

# A perfect match? Internationals and the Dresden Industry

A study commissioned by



TECHNISCHE  
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## Current Situation and Objectives of the Study

**In view of the current demographic change, the recruitment of qualified specialists is becoming a challenge. The shortage of skilled workers is already noticeable - especially in small and medium-sized companies.**

Various studies show that there are numerous vacancies, especially in the „MINT areas“. The fact that almost one in four graduates in Saxony will leave the state again in 2018 after completing his/her studies further highlights the shortage of skilled workers. The solution: international students. Saxony has one of the highest proportions of international students - in fact, the target number of international students by 2020 has already been achieved in the winter semester of 2016/17! Nevertheless, there seems to be numerous difficulties in the transition from university to work. But how can these be overcome? And how can the potential of international students be better utilized for the local industry? And what needs do both international students and companies in Dresden have in terms of employment?

These questions will be answered below.

## Career Path

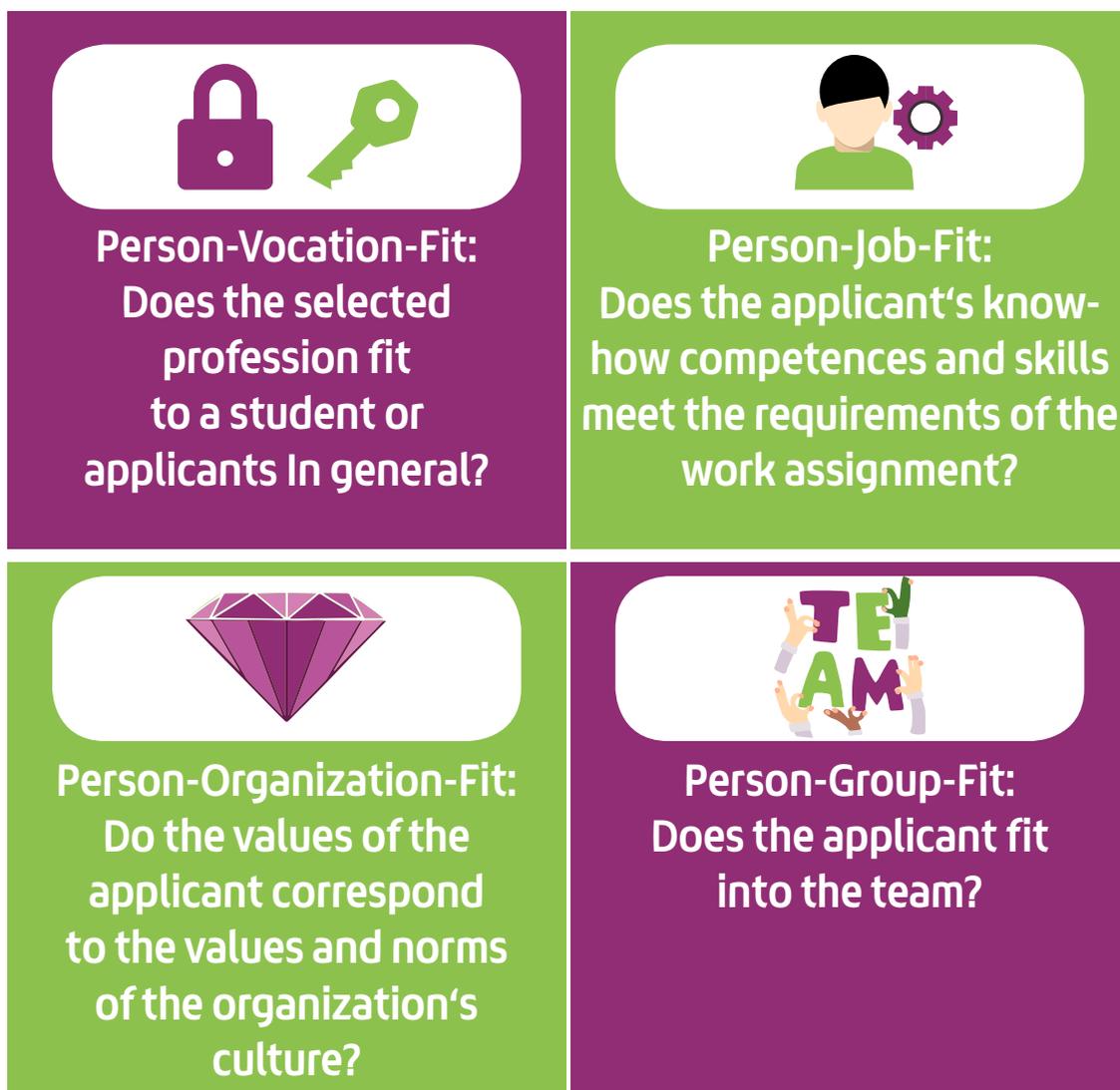
**The decision whether a foreign student in Germany - especially in Saxony – enters successfully in the job market depends on various factors. The macro-, meso- and micro-level must be considered.**

The macro level considers policies, institutions and Organizations. The micro level - values, ideas and actions of the individual. The meso-level includes social interactions and is therefore relevant for companies.



The contact between groups, i.e. between students and employers among others, takes place on the meso-level. Prejudice and discrimination are therefore to be allocated to this level.

## Fit between (international) applicants and the company



**complementary fit: : fit of offer ( skills of a person ) and demand (job offer)**

**supplementary fit: fit of applicant and Characteristics of the organisation/team**

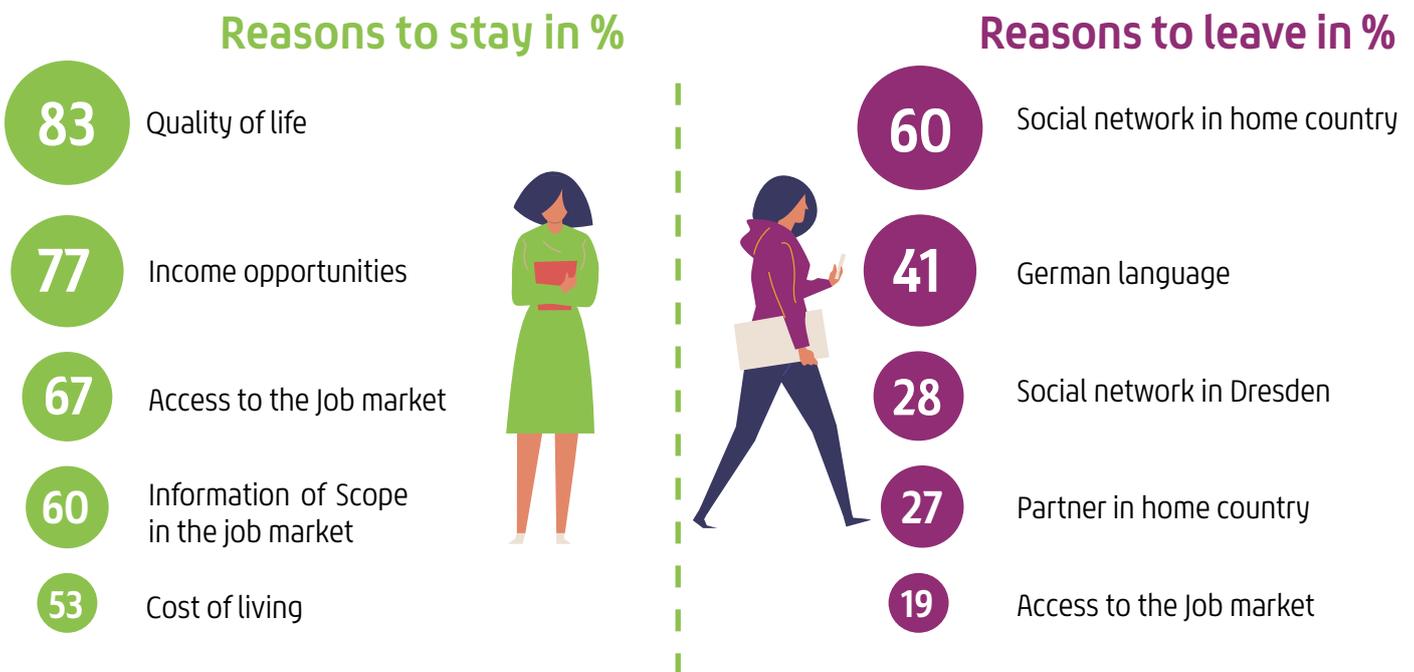


# Result: International Students

**What are the expectations and wishes? What are the difficulties especially in regards to staying in Dresden? And what notions are there in transitioning to the local industry?**

These questions were asked to **305 international students** from **62 countries**. Nearly 50% have the intention to stay in Germany in general. The reason are mainly the good quality of life and the opportunities at the job market. Over a third of all students, that want to stay in Germany, also want to stay in Dresden - with a large share coming from Asian countries. The main motivation to stay in Dresden is the feel-good factor here. For more than 10%, Germany, but not Dresden is a potential location to work in after the studies. The lack of job offers or big cultural differences, difficulties with the German language and discrimination are reasons to leave Dresden or Germany upon graduation respectively.

## Relevant reasons for indecisiveness whether to stay in or leave Germany



## Top 5 reasons to study in Dresden

**142** Excellence Status of TUD

**138** Obtaining study placement in Dresden

**121** High quality degree

**111** Beautiful city

**102** Low cost of living



## Top 5 reasons to work in Dresden vs. in Germany

Beautiful city

Quality of life

Quality of life

Income opportunities

I like living in Dresden

Opportunities in the industry

Cultural offers in the city

Infrastructure

Beautiful surroundings

Social System



## How alumni prepared to enter the job market in Germany / Dresden

- 29 Internship in Germany
- 25 German language course
- 18 Internship in Dresden
- 13 Training for job applications



*Large cultural differences, difficulties with the German language and also discrimination experiences are some reasons, why international students want to leave Germany after their studies.*



## Occupation/working conditions

Almost **half of the international students say that they know little or almost nothing about Dresden's employers**. Clear ideas of what one wants to do later already exists: more than half of the respondents would like to work in the industry which they are studying in. It is becoming apparent that the **computer science, energy, medical and pharmaceutical industries as well as the biotechnology industries** are extremely popular. Furthermore, only **37%** of those surveyed want to work in a large company; every third to fourth respondent prefers an SME – the rest is open to working in startups or companies with more than 500 employees.

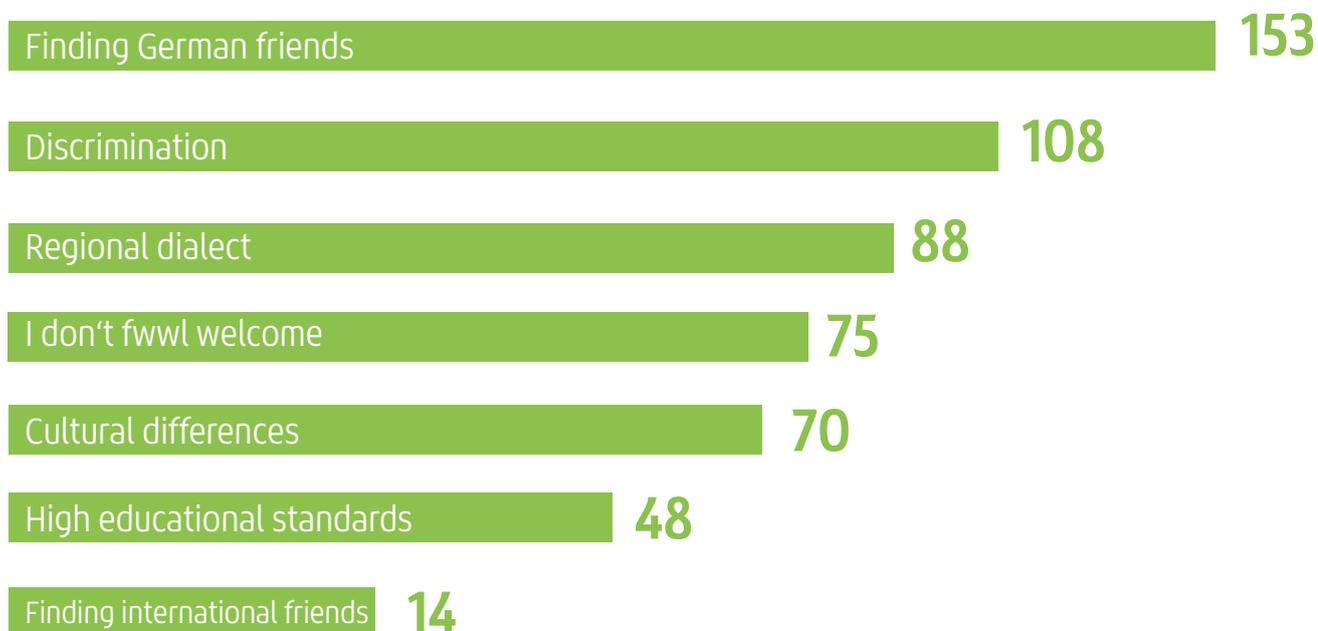
## Language

The German language is one of the greatest difficulties. It is therefore not a surprise that more than **50% of those surveyed wish to speak English in their everyday professional life**. Correspondingly great attention is paid to whether employers in Dresden provide the former or language training. It is also stated that flexible working hours, friendly colleagues, career development opportunities and a good income are important factors that make Dresden an attractive employer destination for students.

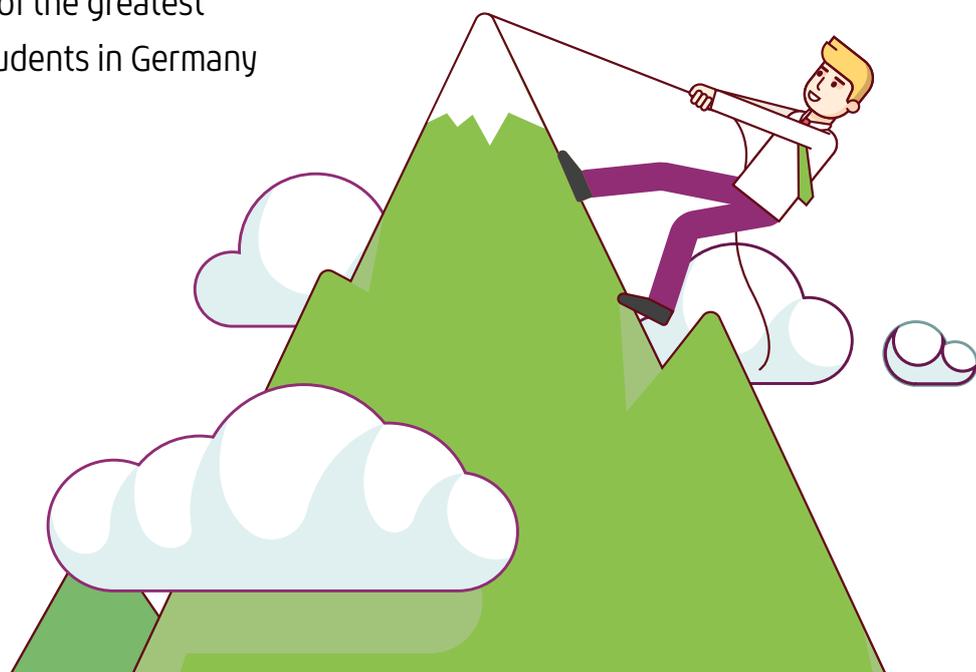
## Application Process

What difficulties do international students encounter in the application process? Again, there are language barriers - both in the preparation of the application documents and in job interviews. Also, too little practical experience is a problem. **One fourth of all internationals has completed an internship or working student job in Dresden**. Students report that practical and technical skills are necessary to complete an internship or to get a job. Internationals are irritated by slow or no response of the companies to their applications.

## Difficulties of a foreign student in Dresden



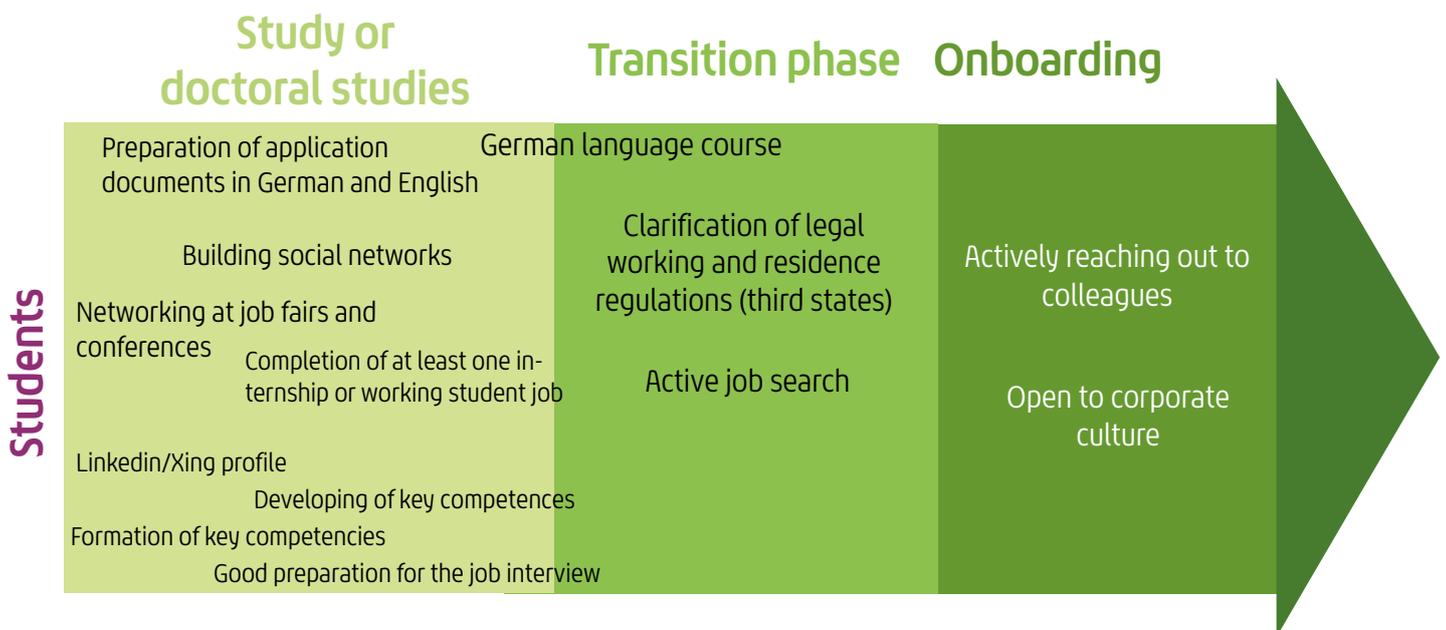
One of the biggest difficulties for internationals in Germany is the „language hurdle“. An equally large proportion of students have difficulty finding German friends. In third place of the greatest difficulties for international students in Germany is the German bureaucracy.



# Guidelines for international students

In order to optimize the „matching process“ of students and employers, suggestions and recommendations are derived from the needs of both groups.

A distinction is made between **three phases**: „study or doctoral studies“, „transition phase“ and „onboarding“.



The main recommendations for international students based on the study results are to continually strive to **improve their German language skills**. Even though at some regional companies the working language is (also) English, at least basic German knowledge is crucial for a successful integration process. Students should therefore take advantage of **language courses offered by universities, TUDIAS, the Goethe-Institut Dresden, adult education centres**, etc. Language tandems can also be helpful.

Building **social networks** outside university is also important. This can be done through **voluntary work, or in sports clubs, choirs** or the like. In general, it is recommended that students familiarize themselves with the **cultural and political conditions of their country of study**.

Gaining **work experience** – through an **internship or as a working student** – is the second important recommendation, because work experience is one of the most important criteria of personnel selection in companies. The third recommendation for (international) students is to develop a **clear vision of their future job**. Other important recommendations include a **well-written application with good structure and grammar and a cover letter tailored to the job advertisement in German and English languages**, as well as a **good preparation for the job interview**. Networking at **job fairs** or **online on job platforms** such as Xing and LinkedIn is also highly recommended.

If the student wants to stay, it is recommended to obtain information on **legal working and residence regulations** at an early stage; furthermore, a note on the visa situation in the application is often helpful for companies.

# Results: Companies

What expectations do companies in Dresden have of international students? What are the reasons for and against hiring internationals? These questions and more were answered by **40 companies**, of which more than 50% are micro/small enterprises and a third are medium-sized enterprises.

About **three quarters of the companies surveyed already employ internationals**. More than 80% of the Internationals holds a specialist job and/or project job; only just under a third performs a management position. Specialists are in the companies mainly in the areas of research and development, production, sales and production.

Companies are particularly looking for international academics for specialist work and project work. More than **50% of the interviewed companies will in future be (very) pleased to receive international applicants** on the inside.



## Ways/channels of the job advertisement

Primarily, companies use their own company website, social platforms and own employees to advertise vacancies.



## Application process

In written applications, companies tend to place more **emphasis on professional and practical work experience**. However, the importance of the criteria varies from company to company! There is development potential from the point of view of the companies with regard to **structure, formulation, linguistic correctness and certificates submission of the applications**. However, it must be mentioned that international applicants often receive not “transcripts” as reference from their work other countries as it is no common international practice. Therefore, the solution for these problems for the companies are e.g. tolerance for missing job references, offers of help with application preparation or lowering of expectations with regard to the structure and the linguistic formulation of the applications.

## Key criteria for the selection of applicants



Work experience



Practical experience during studies



Good structuring of the CV



Matching of the cover letter to the advertisement



Correct spelling and grammar



Job references



School and study grades

## Most important aspects for job interviews

Certain aspects such as adequate response to questions play a major role for the companies surveyed. Also, the fit between applicants and the Team/company and a punctual appearance is important.



Fit in the team

Punctuality

Adequate answers to the questions

Fit in the company

Good presentation of practical experiences

Know-how of the subject

Appropriate dressing

Good self-introduction

Good verbal expression

## Reasons for and against employment of internationals

What are the reasons that lead companies to hiring Internationals?

And what are the Obstacles?

Over 50% of the companies surveyed cited the **lack of skilled professionals** as a reason for the employment of internationals in the company. Also, the **cultural diversity**, with which the company is enriched, and the getting to know **different perspectives** and an **open-minded corporate image** are among the most important reasons.



But what are the obstacles? More than 80% of companies cite the **lack of language skills** of internationals in this regard. Problems and **uncertainties regarding the visa/residence permit** are also an important reason to be mentioned.

## Guidelines for Companies

In order to optimize the „matching process“ of students and employers, suggestions and recommendations are derived based on the needs of both the groups.

A three-phase distinction is made here: „**study or PhD phase**“, „**transition phase**“ and „**onboarding**“.



## Implementation Aspects for Job Interviews

Employers want **practical experience** from students. Therefore, companies should also continuously offer **internships, working student positions and, if possible topics on these**. While faster response to applications is not possible per se, companies could make **time horizons transparent** and thus offer (international) students more orientation.

In order to increase the visibility of your company among students, there are various possibilities: **presence at university fairs** as well as contacting **Career Services** or other connecting parts such as intap can be advantageous.

Language is still an important issue: documents in „formal“ German should also be provided in English. The **support of the language learning process** of the international employees is possible in a number of ways - for example, internally by company or even **cross-company language courses** can be provided. Also a ‘**German lunch break**’ in which only German is spoken in English-speaking teams, this can improve the language learning process to a large extent. ‘**Cultural Days**’, where insight into the culture is given, contributes to the intercultural Sensitization.

**Mentoring programs** are also available for international employees, since social contacts can help in overcoming the initial difficulties. Last but not the least intap offers support while onboarding.

