,6	110,0	101,6				2006		93,9	87,6
	295,1	210,5	181,4	150,1	135,8	120,3	112,5	103,9				2007		96,1	89,6
	302,7	215,9	186,1	154,0	139,3	123,4	115,4	106,6				2008		98,6	91,9
	303,9	216,7	186,8	154,5	139,9	123,9	115,9	107,0				2009		98,9	92,2
2010 = 100	307,3	219,2	188,9	156,3	141,4	125,3	117,2	108,2	100,0			**2010**		100,0	93,2
	313,7	223,8	192,9	159,6	144,4	127,9	119,6	110,5	102,1			2011		102,1	95,2
	319,9	228,2	196,7	162,7	147,2	130,4	122,0	112,6	104,1			2012		104,1	97,1
	324,8	231,7	199,7	165,2	149,5	132,4	123,9	114,4	105,7			2013		105,7	98,5
	327,6	233,6	201,4	166,6	150,8	133,5	124,9	115,3	106,6			2014		106,6	99,5
2015 = 100	328,5	234,3	202,0	167,1	151,2	133,9	125,3	115,7	106,9	100,0		**2015**		106,9	100,0
	330,1	235,5	203,0	167,9	151,9	134,6	125,9	116,2	107,4	100,5		2016		107,4	100,5
	335,0	239,0	206,0	170,4	154,2	136,6	127,8	118,0	109,0	102,0		2017		109,0	102,0
	341,0	243,2	209,6	173,4	156,9	139,0	130,0	120,1	111,0	103,8		2018		111,0	103,8
	345,9	246,7	212,7	175,9	159,2	141,0	131,9	121,8	112,6	105,3		2019		112,6	105,3
2020=100	347,5	247,9	213,7	176,7	160,0	141,7	132,5	122,4	113,1	105,8	100,0	**2020**		113,1	105,8
	358,3	255,6	220,3	182,2	164,9	146,1	136,6	126,2	116,6	109,1	103,1	2021		116,6	109,1
	383,0	273,2	235,5	194,8	176,3	156,1	146,0	134,9	124,6	116,6	110,2	2022		125,8	117,7
	405,6	289,3	249,4	206,3	186,7	165,3	154,7	142,8	132,0	123,5	116,7	2023		132,0	123,5
	414,6	295,7	254,9	210,9	190,8	169,0	158,1	146,0	134,9	126,2	119,3	2024			

Quellen: BAföG Daten entnommen aus dem Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz in der jeweils ab dem Wintersemester geltenden Fassung
Preisindizes: Verbraucherpreisindizes für Deutschland. Lange Reihe ab 1948. Statistisches Bundesamt/Destatis. Für 2024: Pressemitteilung Nr. 020 vom 16. Januar 2025, online abrufbar unter
https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2025/01/PD25_020_611.html#:~:text=WIESBADEN%20%E2%80%93%20Die%2
.

Anmerkungen: BAföG Satz von 1971-2000: alte Bundesländer, ab 2001: alle Bundesländer.
Die Formel zur Berechnung der Fortführung der alten Indexwerte kann der Tabelle entnommen werden.
Preisindex 2024: Pressemitteilung Nr. 020 vom 16. Januar 2025

: Angleichung Preisindex auf 100