

Are you interested in the TestDaF? The Test of German as a Foreign Language

Then you should take a moment and read this information leaflet for applicants. It explains the requirements and application procedure for the TestDaF (Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache) and presents the advantages it has to offer.

When applying to a German university, you are required to submit, amongst other things, a language certificate. This certificate should verify that your knowledge of German meets the demands of academic life.

The TestDaF offers a certificate that is recognised by all institutions of higher education in Germany. You can take this examination at a licensed test centre (i.e. a test centre officially recognised by the TestDaF Institute) in your home country. If you wish to pursue your studies at a German university, the TestDaF allows you to complete the entire examination procedure before travelling to Germany. To find out about the next examination date, contact the nearest test centre or visit our web site.

What is the TestDaF?

The TestDaF is a language test for foreign learners of German who plan to study in Germany and, generally, for those who need a certification of their language skills.

The TestDaF is developed, corrected and managed in Germany by the TestDaF Institute. Examinations take place in your home country.

The examination results are assigned to one of the following three proficiency levels:

- TestDaF-Niveaustufe 5 (TDN 5 – TestDaF level 5)
- TestDaF-Niveaustufe 4 (TDN 4 – TestDaF level 4)
- TestDaF-Niveaustufe 3 (TDN 3 – TestDaF level 3)

For a detailed description of the different levels, click [here](#).

Should you reach the highest level, TDN 5, nothing is in the way of your studies in Germany, as far as language proficiency is concerned (naturally the remaining financial, academic and legal requirements must also be met).

You will receive a certificate showing your examination results separately for each of the four subtests.

Who can take the TestDaF?

The TestDaF is recommended for all those who wish to enter a university or to continue their studies in Germany. The TestDaF can also be taken by those who do not have definite plans to study in Germany yet and merely wish to obtain a differentiated assessment of their language skills. Moreover, the TestDaF is suitable for exchange students who wish to take a language test at the end of their stay in Germany. It provides an additional qualification for your further academic or professional career at home or abroad. However, if you have started studying German only recently, you are advised to wait until you have reached an intermediate level before registering for this examination.

What are the advantages the TestDaF has to offer?

- You can take the TestDaF in your home country. Hence, you do not have to travel to Germany to take a language test.
- The test questions are situated in the university context. The language skills assessed by the TestDaF are tallied to the needs of academic life.
- The TestDaF measures each of the four language skills (reading and listening comprehension, writing and speaking) separately. Thus your certificate will show four separate results giving you a clear picture of your strengths and weaknesses.
- The TestDaF is a standardised test. This allows you to focus your preparation. To find out what kind of questions to expect, take a look at the [sample test](#). You can also purchase a printed version of the sample test at your test centre for self-assessment.
- TestDaF operates a world-wide network of licensed test centres. Their staff will be glad to answer your questions and advise you on the test. You can also obtain information about the TestDaF from DAAD lecturers (DAAD = German Academic Exchange Service), Goethe Institutes, language centres or from university institutes and/or departments of German studies.
- The TestDaF allows you to save time and money, as you can take the examination and receive your certificate in your home country. This way you can gather all the documents you need for your university application before travelling to Germany. The “[Higher Education Compass](#)” informs about studies in all Institutions of higher education in Germany.
- The TestDaF certificate is officially recognised by German universities as a language certificate for the admission of foreign students.
- Provided that the other elements of your application are accepted, a score of TDN 5 in all four subtests will guarantee access to an academic degree course. It is at the discretion of individual universities – depending on the course subject, type of degree and intended duration of the course – to admit candidates whose scores are below TDN 5.
- You can take the TestDaF as many times as you wish. The differentiated assessment offers precise information about the language skills you may still want to improve.

Where can you take the TestDaF?

You can take the TestDaF at a licensed [test centre](#) in your home country. To find out about the nearest test centre click [here](#).

When can you take the TestDaF?

Examinations take place several times a year. To find out about the exact date, please consult the TestDaF web site or contact your nearest test centre.

How do you register for the TestDaF?

To register you must fill out a registration form obtainable from any test centre. You can also download it as by clicking [here](#) (you require the acrobat reader).

What is the examination fee?

An examination fee will be due when registering for the TestDaF. You can enquire the exact amount at your test centre.

How and when do you receive the results?

The test centre at which you took the examination will send you the certificate showing your results within approximately eight weeks following the test. You can then apply for a place at a German university, provided that you have gathered all the other documents required. On the back of the certificate, you will find a description of the criteria for each subtest, which allows a detailed assessment of your language skills.

What are the features of the TestDaF?

All the topics and questions of this test are situated within the general context of higher education. They are intended for applicants of all academic disciplines.

The TestDaF comprises four subtests:

- reading comprehension
- listening comprehension
- writing
- speaking

1. Reading comprehension

In this subtest, you are asked to prove your ability to understand written texts related to the field of higher education both thematically and linguistically. You are asked to treat a set of questions that require comprehension of context and of detailed as well as implicit information. There are three texts at variable levels of difficulty. The text types and question types also vary.

The subtest "reading comprehension" takes 60 minutes.

2. Listening comprehension

In this subtest, you are asked to prove your ability to understand spoken texts related to the field of higher education thematically and linguistically. You are asked to treat a set of questions that require comprehension of context and of detailed as well as implicit information. You will hear three spoken texts at variable levels of difficulty. The text types and question types also vary.

The subtest "listening comprehension" takes 40 minutes.

3. Writing

In this subtest, you are asked to prove your ability to write a clearly structured and coherent text dealing with a specific topic. In the first section, you are asked to describe a diagram, such as a table or graph. The second section asks you to state your opinion on a specific question and make a case.

The subtest "writing" takes 60 minutes.

4. Speaking

In this subtest, you are asked to show that you are able to speak German appropriately in different situations related to the field of higher education. The subtest consists of four sections and a total of 10 questions of variable complexity.

In the first section, you are asked to make an enquiry on the telephone. The second section requires you to ask for or give information, make an urgent request or convince someone of something. In the third section, you are asked to describe diagrams. The fourth section requires you to argue your position on a certain question.

The subtest "speaking" is recorded on tape. You will not be speaking to an examiner as you may be used to from class. This subtest usually takes place in a language laboratory. You will be able to hear the questions on tape and read them in your examination booklet simultaneously. Your answers will be recorded on a second tape. This procedure guarantees the greatest possible objectivity for this subtest. You are highly recommended to practice expressing your thoughts on tape before taking the examination.

The subtest "speaking" takes 30 minutes.

Now you have all the essential information on the TestDaF. As mentioned before, you will find practice material, that is, the [sample test](#), and further information at your nearest test centre and on our web site.

The TestDaF staff wish you good luck with your preparation and examination. We hope that your aspirations to enter higher education in Germany will be realised soon.