

# Evaluation of the survey for international students about job search and starting a career in Germany

## 1. The survey

These are the results of a survey targeting international students at Osnabrück University conducted by the International Office as part of the DAAD project "Study and Stay @OS". The project aims at supporting the transition of international graduates of Osnabrück University into the regional job market. In the long term and tapping into the existing structures and services at Osnabrück University, the project is designed to conceptualize and subsequently establish an operational framework for managing the transition of international students into the local job market. This entails the establishment of immediate project-specific offerings and services, but also of deep information and service structures specifically catering to the needs of the target group. Realizing these goals, in turn, requires purposeful networking with relevant internal and external partners.

109 out of the 865 international students currently enrolled at Osnabrück University participated in the survey. Thus, the response rate is 12.60 %. This survey helped to determine the needs of the target group in order to optimize future event and course offers as part of the project.

The survey covers three primary areas of interest: demographic information of the students (questions 1 to 13), their previous experience concerning job search in Germany (questions 14 to 16), and their needs with regard to support services (17 to 25).

## 2. The Questions

### Question 1: Which degree program are you currently enrolled in?

We received the highest response rate from international students from the following fields of study: *Cognitive Science, Informatik & Systemwissenschaften* with 41.28 %, *Politik & Gesellschaftswissenschaften* with 18.35 %, and *Sprach- & Kulturwissenschaften* with 16.51 % of respondents. 3 respondents did not answer the question.

**Table 1: Degree programs**

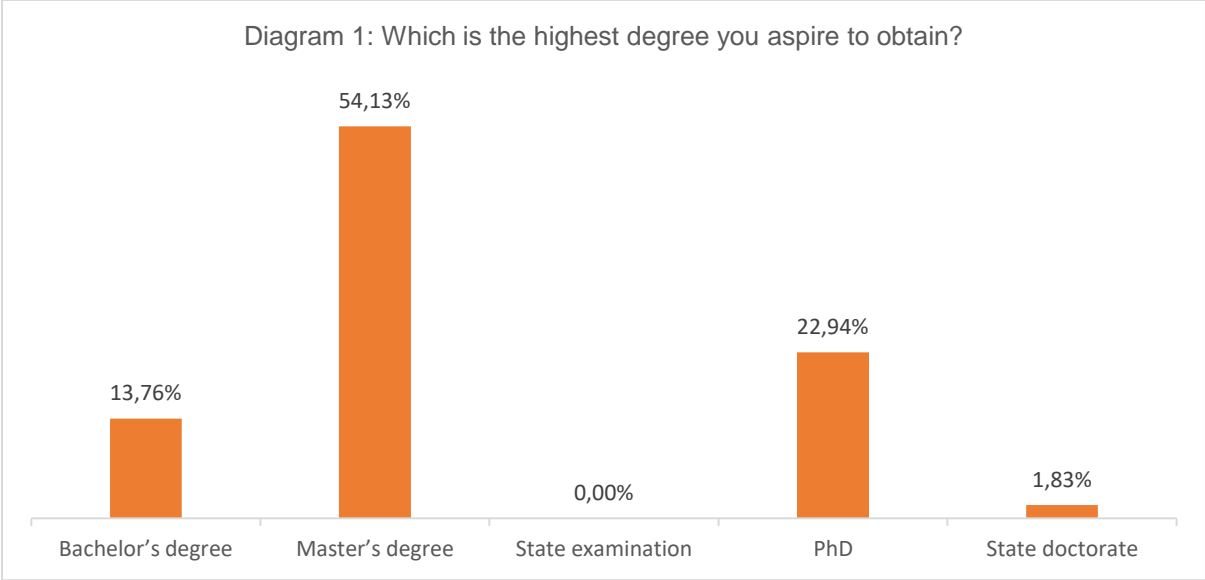
**Number of participants**

Anglistik/ Englisch - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Biologie - Bachelor of Science	4
Biologie/Biology - From Molecules to Organisms - Master of Science	1
Chemie - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Cognitive Science - Bachelor of Science	8
Cognitive Science - Master of Science	31
Deutsch/Germanistik - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	2
Deutsch - Lehramt an Gymnasien	2
Deutsch/Germanistik - Master of Arts	1
Englisch/Anglistik - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Englisch - Lehramt an Gymnasien	1
English and American Studies - Master of Arts	4
Erziehungswissenschaft - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Erziehungswissenschaft. Schwerpunkt: Erziehung und Bildung in gesellschaftlicher Heterogenität - Master of Arts	3
Europäische Studien - Bachelor of Arts	1
Geographie/Erdkunde - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Geoinformatik - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Germanistik/Deutsch - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Informatik - Bachelor of Science	3
	1

Internationale Migration und Interkulturelle Beziehungen - Master of Arts	4
Islamische Theologie - Master of Arts	2
Nanosciences - Materials, Molecules and Cells - Master of Science	1
Physik - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Physik - Bachelor of Science	1
Physik - Lehramt an Haupt- und Realschulen	1
Physik - Master of Science	2
Politikwissenschaft - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Politikwissenschaft: Demokratisches Regieren und Zivilgesellschaft - Master of Arts	11
Psychologie - Bachelor of Science	3
Psychologie: Schwerpunkt Interkulturelle Psychologie - Master of Science	1
Psychologie: Schwerpunkt Klinische Psychologie - Master of Science	1
Rechtswissenschaft - Staatsexamen	1
Sozialwissenschaften - Bachelor of Arts	2
Soziologie: Dynamiken gesellschaftlichen Wandels - Master of Arts	1
Spanisch (Romanistik/Eine Sprache) - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	3
Sport/Sportwissenschaft - 2-Fächer-Bachelor	1
Sprache in Europa/Language in Europe - Master of Arts	2
Theologie und Kultur - Master of Arts	1
Umweltsysteme und Ressourcenmanagement - Master of Science	1
Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeographie - Master of Arts	2
Wirtschaftsinformatik - Bachelor of Science	1
Wirtschaftsrecht - Bachelor of Law	1
Wirtschaftswissenschaft - Bachelor of Science	2
Nicht beantwortet	3

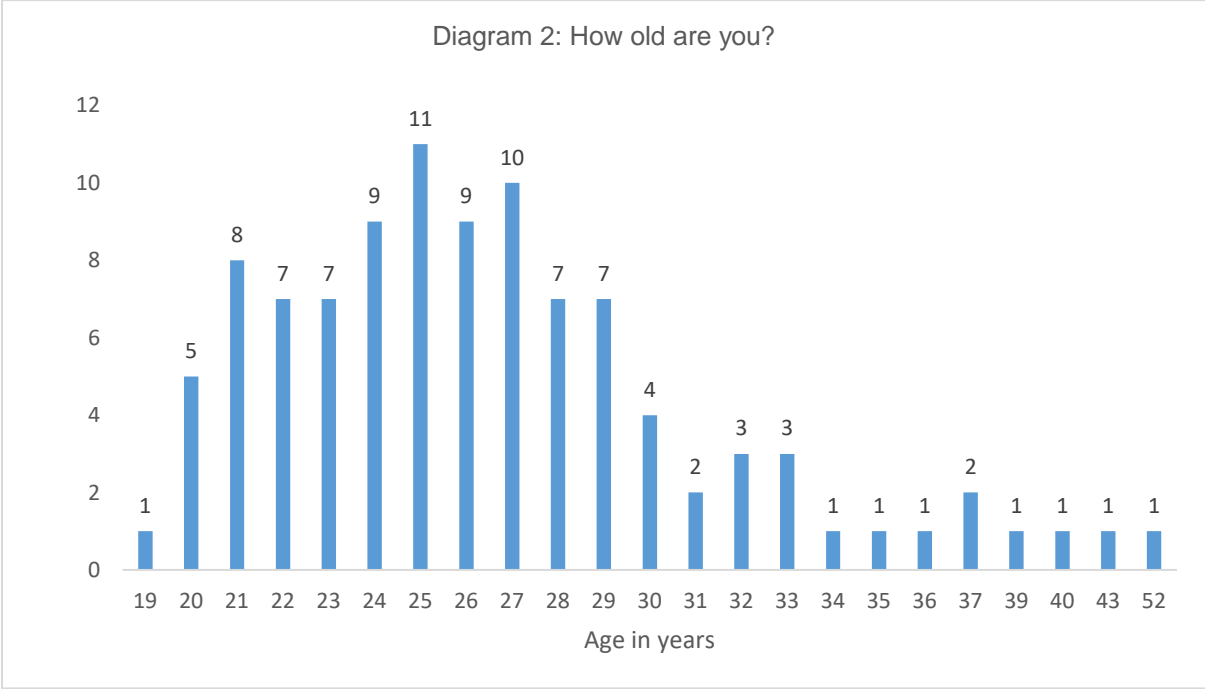
**Question 2: Which is the highest degree you aspire to obtain?**

13.76 % (15) of the respondents are pursuing a bachelor's degree as their highest university degree, 54.13 % (59) are pursuing a master's degree, and 0 % (0) are seeking the state examination. 22.94 % (25) want to complete a doctorate, and 1.83 % (2) are aiming for a post-doctoral degree. 8 respondents abstained from answering the question.



**Question 3: How old are you?**

The surveyed international students range in age from 19 to 52. The average age is 26 years. 2 statements were invalid and 7 respondents abstained.



#### Question 4: What nationality/-ies are you?

There is a great deal of diversity among the university's international students surveyed in terms of their origin. Students from more than 40 nations answered our survey. 6 respondents abstained.

The ten most frequently represented nations in our survey were:

**Table 2: Nationalities (Ranking by frequency)**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
India	10
China	7
Russia	7
Turkey	7
Iran	6
Italy	6
Syria	6
Colombia	5
Ukraine	4
Ecuador	3
Pakistan	3
Southkorea	3

**Table 3: Nationalities (alphabetical order)**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Afghanistan	1	Moldova	1
Albania	1	Morocco	1
Argentina	2	Nepal	1
Bolivia	1	Netherlands	1
Brazil	2	Nigeria	1
China	7	Pakistan	3
Colombia	5	Poland	1
Ecuador	3	Portugal	1
Egypt	1	Romania	1
Finland	1	Russia	7
India	10	Serbia	1
Indonesia	1	South Korea	3
Iran	6	Spain	2
Israel	1	Switzerland	2
Italy	6	Syria	6
Jordan	1	Tajikistan	2
Kazakhstan	2	Tunisia	1
Kenya	1	Turkey	7
Macedonia	1	Ukraine	4
Malaysia	1	Vietnam	1
Mexico	1	unknown	1

### Question 5: What languages do you speak?

In line with their origin, the diversity of languages spoken is also very high. Many of the international students are multilingual and reported speaking up to 10 languages at varying levels. Forty-three languages were named, with Persian and Farsi combined here as one language, and Hindi and Urdu combined under Hindustani.

The ten most commonly reported languages in our survey were:

**Table 4: Language (Ranking by frequency)**

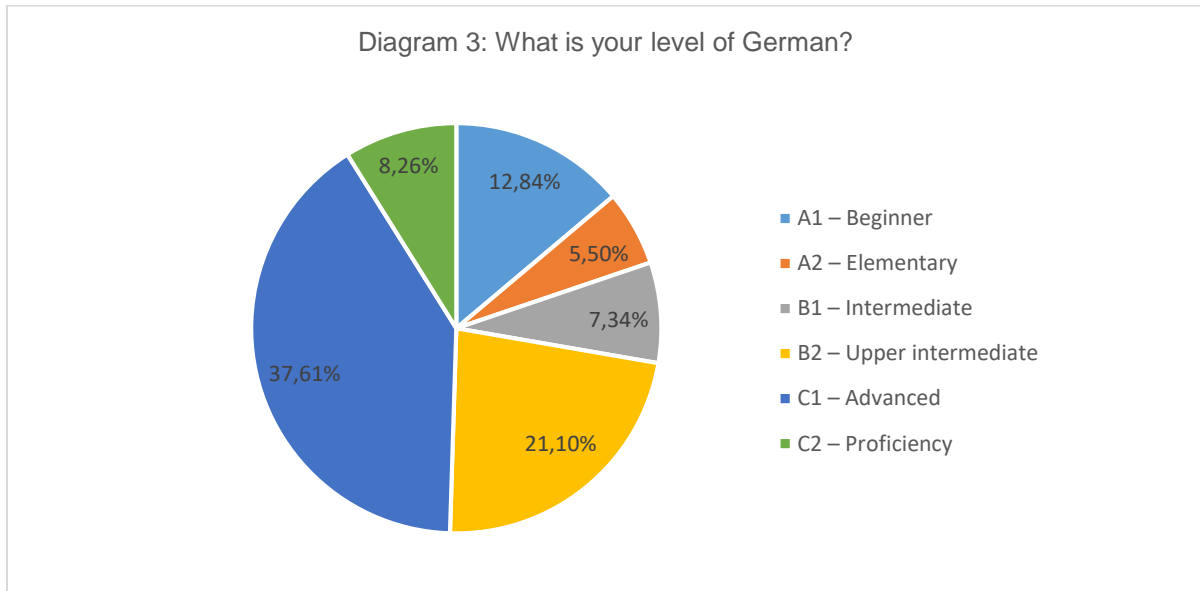
Language	Number of speakers
English	92
German	81
Spanish	19
Russian	18
Arabic	14
French	13
Italian	11
Chinese	10
Turkish	9
Finish	9

**Table 5: Language (alphabetical order)**

Language	Number of speakers	Language	Number of speakers
Albanian	1	Malay	1
Arabic	14	Nepali	1
Azerbaijani	1	Pashto	1
Bahasa-Indonesian	1	Persian/Farsi	6
Bengali	1	Polish	2
Chinese	10	Portuguese	7
Dutch	1	Punjabi	1
English	92	Rumanian	1
Finish	9	Russian	18
French	13	Serbian	1
German	81	Shina	1
Greek	1	Spanish	19
Gujarati	1	Swahili	1
Hebrew	1	Swedish	3
Hindustani (Urdu/Hindi )	8	Tajik	3
Italian	11	Tamil	3
Japanese	1	Turkish	9
Kazakh	1	Turkmen	1
Korean	3	Ukrainian	4
Kurdish	1	Uzbek	1
Macedonian	1	Vietnamese	1

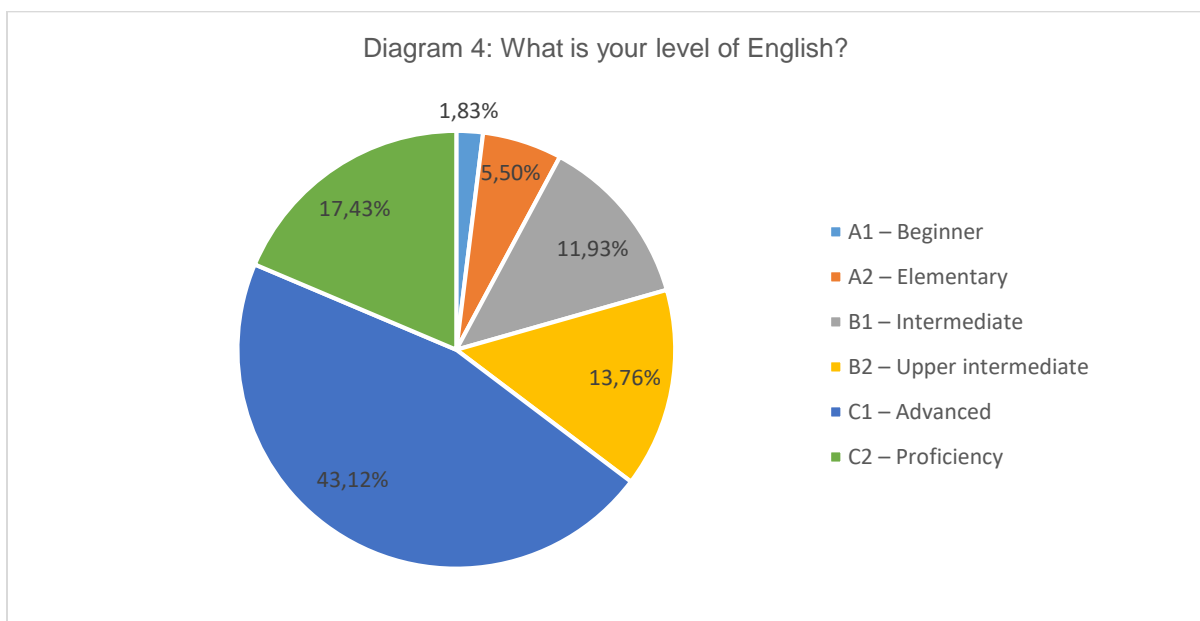
### Question 6: What is your level of German?

We asked the international students to estimate their level of German according to the European Framework of Reference. Almost half of the respondents 44.52 % (50) estimated their level of German to be in the range of C1 (Advanced) or C2 (Proficiency). 18.34 % (20) of the international students surveyed indicated that their level of German was in the range of A1 (Beginner) or A2 (Elementary). 8 respondents abstained.



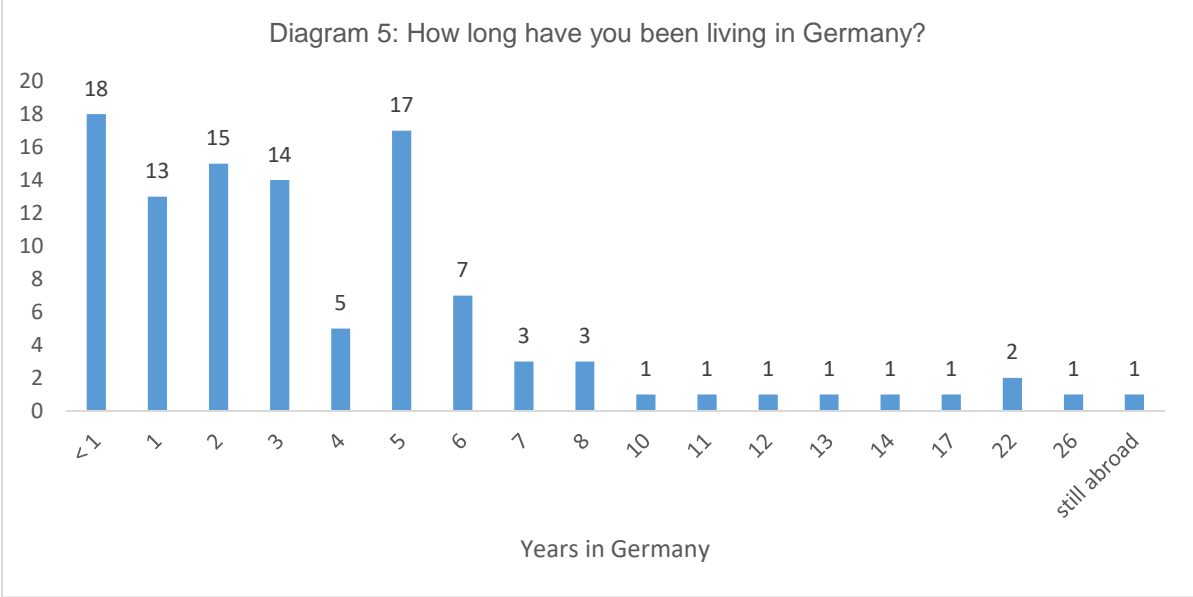
### Question 7: What is your level of English?

We asked the international students to estimate their level of English according to the European Framework of Reference. 60.55 % (66) of the students surveyed estimated their level of English to be in the range of C1 (Advanced) or C2 (Proficiency). Only 7.33 % (8) of the respondents indicated that their level of English was in the A1 (Beginner) or A2 (Elementary) range. According to these results, respondents' overall English language proficiency is higher than the German language proficiency. 7 respondents abstained.



**Question 8: How long have you been living in Germany?**

75.23 % (82) of the surveyed international students have lived in Germany for up to 5 years.



**Question 9: What career aspirations do you have?**

The international students indicated the following keywords when asked about their career aspirations. This reveals a wide variety of interests and desired fields of work:

Figure 1: Career aspirations of international students<sup>1</sup>



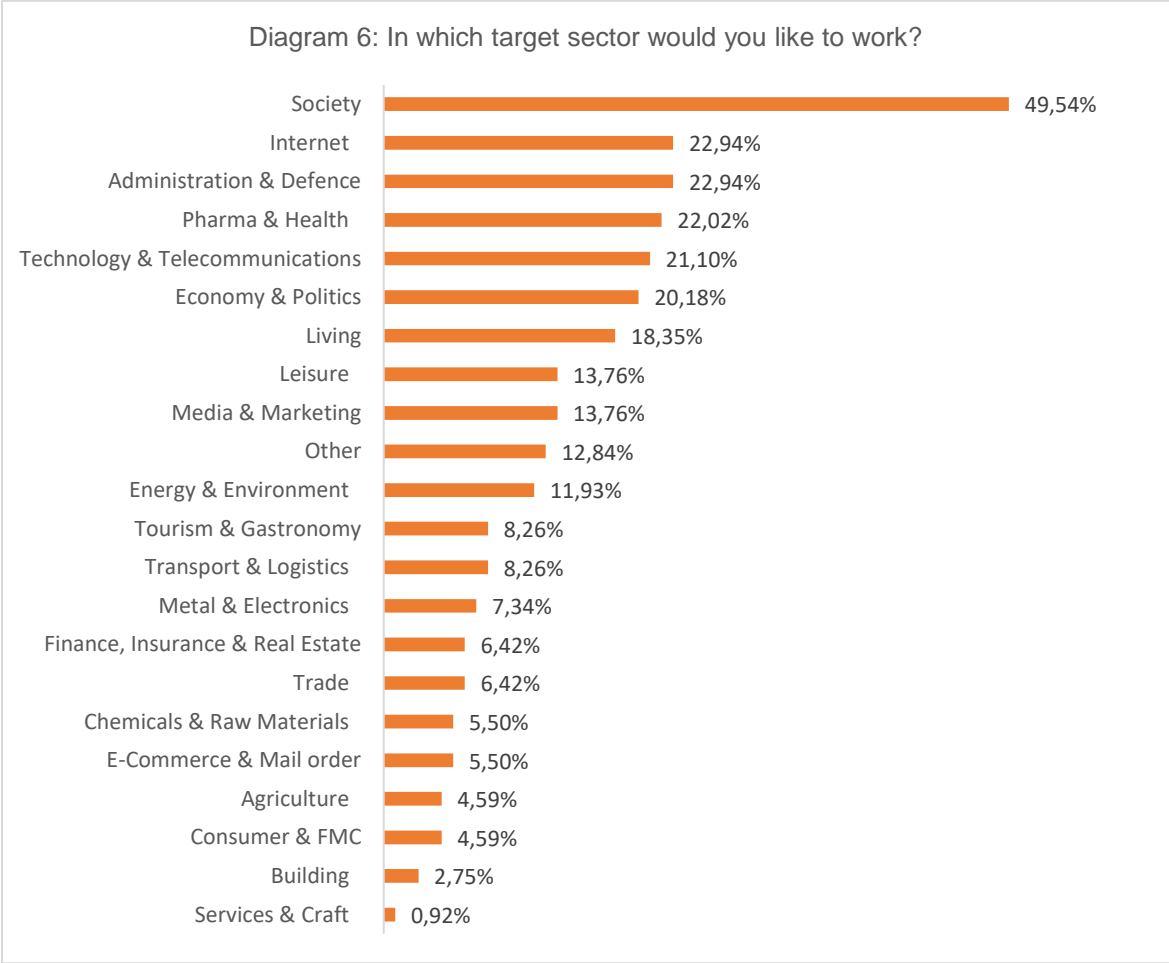
<sup>1</sup> The illustration shows the original answers of the respondents.

**Question 10: In which target sector would you like to work?**

Almost half (49.54 %; 54) of the respondents could imagine working in the target sector *Society*. Other popular sectors include the *Internet* (22.94 %; 25), *Economy & Politics* (22.94 %; 25), *Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare* (22.02 %; 24), *Technology & Telecommunications* (21.10 %; 23) and *Administration & Defence* (20.18 %; 22) (multiple answers were possible).

**Table 6: Target sectors**

Target sector	Percentage of participants (multiple answers were possible)
Society	49,54 %
Internet	22,94 %
Economy & Politics	22,94 %
Pharmaceuticals & Health	22,02 %
Technology & Telecommunications	21,10 %
Administration & Defence	20,18 %
Living	18,35 %
Leisure	13,76 %
Media & Marketing	13,76 %
Energy & Environment	11,93 %





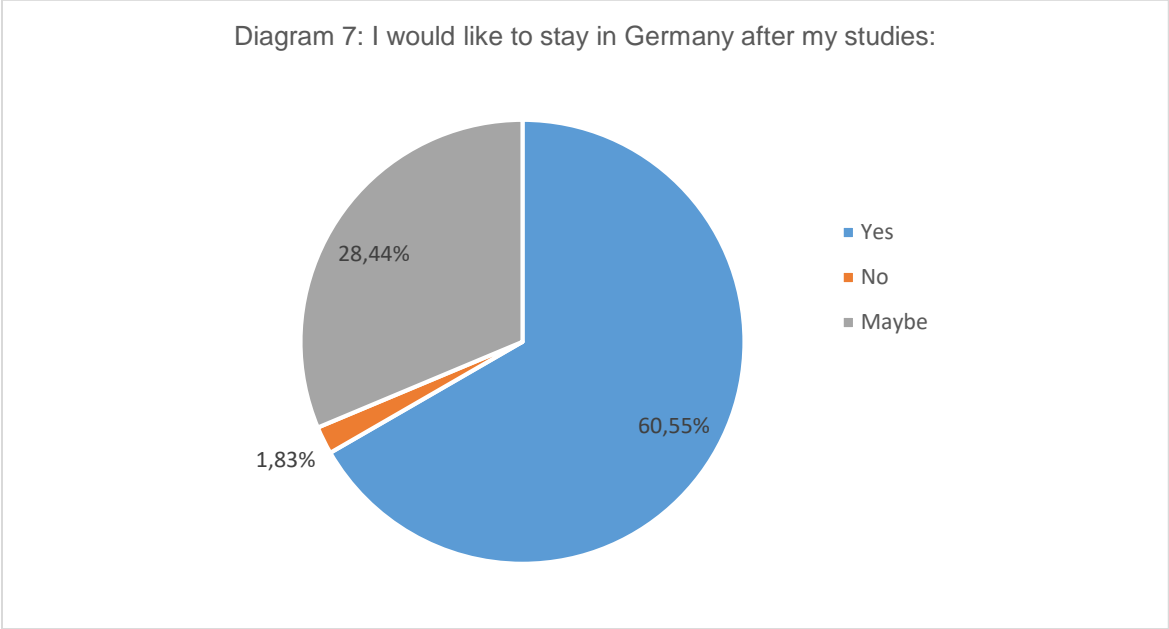
**Table 7: Target sectors with subcategories**

<b>Target sector</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Society: education, demography, geography & infrastructure, history, law & justice, religion, social affairs, weather & nature	54	49,54%
Internet: cybercrime, demography & usage, mobile internet & apps, online videos & online entertainment, range & traffic, social media, search engines & SEO, advertising & marketing	25	22,94%
Economy & Politics: work & profession, economic situation & business, politics, taxes & public finances	25	22,94%
Pharma & Health: doctors, hospitals & pharmacies, healthcare system, health conditions, medical technology, care & support, pharmaceutical industry & pharmaceutical products	24	22,02%
Technology & Telecommunications: TV reception, fixed network & mobile communications, hardware, home appliances, IT services, software, consumer electronics	23	21,10%
Administration & Defence: public administration associations & organisations, defence	22	20,18%
Living: family, friends & acquaintances, love & sex, personality & behaviour, celebrities	20	18,35%
Leisure: amusement parks & local recreation, gambling, hobby, art & culture, toys, sports & wellness	15	13,76%
Media & Marketing: media use, music & music industry, radio, TV & film, publishing & book market, advertising & marketing	15	13,76%
Other	14	12,84%
Energy & Environment: waste management, emissions, energy, environmental & energy technologies, water management	13	11,93%
Tourism & Gastronomy: gastronomy, business travel, private travel, travel agents & tour operators, accommodation	9	8,26%
Transport & Logistics: railway & rail transport, vehicles & road traffic, logistics & transport, aviation & aerospace, shipping, petrol stations	9	8,26%
Metal & Electronics: electrical industry, fine mechanics & optics, automotive engineering, aircraft & space industry, mechanical engineering & plant construction, metal industry, rail, vehicle construction, shipbuilding industry	8	7,34%

Finance: Insurance & Real Estate, banks & financial services, financial market, real estate, insurance	7	6,42%
Trade: DIY trade (building & DIY), buying behavior, electrical retailing, wholesale trade, hobby and leisure, retail trade indexing, body care & health, food retailing, furniture trade & furnishing, shopping center & FOC, textile trade, shoe trade & accessories	7	6,42%
Chemicals & Raw Materials: chemical industry, fossil raw materials, glass, ceramics & plastics industry, mineral raw materials & mining, mineral oil & refining, renewable raw materials, paper & pulp industry	6	5,50%
E-Commerce & Mail order: B2B e-commerce, B2C e-commerce, C2C e-commerce, e-government	6	5,50%
Agriculture: fishery & Aquaculture, forestry, agriculture	5	4,59%
Consumer & FMCG: alcoholic beverages, garden & DIY, pets & zoological, commodities, clothing, shoes & textiles, cosmetics & body care, food & nutrition, furniture, furnishings & contents, non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, detergents & cleaning agents	5	4,59%
Building: finishing trade, main construction industry	3	2,75%
Services & Craft: business services, handicrafts, domestic household related services	1	0,92%

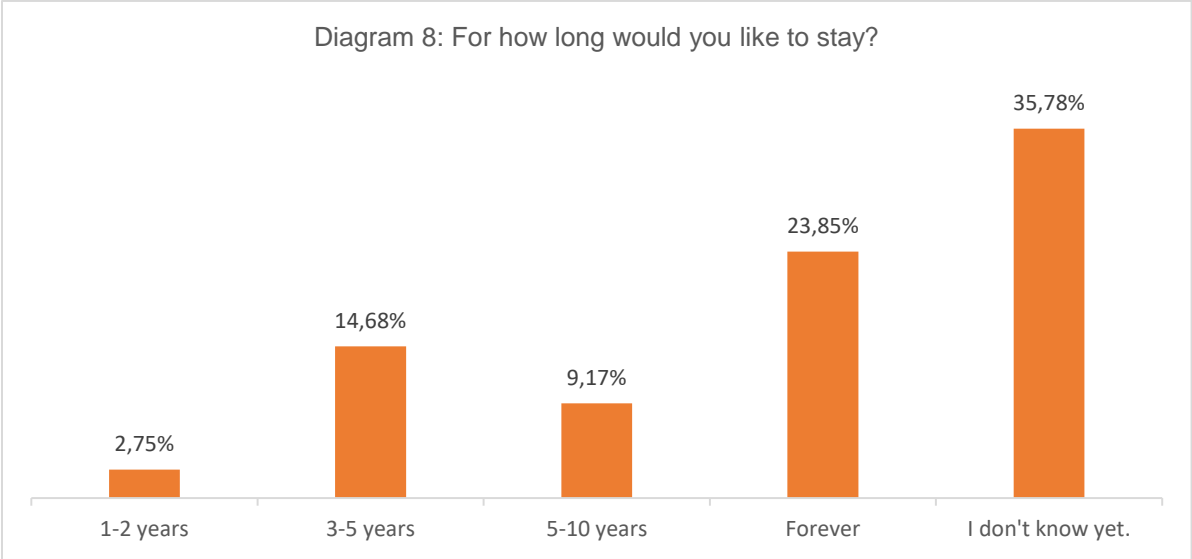
**Question 11: I would like to stay in Germany after my studies:**

The vast majority (60.55 %; 66) of the surveyed international students would like to stay in Germany after their studies. Another 28.44 % (31) could at least imagine doing so. 2 % (2) of the respondents do not have any plans to stay in Germany. 10 respondents abstained.



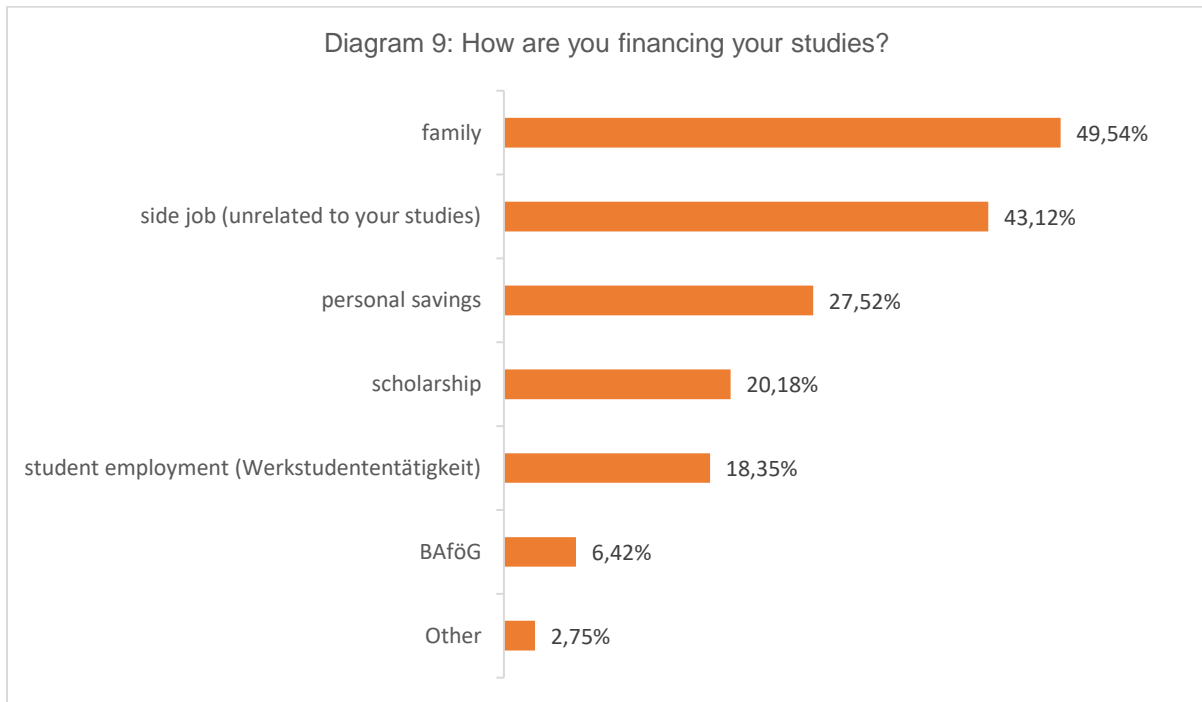
**Question 12: For how long would you like to stay?**

35.78 % (39) of the respondents who want to stay in Germany answered that they did not yet know for how long. However, 23.85 % (26) could imagine staying in Germany forever. 9.17 % (10) of the surveyed international students would like to stay for a period of 5 to 10 years, 14.68 % (16) for 3 to 5 years after graduation, and 2.75 % (3) for 1 to 2 years. 15 respondents abstained.



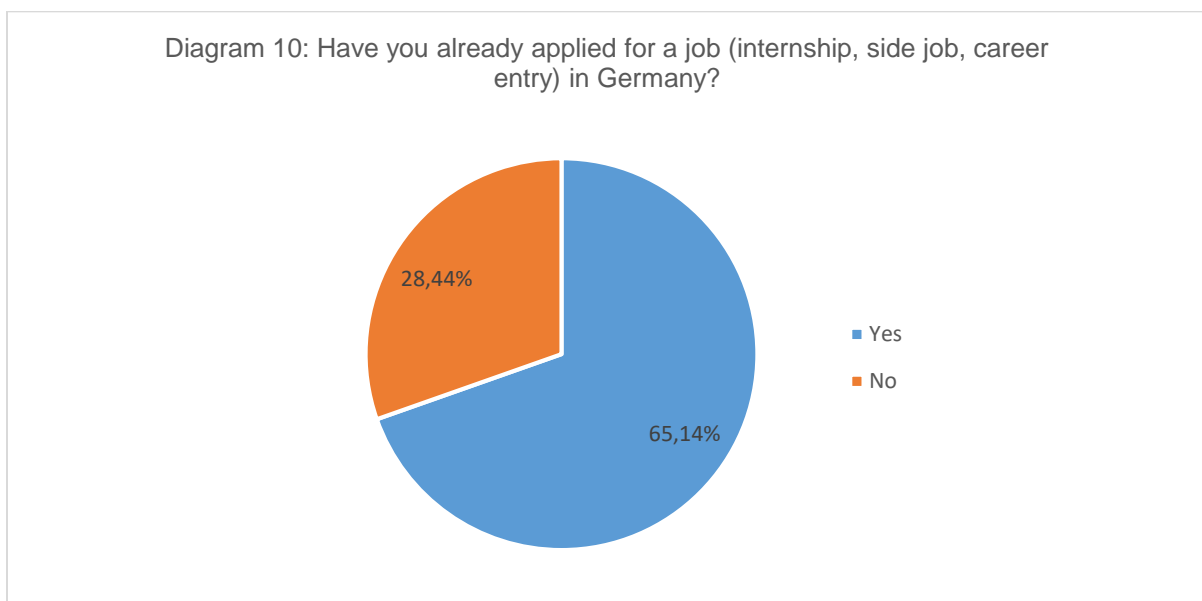
### Question 13: How are you financing your studies?

Almost half (49.54 %; 54) of the international students stated that they finance their studies with the help of their family. 43.12 % (47) have a part-time job and 18.35 % (20) work as *Werkstudent*. 27.53 % (30) of the respondents rely on their own savings, 20.18 % (22) of the students are supported by a scholarship and 6.42 % (7) receive BAföG. Half of the students indicated more than one source of funding. 3 respondents abstained. (Multiple answers were possible). The respondents indicated student loans (e.g. KfW funding) and vacation jobs as other options.



### Question 14: Have you already applied for a job (internship, side job, career entry) in Germany?

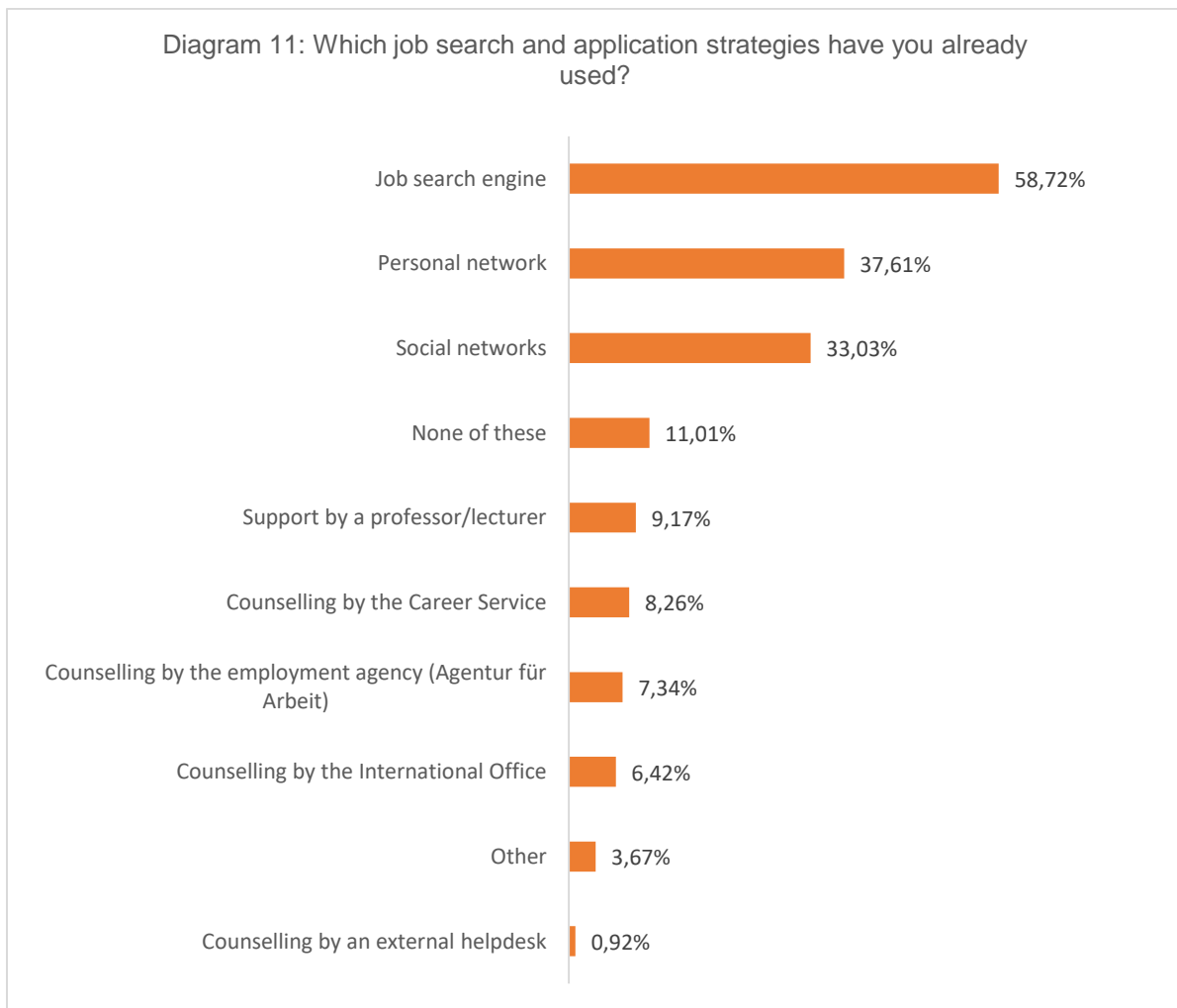
Approximately two-thirds (65.14 %; 71) of the participants stated that they had already applied for a job in Germany once. 7 respondents abstained.



### Question 15: Which job search and application strategies have you already used?

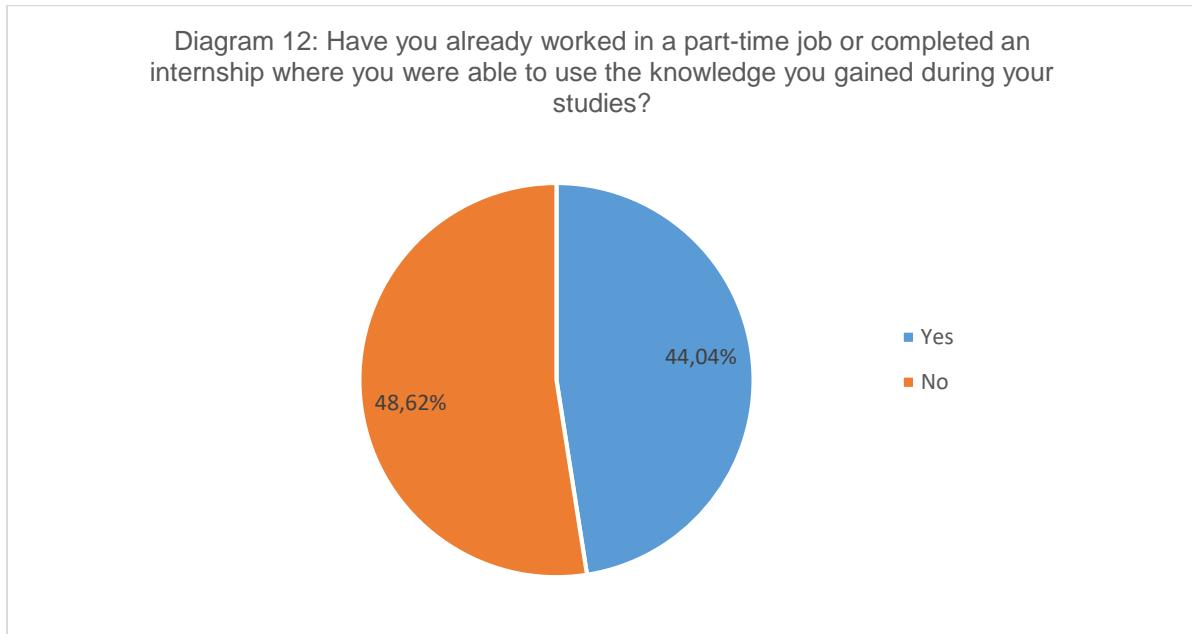
When looking for a job, 58.72 % (64) of the respondents use job search engines, followed by personal networks with 37.61 % (41) and social networks with 33.03 % (36). Some of the international students at Osnabrück University have already sought job search support from university institutions or teaching staff: 6.42 % (7) of the students use the support of the International Office, 8.62 % (9) have sought advice from the Career Service and 9.17 % (10) have been supported by professors or lecturers. The Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit) has been a point of contact for 7.34 % (8) of the respondents. 0.92 % (1) have turned to external counselling centres.

Under Other Strategies, students indicated they had personally inquired with employers or received support through school. 11.01% (12) of students did not use any of the job search strategies indicated. 3 respondents abstained. (Multiple answers were possible.)



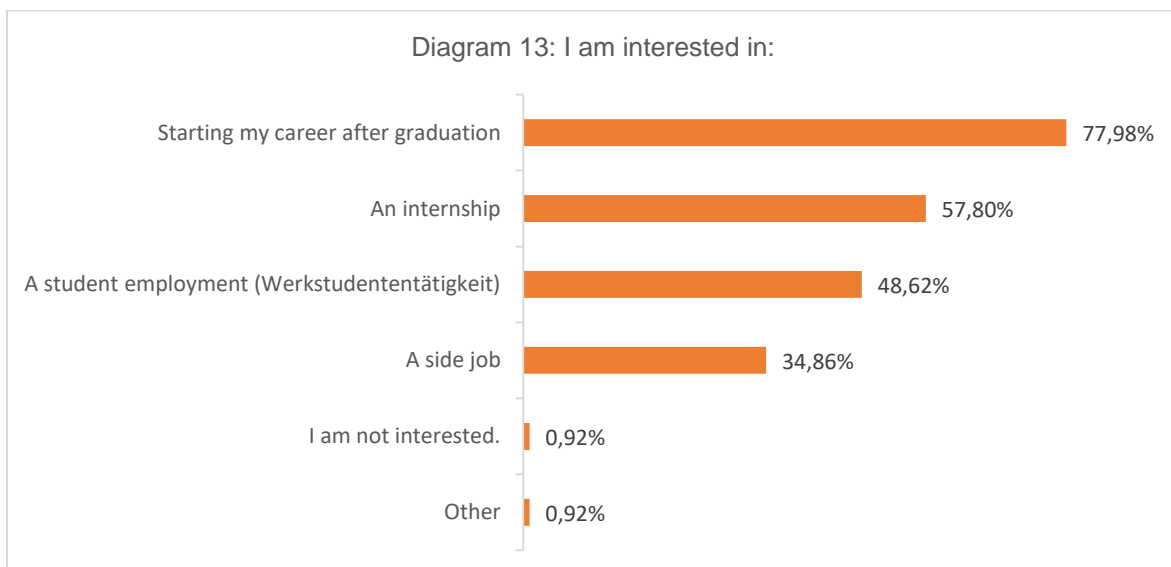
**Question 16: Have you already worked in a part-time job or completed an internship where you were able to use the knowledge you gained during your studies?**

Nearly half (48.62 %) (48) of the international students stated that they have already worked in a part-time job or completed an internship in which they could apply knowledge from their studies. 8 respondents abstained.



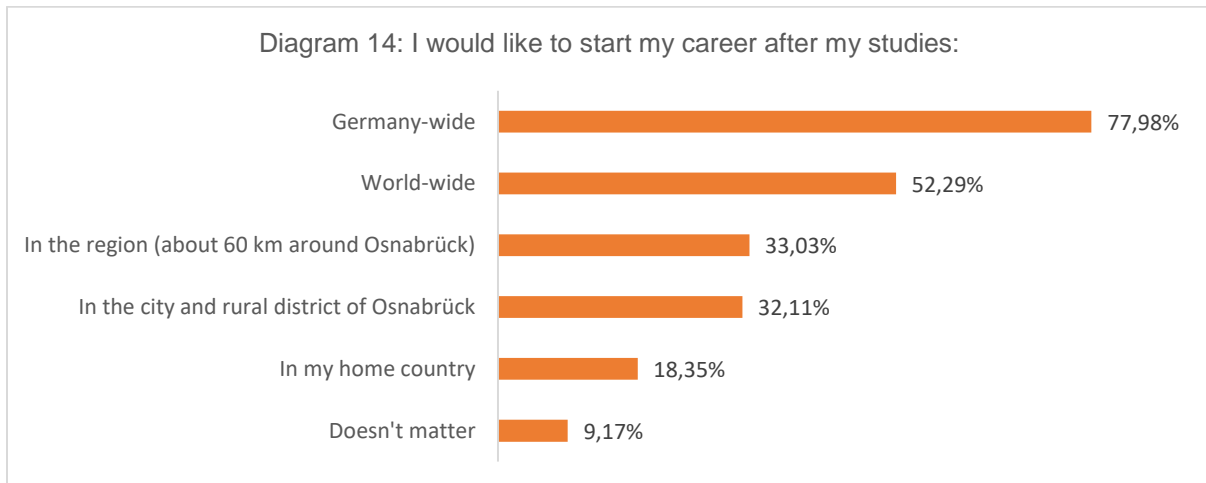
**Question 17: I am interested in:**

In order to be able to tailor our future services specifically to the needs of international students, we wanted to know which job opportunities were particularly relevant. 77.98 % (85) of respondents said they were interested in starting a career after graduation, 57.80 % (63) in internships. 48.62 % (53) were interested in *Werksstudententätigkeit* and 34.86 % (38) in part-time jobs. (Multiple answers were possible.)



### Question 18: I would like to start my career after my studies:

When asked where they would like to start their career, 9.17 % (10) answered that it would not matter to them. 52.29 % (57) of the students would like to work internationally. 18.35 % (20) of the respondents would like to return to their home countries. 77.98 % (85) are considering working in Germany, with about one third stating an interest in working in the region: 32.11 % (35) in the city and district of Osnabrück, 33.03 % (36) within a radius of 60 km around the city of Osnabrück. (Multiple responses were possible.)



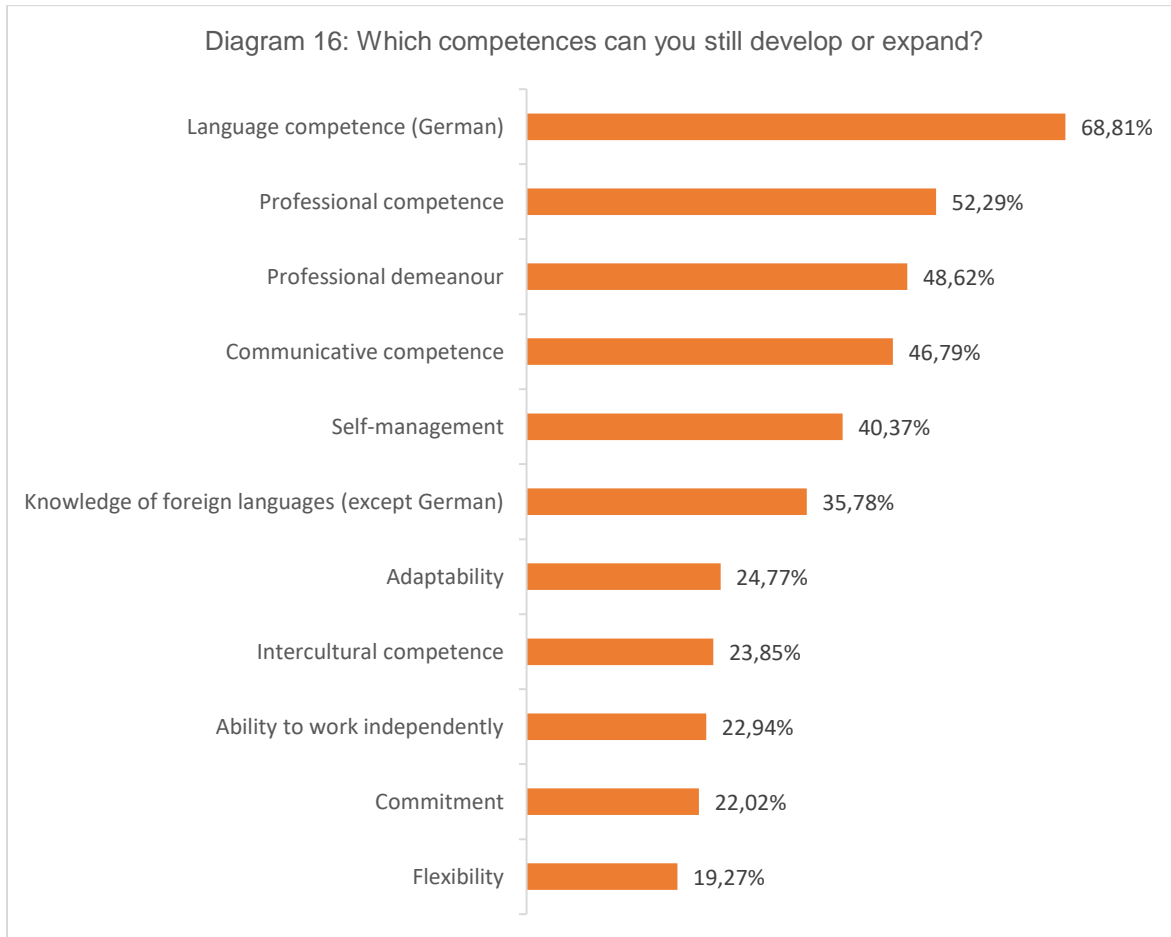
### Question 19: What are your special skills?

When asked about their competencies, 77.06 % (84) of the participants indicated their intercultural competence and 74.31 % (81) their adaptability. 73.39 % (80) of respondents answered that their foreign language skills (except German) were noteworthy, and the same number of respondents noted their ability to work independently. 67.89 % noted flexibility as a distinguishing skill. (Multiple answers were possible.)



## Question 20: Which competences can you still develop or expand?

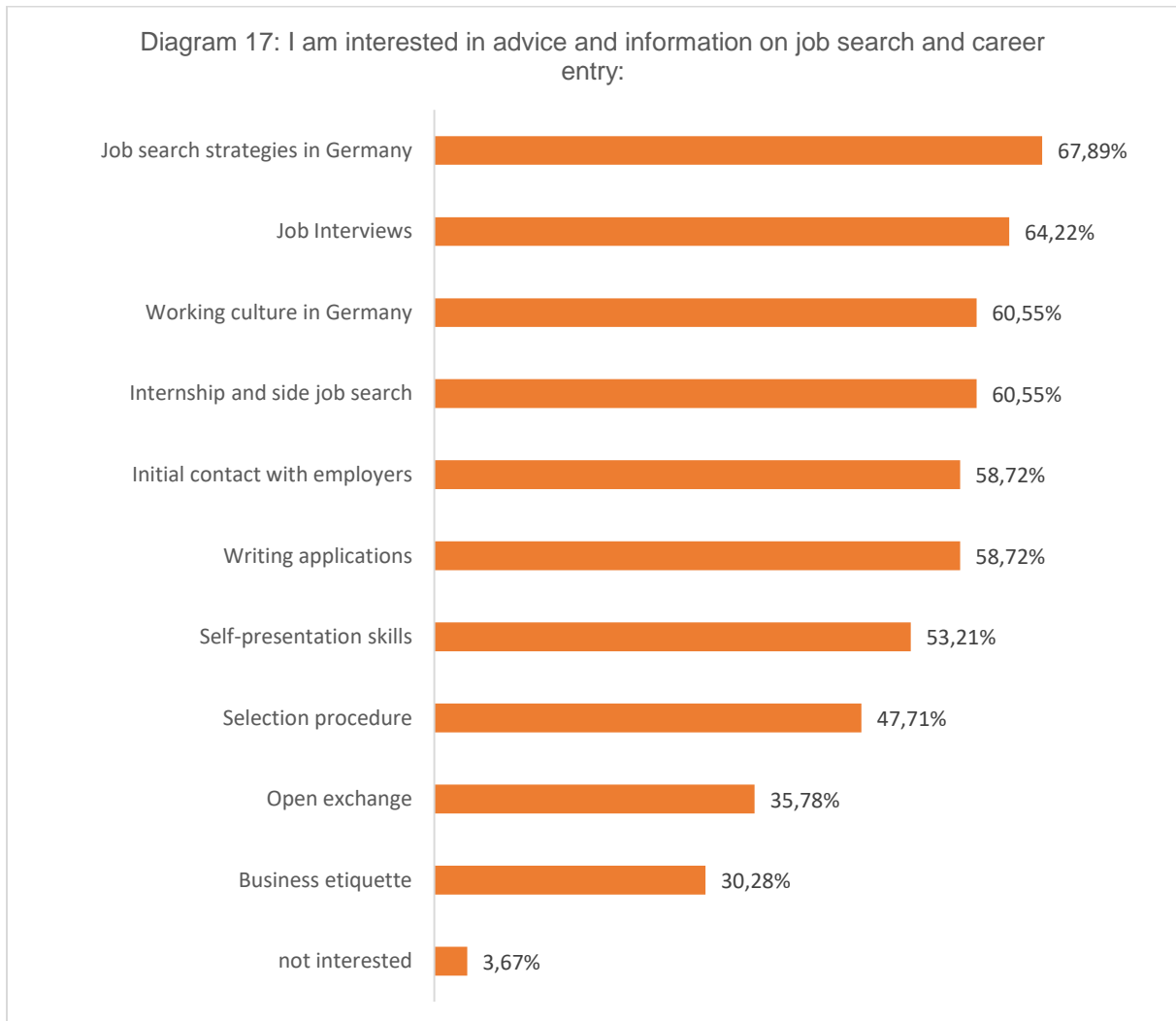
When asked about competences that the participant could still develop and expand, 68.81 % (75) indicated their language competence (German). 52.29 % (57) would like to develop their professional competence, and 48.62 % (53) would like to work on their professional demeanour. 46.79 % (51) of the respondents would like to improve their communication skills. 40.37 % (44) answered that they would like to work on their self-management. (Multiple answers were possible.)





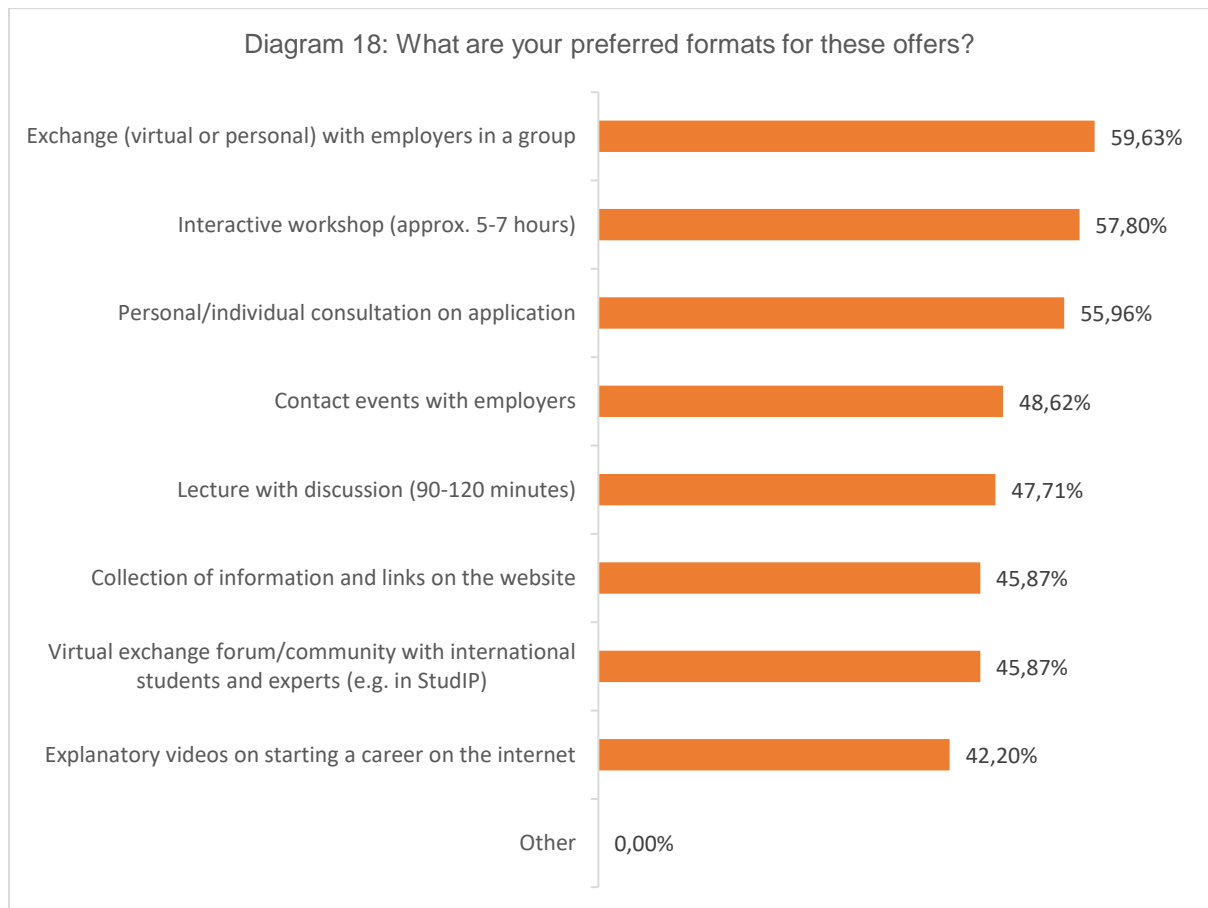
### Question 21: I am interested in advice and information on job search and career entry:

In order to be able to tailor our services to the needs of international students at Osnabrück University, we asked about interest in various advisory and information services. 67.89 % (74) of the respondents were interested in strategies for finding a job in Germany, 64.22 % (70) in services related to job interviews, and 60.55 % (66) in internship/part-time job search and the work culture in Germany respectively. First contact with employers and writing job applications are of interest to 58.72 % (64) of the students. 53.21 % (58) would like advice and information on the subject of self-presentation. 35.78% (39) are interested in an open exchange, and 30.28 % (33) in business etiquette. 3.67 % (4) of the respondents are not interested in service offers. (Multiple answers were possible.)



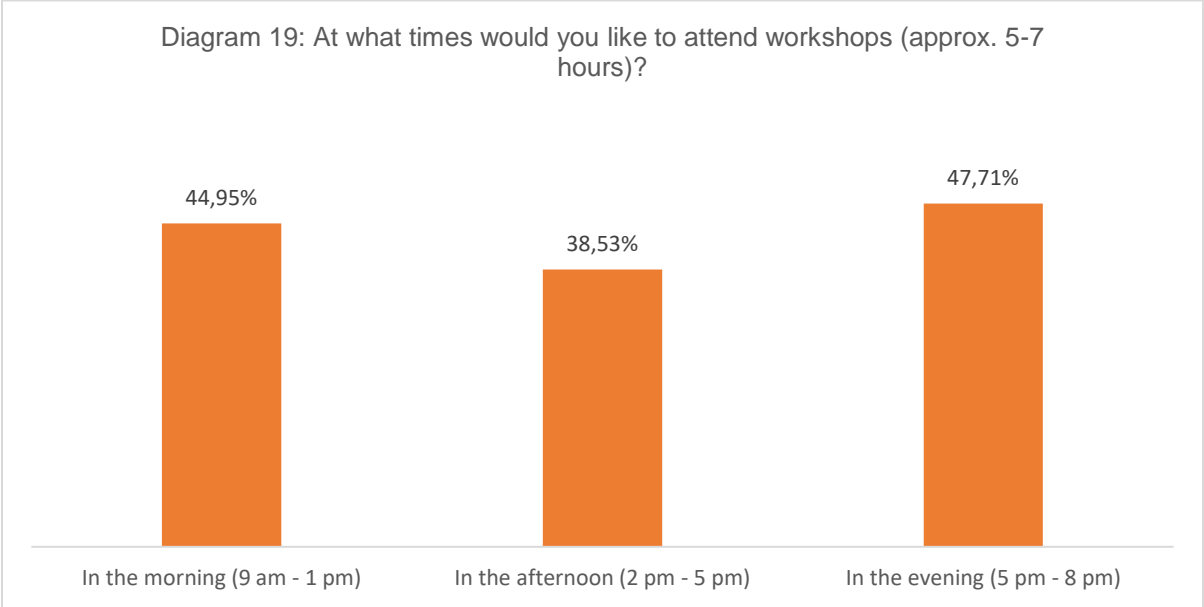
## Question 22: What are your preferred formats for these offers?

59.63 % (65) of the surveyed students would like to exchange information with employers in a group setting, 57.80 % (63) would be interested in interactive workshops. 55.96 % (61) of the students are interested in personal advice on job applications. The remainder of suggested formats are nearly equally interesting to the participants, with interest ranging from 42.20 % (46) to 48.62 % (53) for contact events with employers, lecture with discussion, virtual exchange forum/community with international students and experts, information and link collection on the website, and explanatory videos on career entry. (Multiple answers were possible.)



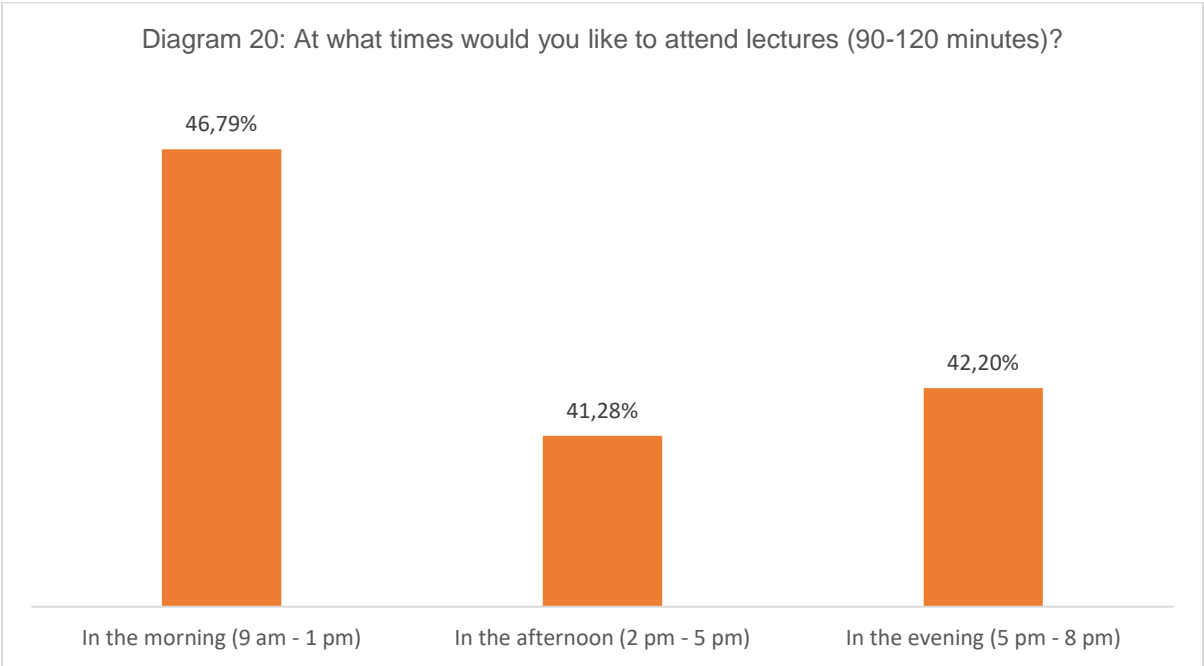
**Question 23: At what times would you like to attend workshops (approx. 5-7 hours)?**

For longer workshops (5 to 7 hours), the students preferred, by a small margin, evening time from 5 to 8 p.m. (47.71 %; 52). 44.95 % (49) of students expressed a preference for the morning from 9 am to 1 pm. Afternoon workshops from 2 to 5 p.m. would be favoured by 38.53 % (42) of respondents. (Multiple responses were possible.)



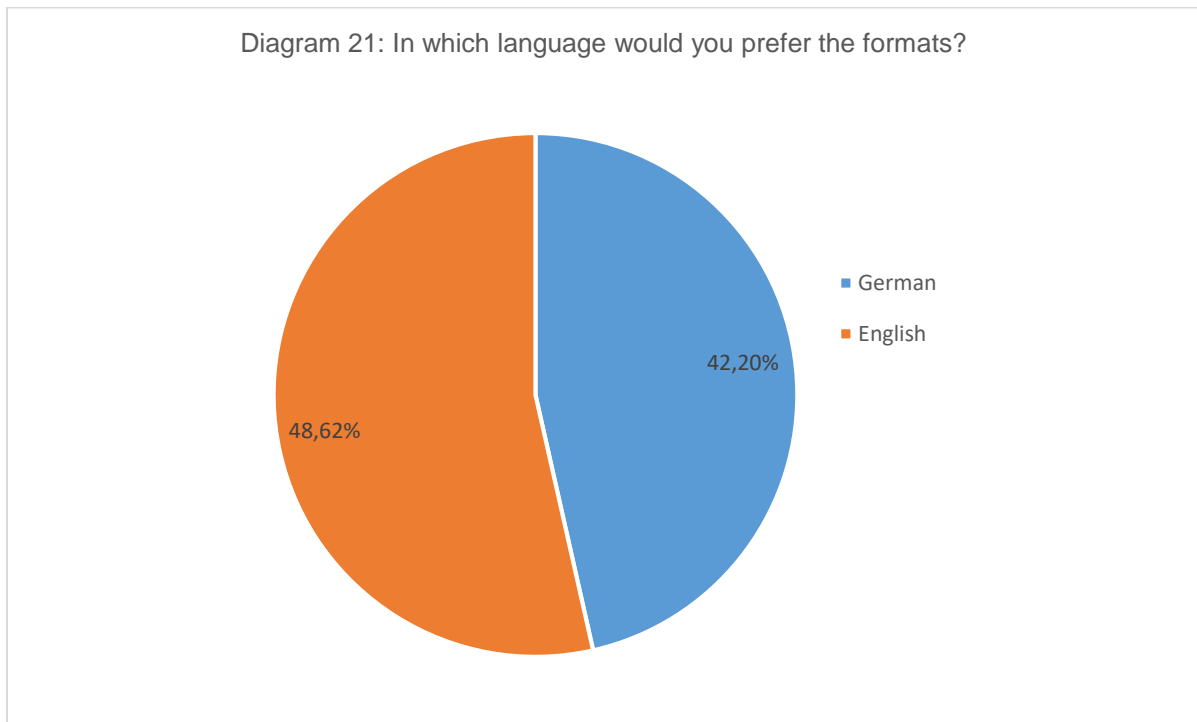
**Question 24: At what times would you like to attend lectures (90-120 minutes)?**

For longer lectures (90 to 120 minutes), 46.79 % (51) of the participants would prefer the morning from 9 am to 1 pm. 42.20 % (45) of students expressed preference for evening time from 5 to 8 pm. 41.28 % (46) of the students are partial to to attend lectures in the afternoon from 2 to 5 pm. (Multiple responses were possible.)



### Question 25: In which language would you prefer the formats?

A slight majority of the students (48.62%; 53) would favour formats in English compared to 42.20 % (46) of the students that would prefer German. 10 respondents abstained.



## 3. Summary of the results and derived measures

### Summary of results:

The participants of the survey form a very heterogeneous group, with 40 different nations and a wide range of degree programs being represented. Cognitive Science, Computer & Systems Science, Political and Social Sciences, and Linguistics and Cultural Studies form the majority of the subjects represented here. Almost 46% of respondents possess a high or very high level of German language proficiency (C1 + C2), while just under 19 % of students show a comparatively low level of German language proficiency (A1 + A2). More than 60 % of the respondents want to stay in Germany after graduation, with another 28 % considering this option.

Respondents have indicated a wide range of skills, among them intercultural competence, adaptability and independence, as well as proficiency in a total of over 40 different languages. The most popular desired working sectors include society (49.54 %), the Internet, business & politics, pharmaceuticals & healthcare, with a large number of different career aspirations. Just under half of the respondents have already worked in a relevant part-time job or internship. Respondents have already employed a number of different job search strategies (58.72 % online job exchanges, 37.61 % personal and 33.03 % social networks), but have neglected other strategies (e.g. counseling services offered by the Career Service (8.26 %) or the Employment Agency (7.34 %)). 68.81 % of respondents named language competence (German) as a skill they would like to develop further; 52.29 % of the respondents indicated professional competence as a skill to develop, followed by 48.62 % for self-presentation skills and 46.74 % for communicative competence.

In terms of their interest in events and courses, between 53 % and 67 % of the respondents expressed interest in topics such as job search in Germany, job interviews, German work culture, internship and part-time job search, first contact with employers, writing job applications and self-presentation. The preferred event formats include: exchange events with employers (59.63 %), interactive workshops

(57.80 %), individual counseling (55.96 %) and contact events with employers (48.92 %). Many respondents have also indicated that they would like to use websites and virtual exchange forums (45.87 % each). 48.62 % of respondents would prefer these events to be held in English over 42 % in German.

The survey clearly indicates the respondents' professional capability as well as their will to stay in Germany, and likewise, it becomes evident that international students require support in transitioning from the university to the German labor market. Within the framework of the project (which runs until December 31, 2021), initial measures are planned to meet this need. However, for a sustainable transition management and for maintaining vital networks with external and internal partners, permanent structures and resources have to be established in the long term, both in the central administration as well as in the Schools. To this end, the survey results will be made available to the School representatives to serve as impetus for further dialogue.

#### **Derived measures:**

Based on these results, various offers and measures catering to the needs of international students will be derived within the project period. In addition to lectures, networking opportunities, and workshops, we will promote the expansion of internet services, individual counseling services, and the establishment of an online networking platform.

#### **Event program:**

In the winter semester 2020, events and offers centered around work culture, first contact with employers, study financing, and part-time job search have formed the core of the project's efforts to support international students in transitioning into the labor market. The summer semester 2021 efforts will address the students' desire for interaction and networking through interactive formats with employers (e.g. NOSTA Group, Diakonie) and multipliers (e.g. alumni, Employment Agency). We have designed group-specific offers for the most strongly represented subjects in order to meaningfully address immediate issues international students experience when they seek to enter the labor market. Our series of "Infocafés" and interactive lectures will delve into the topics of job applications and job search strategies from a variety of perspectives. An English-language lecture will be offered as part of the company contact fair "Chance" at and in cooperation with the Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences. Likewise, to cater to the needs of those participants who do not yet have a sufficient level of German, an Alumni Infocafé and the events for Cognitive Science, Systems Science and Computer Science will be offered in English. In cooperation with Osnabrück University's Welcome Project for refugees, two one-day workshops on the topics of work/life planning and on volunteer work are planned for the summer semester, which will be open to all international students. In the winter semester 2021, the topics of work culture in Germany, first contact with employers, and a workshop on self-presentation are planned.

#### **Website offers, exchange forum, individual counseling and further networking:**

In order to meet the reported needs, we plan to continuously expand our online information services on career orientation, e.g. via expert interviews. A Stud.IP forum will allow students to network with each other, while allowing us to communicate directly with the target group. The desire for individual counseling can be met, to a limited extent, through counseling sessions by the project staff. However, we will mostly refer to the comprehensive services offered by the Employment Agency (e.g. application portfolio check, individual counseling, coaching), which students have not employed extensively thus far, as well as to other multipliers (e.g. ZePros) and direct employer contacts (e.g. via WIGOS).

More information on the Study and Stay @OS project and the events offered can be found on the project website: [www.uni-osnabrueck.de/study-and-stay](http://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/study-and-stay)

The project ends on December 31, 2021.

Contact: Franziska Werner und Bianca Schulz, [career4internationals@uos.de](mailto:career4internationals@uos.de)