

## MARKET PROFILE – Germany

March 2009

### 1. Introduction

The German economy is affected by the global economic crises having arisen in October 2008. The German government has predicted a GDP growth rate of NIL% for 2009. The education sector, though, seems not to be influenced by the downturn yet.

Population stands at 82 million. The German people enjoy a high standard of living. However, unemployment has risen to 9.5% in 2008 and is expected to increase further in 2009.

Germany offers opportunities for all education sectors – tertiary education, high school programmes and English language courses. Professional high quality internship placements abroad are also extremely in demand by German students and graduates.

The biggest barrier in German student mobility overseas is high tuition fees. State education from kindergarten to upper secondary education is free of charge in Germany. At tertiary education, the majority of German States have recently introduced tuition fees of 100 – 800 Euros (200 – 1,600 NZD) per semester. Public study abroad programmes within continental Europe are more or less free of charge. In addition, there are numerous programmes in place providing funding for student mobility within Europe. A growing number of funds are also available for overseas studies.

There is strong and on-going competition from continental Europe. The US has picked up on popularity and is again the largest competitor for overseas study destinations followed by the UK. Australia and Canada are also major competitors for New Zealand education in Germany.

### 2. Local Education System

Educational legislation and the administration of the education system are primarily the responsibility of Germany's 16 federal states. Each state has a Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs which plans and organises the education system, determines course content and sets teacher objectives. States also provide up to 90% of education funding.

At federal level, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) meets to ensure a common structure among the states. KMK also advises German institutions and education ministries about accreditation of foreign qualifications.

The academic year runs from July/August/September to June/July/August of the following year, the exact dates are fixed by each federal state. As a result, starting and ending dates for school holidays vary considerably from state to state; they are referred to as moving holiday seasons.

Children in Germany start school at the age of 6. Primary education (Grundschule) is from school year 1 to 4 where the subjects taught are the same for all. Following primary school there is a two-year orientation phase where teachers observe the students' academic abilities and give recommendations for their future school attendance regarding three different kinds of schools: Hauptschule, Realschule or Gymnasium.

The Hauptschule teaches the same subjects as the Realschule and Gymnasium, but at a slower pace and with some vocational-oriented courses. Students finish Hauptschule in year 9. The Realschule is for students with average academic achievement. It graduates after year 10. The Gymnasium teaches on a high academic level and leads to university entrance (Abitur). The Gesamtschule (comprehensive school) is a more recent development and is only found in some of the states. It takes the place of all: Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium.

German children only attend school in the morning. There is generally no provision for serving lunch.

Tertiary education is currently switching from a traditional 4, 5 to 6 year system to the international 3-year bachelor and 2-year master system. There are 377 state higher education institutions in Germany. The number of private tertiary institutions is increasing. In 2008, there were 71 private education providers for higher education in Germany.

Tuition fees within state tertiary education vary from EUR 100 to EUR 800 per semester depending on the state. Most students work part-time while studying and accommodation can be extremely limited and therefore also costly, especially in larger university cities.

Only 12% of Germans aged 15 and above are enrolled in tertiary education compared to 38% in the UK, 36% in NZ and 33% in the US. However, this results in a very wide post-secondary education system of vocational training that is not part of tertiary in Germany.

### **3. General Advice for New Zealand Education Providers**

New Zealand is perceived as a safe and exotic (yet not too "strange") destination. Popularity has grown steadily. The need for improving English language skills as well as gaining international educational experiences on one's CV are the strongest driver for German students going to New Zealand. Its extraordinary landscape and cultural features are also significant factors for Germans choosing NZ as a study destination.

Germany enjoys strong agent coverage throughout the country for all education sectors. Even tertiary students thoroughly use agents to plan and clarify their options for studying abroad. It is recommended to establish and maintain close agent relationships.

### **4. Sector-Specific Advice for New Zealand Education Providers**

#### ***4.1 Undergraduate & Postgraduate Courses***

Germany has a long tradition in education, science and research with more than 300 higher education institutions throughout the country. The history of many higher education institutions goes back many centuries.

In 2007/2008, as many as 83,000 German tertiary students studied abroad worldwide for one semester or more. Approximately 1,350 German students undertook tertiary studies in NZ in 07/08. The numbers are increasing.

The new German bachelor or master programmes are affecting student mobility in Germany. German universities barely allow much time for study abroad programmes during bachelor or master studies – unless they are part of a joint degree or bilateral agreement. The trend will probably shift from undertaking individual study abroad periods to full bachelor or full master programmes abroad. Joint degree programmes are increasingly playing a significant role in offering a study period abroad. The change from traditional German degrees to international qualifications in Germany also increases the acceptance to graduate abroad.

The introduction of tuition fees at higher education in most German states may result in a broader tolerance for paying for education. Students, who have to pay tuition fees already, start demanding on high-quality education and request that their fees should be spent on upgrading universities' facilities. This is not the case now. As a result, German students are likely to look at foreign institutions that use tuition fees directly to increase and maintain high-quality facilities and student support at the institution itself.

Internships are compulsory at most German tertiary education programmes. In order to stand out, a rising number of German students carry out their internships abroad. The demand for Australia and New Zealand is tremendous (although many potential interns are turned away from New Zealand due to the lack of high level placements available).

#### ***4.2 Vocational & Technical Qualifications***

Vocational training is taught within a dual system at part-time vocational schools and in the work place. Vocational training prepares students for jobs that are based in manual or practical areas, traditionally non-academic, and totally related to a specific trade or occupation. More than 60% of students under 22 years of age are involved in dual vocational training in Germany.

Technical education at tertiary level is either carried out by universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschule) or institutions of cooperative education in collaboration with a company (Berufsakademie, BA). These institutions require the A-Level/ university entrance.

Post-secondary student mobility abroad is primarily carried out after graduating from vocational training before entering the workforce or tertiary education. Types of mobility at this level include English language courses, internships, and – to a small extent – certificate and diploma programmes abroad.

#### ***4.3 Secondary Schools***

English language tuition as a school subject is compulsory at all German secondary schools. Pupils studying for the Abitur (A level) or the Fachabitur (specialised A level) – the only exams qualifying for entrance to universities or universities of applied sciences – need to study a second foreign language. Most students choose French, Spanish or Latin in addition to English. With English being so dominant in the German education system, there is high demand for studies abroad in English-speaking countries to improve English language skills as well as getting the 'overseas experience'. The first English language trip abroad is primarily undertaken as a short language course in school years 7 and 8 - usually to England or Malta. Additional visits to English speaking countries are typically undertaken in school years 9, 10 or 11 for the duration of six to 12 months. This period is traditionally called 'exchange year', although its meaning has changed from the traditional exchange to individual full fee paying programmes in the last decade. Popular destinations are the US, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The poor OECD PISA results for Germany at secondary education still raise alarm bells within the German education system. Germany ranked 19 in mathematics, 21 in literacy and 18 in science. The weak German results work advantageously for New Zealand as NZ placed itself among the best 5 of all OECD countries worldwide.

The German government has changed the total schooling years at upper secondary education from 13 to 12 years. This change is affecting German student mobility. A trend shows a reduction of time spent abroad from 12 months to 6 or 3 months, and a shift from age 16 to age 13-15 when going abroad.

16,000 German students spend some time at high schools abroad each year. New Zealand has become a very popular study destination for German high school students ranking third after the US and Canada – having overtaken Australia last year. More than 1,000 students go to NZ annually – numbers are increasing.

Main interest for education abroad is for co-educational schools with some increasing interest for single gender schools. In the niche market segment of boarding and private schools lesser business is recorded but demand is increasing.

The NZ NCEA University Entrance qualification has become increasingly popular with German students. NCEA University Entrance is recognised as direct entry to German universities and universities of applied sciences. Requirements can be viewed at [www.anabin.de](http://www.anabin.de) (in German). Individual prerequisites, however, apply according to additional entry requirements. Students should check with the desired German university in advance if additional requirements have to be met. A document with subject and level recommendations for accreditation in Germany is available through NZQA Wellington and NZTE Hamburg.

#### ***4.4 Primary and Intermediate School***

German children attend school from age six or seven. Primary education takes four to six school years depending on the federal state. Primary education in Germany is taught at state schools, Waldorf schools, Montessori schools, free alternative schools and a few Protestant and Catholic schools.

School years five and six form an orientation phase (Orientierungsstufe) in which students, parents and teachers decide which kind of secondary school the students should attend afterwards (least academic, elementary, grammar, or comprehensive school). In most states the orientation phase is embedded in secondary schools.

Student mobility at primary or intermediate level is barely present in Germany.

#### ***4.5 English Language***

English language programmes abroad present a range of opportunities for German students, especially in regards to offering an additional value, like outdoor training, sport activities, internship placements etc.

115,000 German students go abroad for language training each year. English language remains the most popular language studied abroad. In 2006/2007 approximately 1,050 German students and adults took English language courses in NZ – numbers are slightly declining.

Au Pair programmes are popular. Internship placements, which can be linked to short language courses (especially professional English and tailor-made English language courses), are in growing demand.

The Working Holiday Scheme for young German nationals is gaining immense popularity. Online applications can be made from anywhere in the world via the NZ Immigration website. The number of visas is not restricted. The limit of the three-month-employment period with one company has also been lifted. In 2007/2008 more than 6,000 working holiday visas were issued to German citizens.

## **5. Market Trends**

The German government is actively promoting international student mobility amongst German students. Campaigns include various student grants for education abroad and support for German institutions to collaborate with international institutes. The push for internationalisation has led to an increase in bilateral agreements between universities and organisations. International joint degrees are of growing significance in Germany.

## **6. Competitor Activity & Statistics**

The profile of a particular country is significant in determining whether a student even considers it as an option. Most German secondary and tertiary education students undertake extensive research prior to the selection of a study destination abroad. According to a survey of German education agents, most students had already decided on their study region when contacting an agent.

New Zealand is perceived as being very similar to Australia. German students who have decided to go to Australia also consider New Zealand as a possible destination. Australia and New Zealand are often referred to in one breath and are considered being one region by students and parents.

New Zealand competitors are very active in Germany. Government agencies such as the US Consulate General, the Canadian Embassy and the British Council are presenting their education opportunities thoroughly at fairs and education events throughout the year. AUSTRADE is not as active, yet, student numbers to Australia are nonetheless increasing.

Individual education providers (especially from the UK and Australia) are visiting the market once a year to maintain a close network of agents. There are frequent road shows of competitor providers who visit schools and universities while organising events and fairs to attract a large number of potential students.

For German students, the UK is the most popular study destination for English language (followed by Malta) and tertiary education abroad (followed by the US). The US holds the market lead for secondary education abroad with German students worldwide. Closest competitors for NZ are Canada (1.) and Australia (2.) for tertiary education and secondary education abroad.

## **7. Immigration Requirements**

Short language courses of up to three months do not require a student visa for NZ. German citizens can simply enter the country on a valid passport and a return ticket, making this type of student mobility very difficult to track.

Students need to apply for a student visa/permit if enrolled in a study programme for more than 3 months or if enrolled in more than one course for less than 3 months duration.

Secondary school students always need to apply for a student visa/permit – even if they are enrolled at a NZ secondary school for less than 3 months!

Student visa applications are handled through the New Zealand Embassy, Friedrichstr. 60, 10117 Berlin. The application form can be downloaded at [www.immigration.govz.nz](http://www.immigration.govz.nz)

Renewals of student permits for German students that are already in New Zealand can be logged via local NZ Immigration offices.

## 8. Policy changes and other recent developments

Upper secondary education that leads to university entrance has now changed from 3 to 2 years with a total school attendance of 12 years in all German states.

At tertiary education, Germany is in the process of switching to a three-year bachelor and two-year master qualification system. International degrees are popular among German students as they are more competitive with international education institutions and employers. The government's aim is to change all traditional German qualifications to the international qualification system of bachelors and masters by 2010.

Despite the negative economic situation at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, the education sector does not seem to have been affected a lot yet. German education agents do not feel a turndown of inquiries; in fact, parents are currently taking advantage of the favourable currency exchange rate for NZ Dollars. However, long term results of the economic crises will certainly also be felt in the education sector in the near future.

## 9. Key Dates

### Public Holidays 2009

1 January	New Year's Day
6 January	Epiphany <sup>1</sup>
23 – 25 February	Carnivals <sup>2</sup>
10 – 13 April	Easter
1 May	May Day or Labour Day
21 May	Ascension
1 June	Whit Monday
11 June	Corpus Christi <sup>3</sup>
15 August	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary <sup>4</sup>
3 October	Day of German Unity
31 October	Reformation Day <sup>5</sup>
1 November	All Saints Day <sup>6</sup>
18 November	Repentance Day (Buss und Bettag) <sup>7</sup>
24 December	Christmas Eve <sup>8</sup>
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day
31 December	New Year's Eve <sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and Saxony-Anhalt

<sup>2</sup> in North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland Palatinate

<sup>3</sup> in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hessen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate; it is also a holiday in communities in Saxony and Thuringia which have a majority of Catholic inhabitants.

<sup>4</sup> in Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg (in predominantly Catholic Communities) and Saarland

<sup>5</sup> in Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia (Predominantly Evangelical communities)

<sup>6</sup> in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland Palatinate, Saarland and Thuringia (predominantly Catholic communities)

<sup>7</sup> Saxony only

<sup>8</sup> Government closed, half day for shops.

## School Holidays:

<b>Baden Wuerttemberg</b>	-	09.04./14.04. - 17.04.	25.05. - 06.06.	30.07. - 12.09.	26.10. - 31.10.	23.12. - 09.01.
<b>Bavaria</b>	23.02. - 28.02.	06.04. - 18.04.	02.06. - 13.06.	03.08. - 14.09.	02.11. - 07.11.	24.12. - 05.01.
<b>Berlin</b>	02.02. - 07.02.	06.04. - 18.04.	22.05.	15.07./16.07. - 28.08.	19.10. - 30.10.	21.12. - 02.01.
<b>Brandenburg</b>	02.02. - 07.02.	08.04. - 17.04.	22.05.	16.07. - 29.08.	19.10. - 30.10.	21.12. - 02.01.
<b>Bremen</b>	02.02. - 03.02.	30.03. - 14.04.	20.05. - 22.05./02.06.	25.06. - 05.08.	05.10. - 17.10.	23.12. - 06.01.
<b>Hamburg</b>	30.01.	09.03. - 21.03.	18.05. - 23.05.	16.07. - 26.08.	12.10. - 24.10.	21.12. - 31.12.
<b>Hesse</b>	-	06.04. - 18.04.	-	13.07. - 21.08.	12.10. - 24.10.	21.12. - 09.01.
<b>Mecklenburg West Pomerania</b>	09.02. - 20.02.	06.04. - 14.04.	02.06. - 06.06.	20.07. - 29.08.	26.10. - 30.10.	21.12. - 02.01.
<b>Lower Saxony</b>	02.02. + 03.02.	30.03. - 15.04.	22.05./02.06.	25.06. - 05.08.	05.10. - 17.10.	23.12. - 06.01.
<b>Northrhine Westphalia</b>	-	06.04. - 18.04.	02.06.	02.07. - 14.08.	12.10. - 24.10.	24.12. - 06.01.
<b>Rhineland Palatinate</b>	-	01.04. - 17.04.	-	13.07. - 21.08.	12.10. - 23.10.	21.12. - 05.01.
<b>Saarland</b>	23.02. - 28.02.	06.04. - 18.04.	-	13.07. - 22.08.	19.10. - 31.10.	18.12. - 02.01.
<b>Saxony</b>	09.02. - 21.02.	09.04. - 18.04.	22.05.	29.06. - 07.08.	12.10. - 24.10.	23.12. - 02.01.
<b>Saxony Anhalt</b>	02.02. - 10.02.	06.04. - 18.04.	22.05. - 29.05.	25.06. - 05.08.	12.10. - 17.10.	21.12. - 05.01.
<b>Schleswig Holstein</b>	-	06.04. - 21.04.	-	20.07. - 29.08.	12.10. - 24.10.	21.12. - 06.01.
<b>Thuringia</b>	02.02. - 07.02.	06.04. - 17.04.	-	25.06. - 05.08.	12.10. - 24.10.	19.12. - 02.01.

## 10. Visiting time recommendations

The best time to visit is from January to June (except during Easter) and September to November.

## 11. Helpful Hints

If you wish to appear serious and genuine about business, make regular market visits to Germany. Avoid visiting German agents during the main summer holiday period (late June until late September).

New Zealanders have a reputation for being uncomplicated, direct and honest; all qualities that the Germans admire. If you back this up with punctuality at appointments, prompt replies to enquiries and correspondence – overnight if possible – and attention to detail, you will smooth your way into Germany.