

## Students and Apprentices

The public broadcasting services in Germany offer a high-quality information and entertainment programme as well as independent reporting – on the radio, television and internet. This programming is made possible by the licence fee, which is currently 18.36 euros per month. As part of a contributory financing model, everyone is obligated in principle to pay this fee.

Even you, as students and apprentices, are required to pay it in principle if you live in your own dwelling and not with your parents, for example. However, under certain conditions, you can apply for an exemption from the licence fee.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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## I still live at home. Do I have to pay the licence fee?

If you are a student still living at home, your parents pay the licence fee. In case you receive a letter from the contribution service, please respond by providing the licence fee contribution number for the dwelling in which you live.

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## I live in a flat-sharing community (Wohngemeinschaft, WG). Who pays?

In a WG, only one resident is always required to [register](#) [in German] with the contribution service. All other residents who have already registered can deregister. If the contribution service asks you as a WG resident to clarify your contribution obligation, please send the service the contribution number of the person who is paying the licence fee for the dwelling.

In a WG, it is only possible to be exempt from the obligation to pay the licence fee if everyone meets the requirement for the exemption. If one occupant does not meet the requirement, he must register his name with the contribution service and pay the licence fee.

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## I live in a student hall of residence. Do I have to pay?

If your room is located on a generally accessible hallway, it is considered as a dwelling. It does not matter if you have your own bathroom or kitchen: The monthly licence fee of 18.36 euros per room must be paid.

If several rooms are separated from a generally accessible hallway or staircase by a common front door, the rules for a flat-sharing community apply.

Provided no licence-fee account for a dwelling exists, the contribution service recommends that you [register](#) [in German] to promptly pay the license fee to avoid possible claims for recovery.

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## I am doing an apprenticeship. Do I have to pay the licence fee?

If you are currently doing an apprenticeship and receive an apprenticeship allowance, you are not entitled to an exemption. Even if the apprenticeship allowance is low, you are not entitled to an exemption. Please [register](#) [in German] if no licence-fee account has been set up yet.

On the contrary, [you can apply for an exemption from the contribution obligation](#) [in German] if you do not live with your parents and receive the following public benefit:

- Vocational training assistance pursuant to §§ 114, 115 No. 2 of the Third Book of the Social Security Code or pursuant to the Third Chapter, Third Subparagraph of the Third Book of the Social Security Code

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## As a student, I receive BAföG, a student grant. How does this affect things?

If you receive BAföG and do not live with your parents, [you can apply for an exemption from the licence fee](#) [in German]. The exemption also applies to spouses or registered partners, but not to other occupants.

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## I am not eligible for BAföG. What applies then?

In principle, students can only be exempted from the obligation to pay broadcasting fees if they receive BAföG. Even taking into account the case law of the Federal Administrative Court (BVerwG), an exemption as a special case of hardship can **only be considered in exceptional cases**.

Such an exceptional case may exist if students in certain cases do not (or no longer) receive BAföG benefits although they are still indigent.

A hardship exemption is possible in the following cases, for example:

- Student is in a second degree programme, § 7 para. 2 BAföG
- Student has changed the subject of study, § 7 para. 3 BAföG
- Student has exceeded the age limit, § 10 para. 3 BAföG
- Student has exceeded the maximum period of eligibility, § 15a BAföG
- Student has not provided proof of academic achievement according to § 48 BAföG

Indigence exists if the income, after deduction of the costs to be taken into account (housing costs, health insurance contributions), is below the standard rate relevant for receiving assistance towards living costs.

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## I am only in Germany to study. What applies to me?

**Students from EU member states** must have sufficient means of subsistence during their stay in Germany. Therefore, an exemption due to hardship cannot usually be considered. However, they can be exempted from the obligation to pay broadcasting fees as a special case of hardship if

they receive a study support benefit from their home country that is comparable to BAföG.

In order to receive a residence permit, **international students** must prove that they have sufficient financial means to secure their livelihood. A hardship exemption is therefore not usually considered in these cases.

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## What is the rule for those who have completed a voluntary social year, Erasmus students or other grant holders?

Those who have completed a voluntary social year, Erasmus students or other grant holders are in principle required to pay the fee. The same rules apply to them as to all other contributors. Please [register](#) [in German] if you still do not have a contribution account.

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## How can I apply for an exemption?

Are you entitled to an exemption from the licence fee? The [online form](#) [in German] guides you step by step through the application. To further speed up the process, we would ask you to please attach the necessary proof directly to the application.

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