

Institut für Anglistik / Amerikanistik
Information for Students
Compulsory Stay Abroad for Students of English¹
Official guidelines updated 18.09.2019

General Guidelines

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

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

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

Exception: 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 look at the section about exemptions and special consideration on page 3. Students *who grew up speaking English in Germany* (eg. with a parent who is a native speaker of English) are expected to complete the standard stay abroad.

Destinations

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

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

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

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

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

General Criteria, Duration, Timing, Activities and Restrictions

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

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

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

Due to visa limits in certain countries, the period of **three months/12 weeks** will be considered complete as long as it is **81 days** (plus arrival and departure days) or more in length.⁵

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

- The stay abroad needs to be completed **during** your studies – either during the BA or MEd degree.
 - (Due to the structure of the GHR300 programme, we strongly recommend that these students go abroad as undergraduates.)
- Time spent in an English-speaking country **before** you started university does not generally count; nor does a completed degree or period of study in English from a country where English is not the main language spoken.
- If you **attended university/college** or similar in an English-speaking country *before* coming to Oldenburg, eg. while working as an au pair, or if you **worked in a job directly relevant to your future studies**, eg. as an assistant teacher, you will need to contact the **Fachstudienberatung** directly to discuss credit transfer options – none of these can be automatically recognised as the stay abroad.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exemptions from the Stay Abroad and Applications for Special Consideration

It is **not** possible to receive a complete exemption from the stay abroad. Students who feel that they are genuinely unable to go abroad for a period of twelve weeks – for example due to chronic illness, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, their family situation, severe financial hardship, or visa issues for non-EU students – need to contact the **Fachstudienberatung** early in their studies to discuss their options. This also applies to native speakers of English who grew up in an English-speaking country; or students with completed degrees from countries with English as the official/main language.

- **All requests for special consideration must be discussed in person with a departmental advisor prior to a formal application being made to the Prüfungsamt.**

Students with **good academic reasons** for *splitting* the stay abroad (eg. two shorter school internships where it would not have been possible to work for a continuous period due to school holidays in the destination country and semester dates in Oldenburg) **also** need to contact the **Fachstudienberatung** in advance. Do **not** just assume that this option is acceptable, as you may find on your return that you cannot get credit for your stay!

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

If a stay abroad from an earlier course of studies does not meet the Oldenburg criteria (in terms of length, timing, activities or location), then you will usually need to go abroad again. Please see a departmental advisor as soon as possible after commencing studies in Oldenburg if this applies to you!

Departmental Stay Abroad Advisors

General contact details: **Fachstudienberatung Anglistik** – <fachstudienberatung.anglistik@uol.de>

Dr. Anna Auguscik

A6 2-212a

- Credit for stays abroad (general)
- Special consideration/alternatives
- Auslands-BAföG
- Scholarship applications
- Credit for courses in **literary & cultural studies**

Lauren Freede

A6 2-221

- Erasmus+ / European Free Movers
- Scholarship applications
- Credit for **language practice** courses
- In Dr. Auguscik's absence only:
 - Credit for stays abroad (general)
 - Special consideration / alternatives

Christian Kramer

A6 2-203

- Credit for courses in **didactics**

Dr. Ilka Flöck

A6 2-222

- Credit for courses in **linguistics & language science**