

**Contact:**

Nora Sevbihiv Sinemillioğlu  
Project Director  
n.sinemillioğlu@uni-assist.de

**Media Contact:**

Kristin Lenz  
pressestelle@uni-assist.de

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Press Release

## **Refugees Provide Data on University Access and Studying in Germany**

**In March and April 2019, uni-assist e. V, in cooperation with Humboldt University of Berlin, conducted an in-depth online survey of 19,500 refugee students and prospective students. As a result, 6,340 respondents shared their experiences with university access and their first steps as university students. The survey provides reliable data on the situation of refugees in Germany who are interested in taking up university studies.**

uni-assist e. V., the working service point for international student applications, is an association supported by over 185 German universities. uni-assist provides preliminary evaluations for international student applications. uni-assist evaluates student applications for refugees in Germany free of charge as part of the free evaluation procedure. Proof of refugee status is a prerequisite for a free application via uni-assist, as determined via residency status. uni-assist's free evaluation procedure is made possible by a grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), with funds provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Initial analyses of the survey results show that approximately 73% of the refugee applicants using the free uni-assist evaluation procedure were admitted to university. Transferring this percentage to all applicants who have used the free evaluation procedure, we can assume that almost 13,000 refugees have been admitted to university studies in Germany. "The scale of this number lets us surmise that the number of refugees admitted to universities in Germany is far greater than previously claimed based on other analyses", says Nora Sinemillioğlu, Project Director of the free evaluation procedure for refugees in Germany.

19,500 of those who requested cost exemption with uni-assist were asked to participate in the survey. At the end of the survey period, 6,340 refugees had submitted completed survey forms. The anonymous online survey consisted of approximately 100 questions and was available in German, English and Arabic. It contained questions on basic demographic data, on uni-assist's cost exemption, on preparations for the application, on the application itself, and on university studies.

The majority of respondents said they had come from Syria (81%), while the rest stated their nationality as Afghan, Iraqi, Iranian, Turkish or stateless (2–3% each). 81% identified as male, 19% as female. Approximately 95% of respondents were aged between 17 and 34 years. The vast majority arrived in Germany in 2015 or earlier: almost 70% stated 2015 as their year of arrival. Respondents who stated that they had arrived before or after that year made up 15% respectively.

Responses on refugees' first experiences at university also provided interesting insights. While the majority are satisfied with their studies and stated that they are doing well, the specialised language used appears to have the potential to delay graduation or even put it at risk. 61.5% stated that the specialised language used in university studies presented a problem. In addition, respondents stated that their successful graduation is put at risk by their living arrangements (23.8%) and the problem of financing their studies (56.2%). 86.4% of respondents currently enrolled at university assessed their financial situation as somewhat precarious. "These results make it clear that additional support programmes, including for financial support, may be necessary to provide refugee students with enough stability to achieve a successful graduation", explains Nora Sinemillioğlu.

In its role as the centralised evaluation provider for international applicants to member universities in all German States, uni-assist has access to a unique pool of data on refugee student applicants and academics. "The data currently available may prove highly valuable for further refugee studies, but also for studies on international prospective students", Sinemillioğlu emphasises.

[Further survey results were published here, in the magazine \*Flucht und Studium\*.](#)

**Contact:**

Nora Sevbihiv Sinemillioğlu  
Project Director, free evaluation procedure for refugees in Germany  
E-mail: [n.sinemillioğlu@uni-assist.de](mailto:n.sinemillioğlu@uni-assist.de)

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Email: [pressestelle@uni-assist.de](mailto:pressestelle@uni-assist.de)