

For further information about your options for the stay abroad, please sign up for the course  
“3.02.082: Organisation and Supervision of Compulsory Stay Abroad” on Stud.IP.

Enquiries should be made in person during the regular stay abroad “Blocktermine” or can be directed to  
the departmental stay abroad advisors<sup>2</sup> at [fachstudienberatung.anglistik@uni-oldenburg.de](mailto:fachstudienberatung.anglistik@uni-oldenburg.de)

## General Guidelines

We strongly recommended that all students of English complement their studies with an extended stay abroad in an English-language environment, **preferably in an English-speaking country** and, where possible, for a period of six months to a year. You will profit from this time on many different levels – a stay abroad allows you develop your language skills and your intercultural competence, as well as giving you a significant opportunity for personal growth.

Those intending to pursue teaching as a profession will find their stay abroad beneficial not only for their future careers but specifically for the second, post-degree phase of their teacher training. Successful trainees require excellent language skills in order to manage the demands of classroom discourse and demonstrate their diagnostic competence when interacting with learners.

While there are many potential options for a stay abroad, you are most likely to be able to meet your professional and linguistic goals by spending time as a visiting student at a university or as an assistant teacher at a school or college in an English-speaking country. You will simply not be exposed to the same level of language and interaction in a hospitality or childcare setting as you would be in an academic or professional environment.

## Specific Criteria

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-language environment during their studies.<sup>3</sup> This time should **ideally** be spent in an English-speaking country.

The stay abroad 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> The current departmental advisors are Dr Anna Auguscik and Lauren Freede.

<sup>3</sup> This regulation is laid out in the *Verordnung über Masterabschlüsse für Lehramter in Niedersachsen (Nds.MasterVO-Lehr § 8)*.

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.”<sup>4</sup>*

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

**NOTE:** Native speakers of English *who grew up in a country with English as an official language* **should contact the Fachstudienberatung** directly. However, students *who grew up speaking English in Germany* (e.g. with a parent who is a native speaker of English) are expected to complete the standard stay abroad.

**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 described in this document (in terms of **length, timing, activities or location**), then you will usually need to go abroad again to make up the missing time period. Please see a departmental advisor as soon as possible after commencing your studies in Oldenburg if this applies to you!
- **HOWEVER:** work experience, other internships and periods of study abroad completed and credited while studying at another university **in Lower Saxony** will be credited in full.

## Destinations

The stay abroad should **ideally** take place in an English-speaking country. **An English-speaking country is a country in which English is an official language or one of the main languages spoken.** If you are unsure whether a particular country is appropriate, then please check the [website](#) and consult an advisor in advance.

However, if a stay abroad in an English-speaking country is not possible, you **may** alternatively be able to spend the required period of time working or studying in a non-English speaking country as long as your plans allow you to achieve the outcomes described in the general guidelines to at least the same extent.<sup>5</sup>

Note that any stay abroad in a non-English-speaking country needs to be approved by the Fachstudienberatung **in advance** via a Learning Agreement *regardless* of whether you are planning to work or study. In addition, you will not be able to get credit for a stay abroad in a country or region in which your native language is spoken or where you are a competent speaker of the local language.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> BPO der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, (4) *Fachspezifische Anlage für das Fach Anglistik*, 01.08.2022, #3 - Empfehlungen und Hinweise.

<sup>5</sup> For example, if you spend a semester studying at a partner university in Spain or South Korea, the majority of your courses will need to be taught in English. Similarly, if you are doing a school internship in Norway, as much of your daily interaction as possible needs to be in English, which would probably rule out a full-time role teaching German.

<sup>6</sup> This obviously does not apply if you are studying two languages, one of which is English, and you choose to complete your stay abroad in the other country. In any other situation, please discuss your proficiency in the local language with an advisor in advance before you finalise your plans.

## General Criteria, Duration, Timing, Activities and Restrictions

### (a) Studienrelevanz

The setting abroad should enable you to have extensive contact with adult native speakers and/or high-level users of academic and professional English, which in turn fosters the development of high-level communicative competence.

The following settings and activities generally ensure sufficient interaction with Anglophone culture and/or academic and professional discourse in English:

- educational institutions<sup>7</sup>
  - 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
  - professional administrative tasks and customer / supplier / guest interaction

### (b) Duration

**(b1)** In order to be eligible for full credit, the stay abroad should be a minimum of **three months** (12 weeks), encompassing the equivalent of **sixty full-time** days at work. One working day = a full workday for the environment in which students are working.<sup>8</sup>

**(b2)** For administrative purposes, a full-time work day on site 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. The total workload should be approx. **360 working hours** or more.

### (c) Timing

**(c1)** The following restrictions apply to the **timing** of the compulsory stay abroad:

- The stay abroad usually needs to be completed **during** your studies – either during the BA or MEd degree.
  - Due to the structure of the GHR300 programme, we strongly recommend that these students go abroad as undergraduates.

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<sup>7</sup>You 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 (i.e. MEd Gym students can work in primary/elementary schools). However, note that if you are funding your stay abroad via Auslands-BAföG, the criteria may be stricter.

<sup>8</sup>Due to visa limits in certain countries, as well as potential issues with the timing of (local) school holidays, the period of **three months/12 weeks** will be considered complete as long as it is **81 days** (plus arrival and departure days) or more in length.

**(c2)** Time spent in an English-speaking country – or an English-language setting in a country where English is not the main language spoken – \*before\* you started studying in Oldenburg **may** count under certain circumstances, assuming that the activities:

- are documented in full (or there is documentation for a period of at least three months)
- would otherwise meet the criteria described under point (a) such as attending college, university or language courses, working as an au pair, an assistant teacher, or another professional job.
  - The criteria described under point (d1) below must also be met.

If this is the case and your past activities meet these requirements, then you are able to submit an application for special consideration to gain credit for your previous stay abroad.

- An application for credit for previous activities should only be submitted after a **meeting with a departmental advisor**.

**(c3)** As a general rule, the stay abroad should be completed in one block and cannot be split.

- Students in certain degree programmes and/or with specific subject combinations such as *Elementarmathematik* may find it difficult to find a period of three months in which to go abroad, especially if you have left it until later in your studies. Anyone in this situation needs to discuss their case with a departmental advisor as soon as possible.
- Students who feel that they are unable to go abroad for non-academic reasons – for example due to chronic illness, pregnancy, caring or family responsibilities, or severe financial hardship – should look at the section “**Exemptions and Alternatives**” on page 5 and contact a departmental advisor for further information.

## **(d) Activities**

**(d1)** The following restrictions apply to your **activities** during your stay abroad:

- It is possible to combine the compulsory stay abroad with a compulsory school internship such as the ASP / FP as long as you make up the extra time for a total of twelve weeks / 90 days.<sup>9</sup>
- Time as an au pair will **only** count if you work in an English-speaking country AND – *for those employed for less than six months* – 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.<sup>10</sup>
- 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 (e.g. working in a German-language call centre or German restaurant would not apply).
  - NOTE: Language courses can **only** count if they are completed in an 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, preferably in an English-speaking country. Please talk to an advisor in advance.

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<sup>9</sup> Note that you can only complete **one** of the compulsory school internships outside Germany, and this cannot be the GHR Praxisblock – contact the [DIZ](#) for further information.

<sup>10</sup> Full-time study at a language school is defined according to the *school's* definition of full-time or – if not available – at least **20 hours** of formal instruction per week.

## (d2) Options and limitations:

- It is possible to combine different options (language course; internship; paid employment) as long as they take place consecutively.
  - i. For a stay abroad in an *English-speaking country*: you may leave a gap between your eligible activities as long as the break does not involve travel to a non-English speaking country.
  - ii. For a stay abroad in an English-language environment in a *non-English speaking country*: your eligible activities should be consecutive if at all possible. You **must not** spend time in a German language setting or be involved in German-language tourism and travel if a small gap does occur.
- It is not enough to have spent time in an English-speaking country with a 'working holiday' or 'work and travel' visa. This period 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. You must provide documentation for all your jobs.

## (d3) Exclusions:

- Visiting friends and relatives and/or taking an extended holiday **cannot** be recognized as the compulsory stay abroad.
- Farm work or jobs in fields like building or hospitality where the job description suggests there is little contact with native speakers or advanced users of academic and professional English **will not** be accepted either – you are supposed to spend your time in an English-language environment where a certain level of language competence is required.

## The Stay Abroad: Exemptions and Alternatives

It is **not** possible to receive a complete exemption from the stay abroad *unless* you fall into one of the categories described on page 2 and are majoring in two modern languages or are a native speaker of English.

At a minimum, students will have to complete an equivalent **local alternative**, although you are strongly encouraged to spend at least *some* time abroad if at all possible.

- You may be eligible to complete an alternative to the stay abroad if you are dealing with **chronic illness, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, a complex family situation, severe financial hardship, or visa issues** (for non-EU students).
  - Special consideration applications in these categories will be approved on a **case-by-case basis only**.
  - A lack of planning, not wanting to leave your pet, homesickness or a time-intensive hobby do **not** qualify you for an alternative!
- Students who are unable to go abroad for the full period are strongly encouraged to complete the stay abroad in multiple blocks *rather than* just opting for a local alternative.
  - Blocks of **either 2 x 6 weeks or 3 x 4 weeks** are eligible for credit assuming all the other criteria in terms of activity, length and number of working days etc. have been met. Blocks of 4 x 3 weeks *may* also be considered but are less likely to be effective.
    - Students should attempt to complete as close to **12 weeks abroad in total** as possible.
- It is also possible to **combine** one or more blocks of time in an English-speaking country or English-language environment abroad with alternative local activities to complete the equivalent of 12 weeks. Such a combination would also be preferable to only working locally.

## Applying for special consideration

Any application for special consideration should only be submitted after a **meeting with a departmental advisor**<sup>11</sup> and will need to be accompanied by the Special Consideration form and appropriate documentation.

- You are of course welcome to discuss your situation in private prior to making a formal application!

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## Postscript: How to get credit for your stay abroad

**Step 1:** Collect the documents relating to your stay abroad – learning agreements (study or work) as well as, depending on the *type* of stay abroad, your transcripts, learning agreements, letters of reference, proof of completed internships, language certificates or similar.

- Convert any paper documents to a digital format as best you can.
- Combine your paperwork into as few files as possible, saving as PDFs rather than image files.

**Step 2:** Bring your documents – ideally in digital form<sup>12</sup> – to the next “Blocktermin” for stay abroad credit and queries.<sup>13</sup>

- Sign up for the Stud.IP course **3.02.082: Organisation and Supervision of Compulsory Stay Abroad** (if you have not already done so) to find the “Blocktermine” schedule and to make an appointment.
- We will be asking you to upload your confirmation documents to individual Stud.IP folders in **3.02.082** during the session, so please make sure you have an appropriate digital device with you.

**Step 3:** Register for the online examination in Stud.IP for the stay abroad if you have not already done so. It is listed as **Auslandsaufenthalt (58801)**.

- It is enough to register after you return – please do not sign up for the examination many semesters in advance!

### FINAL NOTE:

The information above only applies to the process of getting credit for the compulsory stay abroad itself. If you wish to get credit for individual courses taken at another university in addition to this, then – assuming you have (a) discussed your course choice with a departmental advisor in advance; and (b) have a signed non-binding learning agreement – you should consult the requirements for credit transfer (“Anerkennung”) laid out by the [Prüfungsamt](#).

- If you return from your time abroad and do *not* have a non-binding learning agreement, then please make an appointment with the Fachstudienberatung to discuss your options *before* you submit your paperwork to the Prüfungsamt.
  - This appointment can also take place within one of the regular stay abroad “Blocktermine”. See the Stud.IP course **3.02.082** for the schedule.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The current departmental advisors are Dr Anna Auguscik and Lauren Freede.

<sup>12</sup> If the scan quality of your digital documents is low, or if the scan is heavily watermarked (as is sometimes the case for American university transcripts), please bring the hard copy with you to the session as a backup.

<sup>13</sup> If you are truly unable to attend one of the “Blocktermine” or need credit very urgently, then you can attend one of the departmental advisors’ regular office hours or contact one of them via email.