

Special Applications Information Sheet

In programs with limits on admissions (impacted programs, or *Numerus Clausus*), study placements are awarded according to average grade, semesters spent waiting, and selection criteria set by the higher education institution itself. When you submit an admission application, you can also submit special requests (*Sonderanträge*) that may offset disadvantages suffered due to illness or disability. Special requests are submitted as part of the online application process. Together with the admission application, the completed special requests form (“Sonderanträge”) and the necessary documentation (officially certified) must be submitted to Freie Universität Berlin before the deadline.

Hardship Application

The legal basis for a hardship application is § 10 of the Higher Education Admission Act for the State of Berlin (Berliner Hochschulzulassungsgesetz, BerlHZG). In a hardship application, you can apply for immediate admission to study. Proof of disability alone is, however, not sufficient for hardship to be acknowledged. Special health circumstances that necessitate immediate admission include progressive disease or disability that makes a longer waiting period unreasonable, and/or the fact that the specific academic program selected promises successful integration or reintegration into professional life for the applicant. The statement from a specialized medical practitioner must adequately state a position on the application.

Applications with merit

In cases such as the following, you can make a hardship application. Please note which officially certified documents (see text shown in boldface) must be submitted with your application.

1. special health-related circumstances that require immediate admission:
 - 1.1 progressive disease that is likely to cause the student to be unable to sustain the effort required for this academic program in the future (***opinion from specialized physician, no older than one year***)
 - 1.2 limitation in the choice or exercise of professions due to physical disability; physical disability that presents an obstacle to any other reasonable activity until allocation of a study placement and/or the program applied for is expected to yield successful rehabilitation, precluding any reasonable occupation during the waiting period (***opinion from specialized physician, no older than one year***)
 - 1.3 applicant has had to discontinue previous studies or previous professional activities for health-related reasons, precluding any reasonable occupation during the waiting period (***opinion from specialized physician, no older than one year***)
 - 1.4 limitation in the choice or exercise of professions due to illness, presenting an obstacle to any reasonable occupation during the waiting period (***opinion from specialized physician, no older than one year***)

Regarding numbers 1.1 – 1.4 above:

The opinion from the specialized physician must adequately state a position with regard to the individual criteria mentioned in the specific number. The opinion should include statements as to the emergence, severity, progress, and treatment options associated with the applicant's disease or illness and a prognosis for the further progress of the condition. It should also be understandable to non-medical professionals. Documents such as a disability card (Schwerbehindertenausweis), notice of disability from the Social Welfare Office (Versorgungssamt), or notice of discharge from the German federal armed forces (Bundeswehr) are suitable as additional evidence.

2. special social or family circumstances requiring an immediate admission (***appropriate documentation***)
3. status as a *Spätaussiedler* (ethnic German migrant from Eastern Europe), along with commencement in the country of origin of an academic program that corresponds to the academic program listed as the first preference (***official certification regarding Spätaussiedler status and certification from the higher education institution regarding commencement of such an academic program in the country of origin***)
4. earlier admission to the academic program listed as the first preference and inability to accept such admission for urgent reasons for which the applicant him- or herself was not responsible (particularly illness) (***documentation of the urgent reason preventing enrollment, along with earlier admission notice***)
5. applicant residing in the commute area of the higher education institution (its Einzugsgebiet) cannot reasonably be expected, for health, family or social reasons, to move to a different location to study, and the waiting period for the desired academic program in the State of Berlin would probably last longer than four semesters (***appropriate documentation***)

Applications without merit

In cases such as the following, applications **cannot** be approved as a general principle unless there are further unusual circumstances in the person of the applicant.

To item 1:

- restriction to a specific location due to the need for home-based care for an existing illness, disease, or condition
- applicant had to discontinue his or her prior academic program or professional activity for health-related reasons, but it is possible for the applicant to seek another occupation during the waiting period
- applicant is limited in his or her choice of professions due to illness, but it is possible and reasonable for the applicant to seek another occupation during the waiting period

To item 2:

- applicant is married, has one or more children, is an orphan/semi-orphan
- parents or siblings are ill or severely disabled, require care, or are unable to work
- applicant is already in advanced age
- applicant will exceed an important age limit (e.g., for acceptance into the German civil service preparatory phase (*Vorbereitungsdienst*) or to be appointed a civil servant) if the commencement of his or her studies is delayed further
- financing of the academic program is limited
- either or both of the applicant's parents have *Spätaussiedler* status, have been expelled from their home country or countries, are victims of political or ethnic persecution, or are refugees from the former German Democratic Republic
- discontinuation of previous studies or previously exercised profession due to unemployment, poor professional prospects, lack of motivation or aptitude or for conscience-related reasons
- academic program begun abroad cannot be concluded there, applicant wishes to continue it here
- applicant was required to expend a great deal of effort, time, and/or money to acquire his or her certificate of general higher education entrance qualification via the "alternative route" (*zweiter Bildungsweg*)
- in order to take the "alternative route" (*zweiter Bildungsweg*), applicant gave up a promising career and fears difficulties in returning to such profession because his or her knowledge or skills are now outdated due to the rapid pace of development in the field

To item 4:

- applicant was admitted to the academic program listed as the first preference in an earlier semester, but then was not enrolled in that program because his or her higher education entrance qualification documents were invalid, refused the study placement for other reasons (such as inability to find housing)

Application for an Improved Average Grade

An applicant's average grade is an essential selection criterion during the allocation of study placements. As a result, any adverse effects on an applicant's prior academic performance that prevented the applicant from achieving a better average grade on his or her higher education entrance qualification document (such as the *Abitur* certificate) should be compensated for. If the student is able to furnish documentation of circumstances of this kind and their effects, the application for admission can be considered for the allocation process with an improved average grade.

If you wish to apply for an improved average grade, you are required to enclose an officially certified **copy of your leaving certificate** and a **statement from the school** (not from one or more individual teachers).

Please be sure to request this statement with as much lead time as possible so that your school is able to prepare the statement before the application deadline.

To ensure that schools that are requested to prepare statements regarding applications for compensation for disadvantages for selection of candidates according to qualifications prepare those statements according to comparable standards, **the following principles should be borne in mind when such statements are prepared.**

1. The decision as to whether the school where the applicant earned his or her higher education entrance qualification issues a statement regarding an application for compensation for disadvantages for selection of candidates according to qualifications is made by the school administration in its own due discretion. The school is permitted to refuse to prepare such a statement, and must in particular refuse to do so if it is not possible to make the determinations necessary for the statement due to lack of knowledge regarding the person requesting the statement (e.g., because that person attended the school for too short a period).
2. The statement, which must be signed by the school administration, must include the following:
 - a) a brief description of the student's school career;
 - b) information on the nature and duration of the circumstances for which the student was not responsible that were the primary cause of any interruption in his or her school performance; the school must limit itself to documented facts in this regard;
 - c) information on the recognizable, credibly documented effects of such circumstances on the student's grades in the individual subjects of instruction, according to the evaluation of the appropriate instructors;
 - d) a clause specifying that the statement is intended only for submission to Freie Universität Berlin and may not be used for any other purpose
3. If the school is convinced that the special circumstances the applicant is claiming (and for which the applicant is not responsible him- or herself) adversely affected the applicant's academic performance, the school must state a credible determination for each subject that is to be considered, taking into account the long-term overall development of the student's performance over several years, of the range within which a better grade or higher point total would have been expected without the adverse effect in

question. Based on this information, the school must specify a spectrum within which the student would have been expected to receive a better overall average grade or higher overall point total on his or her higher education entrance qualification document.

4. A statement cannot be based on general experiences or facts except where attesting to minor differences in performance. More stringent requirements must be applied with regard to the conclusive depiction of the causal relationship between the circumstances and the student's performance as the range of grades or point values specified in the statement rises.

If necessary and possible in the individual case, the school is permitted to utilize the services of a school psychologist working at or on behalf of the school during the preparation of the statement.

Applications with merit

In cases such as the following, applications for improved average grades can generally be made, by submitting the special application form as well as the required documents. Please note that you are required to furnish documentation not only of the reason for your application (the documents required are shown in parentheses), but also of the effects of the reason for your application on your average grade, which have to be proven by the statement from your school and the leaving certificate.

1. special social circumstances:
 - 1.1 pregnancy on the part of a female applicant within the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification (***opinion from specialized physician or child's birth certificate***)
 - 1.2 relocation to Germany from a non-German-speaking area if the applicant did not attend a German-speaking school beforehand (***official certification regarding the time of relocation and other appropriate documentation***)
 - 1.3 other comparable special social circumstances (***appropriate documentation***)
2. Special health-related circumstances:
 - 2.1 extended illness-related absence from school during the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification (***opinion from specialized physician***)
 - 2.2 severe disability on the part of the applicant, rated at 50 percent or more (***notice of determination of disability status from the Social Welfare Office (Versorgungsamt)***)
3. Special family circumstances:
 - 3.1 care for own minor child/ren in the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification (***birth certificates of child/ren***)
 - 3.2 care for a parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent who required care, or for own siblings, in the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification (***certificate regarding placement in Care Level (Pflegestufe) II or III according to the German Code of Social Law (Sozialgesetzbuch) IX or physician's certificate attesting to the need for care***)
 - 3.3 care for minor siblings who did not have other care and lived in the applicant's household during the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification (***birth certificates of siblings***)
 - 3.4 loss of one parent in the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification, or loss of both parents before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification, if the applicant was unmarried at the time and had not yet reached the age of 25 (***death certificate(s) of parent(s) and statement as to marital status at the time***)

- 3.5 repeated changes of school in the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification due to parents moving (***school leaving certificates (Abgangszeugnisse) and registration certificates (Meldebescheinigungen) regarding the parents***)
- 3.6 other comparable special family circumstances (***appropriate documentation***)
- 4. applicant was a national winner in the “Jugend forscht,” “Bundeswettbewerb Mathematik,” “Jugend musiziert” or “Bundeswettbewerb Fremdsprachen” competitions during the last three years before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification (***officially certified copy of certificate of winning participation in competition***)
- 5. other comparable special circumstances affecting the applicant (***appropriate documentation***)

Applications without merit

In cases such as the following, applications **cannot** be approved as a general principle:

To item 3.6:

- applicant worked within the parents’ household or business without being driven to do so by necessity during his or her schooling
- illness on the part of the applicant’s parents
- loss of a parent or other close relative before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification except as stated in No. 3.4
- disagreement between parents or divorce of parents
- relocation by the parents **before** the last three years before the applicant earned the certificate of higher education entrance qualification

To item 5:

- claims of disadvantage due to attendance at an academic secondary school (*Gymnasium*) of a specific type or completion of a secondary school graduation equivalent exam (*Nichtschülerreifeprüfung*)
- claims of disadvantage due to attendance at an academic secondary school (*Gymnasium*) in a state with a reorganized upper level (*Oberstufe*)
- claims of disadvantage due to having taken the *Abitur* examination in a state where such examinations are administered centrally (*Zentralabitur*)
- claims that the applicant suffered a disadvantage due to unfair grading or evaluation
- illness during the *Abitur* examination
- long, time-consuming commutes to school
- participation in an exchange program,
- participation in student government

Application for an Improved Waiting Time

Within the scope of selection of applicants according to wait times, the operative factor is the number of semesters that have elapsed since the candidate earned his or her certificate of higher education entrance qualification (e.g., *Abitur* certificate). There may, however, be circumstances that delayed the applicant in earning his or her higher education entrance qualification. In these cases, the applicant will not be able to show as much wait time. In such a case, the applicant is entered in the process for selection of applicants according to wait times

based on having earned the higher education entrance qualification at an earlier time. The applicant is thus considered with the amount of wait time that it is estimated would have applied if the delay had not occurred.

Applications with merit

In cases such as the following, applications for improved wait times can generally be made, by submitting the special application form as well as the required documents. Please note that you are required to furnish documentation not only of the reason for your application (the documents required are shown in parentheses), but also of the effects of the reason for your application on the time at which you earned your certificate of higher education entrance qualification. **In all cases, please be sure to enclose a certificate from the school regarding the reason for and length of the delay in earning higher education entrance qualification or own statement, along with all other documentation showing the reason for which the applicant suffered a disadvantage and an officially certified copy of your leaving certificate.**

1. special social circumstances:
 - 1.1 pregnancies of female applicants during her schooling (***opinion from specialized physician or child's birth certificate***)
 - 1.2 relocation from a non-German-speaking area to the Federal Republic of Germany if the applicant did not attend a German-speaking school beforehand (***official certification regarding the time of relocation and other appropriate documentation***)
 - 1.3 other comparable special social circumstances (***appropriate documentation***)
2. special health-related circumstances:
 - 2.1 extended illness-related absence from school (***opinion from specialized physician***)
 - 2.2 severe disability on the part of the applicant, rated at 50 percent or more (***notice of determination of disability status from the Social Welfare Office (Versorgungsamt)***)
3. special family circumstances:
 - 3.1 care for own minor child/ren while applicant was still in school (***birth certificates of child/ren***)
 - 3.2 care for parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent, that required care, or her own siblings, while applicant was still in school (***specialized physician's certificate attesting to the need for care***)
 - 3.3 care for one or more minor siblings who did not have other care and lived in the applicant's household while applicant was still in school (***birth certificates of siblings***)
 - 3.4 loss of one or both parents before earning the certificate of higher education entrance qualification, if the applicant was unmarried at the time and had not yet reached the age of 25 (***death certificate(s) of parent(s) and statement as to marital status at the time***)
 - 3.5 repeated changes of school due to parents moving (***school leaving certificates (Abgangszeugnisse) and registration certificates (Meldebescheinigungen) regarding the parents***)
 - 3.6 other comparable special family circumstances (***appropriate documentation***)
4. applicant earned higher education entrance qualification in a course of study that resulted in dual qualifications and lasted 14 years (both the *Abitur* examination and the final vocational or professional examination were taken at the end of the 14th year of his or her schooling)
5. applicant was a national winner in the "Jugend forscht," "Bundeswettbewerb Mathematik," "Jugend musiziert" or "Bundeswettbewerb Fremdsprachen" competitions (***officially certified copy of certificate of winning participation in competition***)
6. other comparable circumstances (***appropriate documentation***)

Special Applications

Application number: _____ surname, name: _____

If you wish to claim one or more of the following reasons, you are required to check the appropriate box and substantiate your application in writing. **Appropriate documentation must be enclosed as officially certified copy.**

Hardship Applications (Applications with merit)

1. Special health-related circumstances

1.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1.4 <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Special social or family circumstances
3. Status as a Spätaussiedler
4. Earlier admission to the academic program
5. Residence in the commute area of the higher education institution (it's Einzugsgebiet) (only in combination with one of the reasons No. 1 and 2)

Please do not fill in:

Härtefall:

Härtepunkte:

Verbesserung der Note um:

Verbesserung der Wartezeit um:

Application for an Improved Average Grade (does not apply to master programs)

1. Special social circumstances

1.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1.3 <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Special health-related circumstances

2.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2.2 <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Special family circumstances

3.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.5 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.6 <input type="checkbox"/>
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4. National winner
5. Other special circumstances

Application for an Improved Waiting Time (does not apply to master programs)

1. Special social circumstances

1.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1.3 <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Special health-related circumstances

2.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2.2 <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Special family circumstances

3.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.5 <input type="checkbox"/>	3.6 <input type="checkbox"/>
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4. Higher education entrance qualification earned in a course of study that resulted in dual qualifications
5. National winner
6. Other special circumstances

place, date

signature