

# Enrollment in Academic Institutions of Higher Education (1914-1943/44)

## Abstract

Student numbers in Germany fluctuated between 1914 and 1943/44, with economic crises and the two world wars playing a decisive role. While many male students were called up for military service between 1914 and 1918, the number of students rose to over 100,000 by the end of the war until the summer semester of 1919, thus exceeding the direct pre-war level. The statistics also include foreign students who may have had to leave the country during the war. The temporary decline in student numbers in the years 1924/25 was due both to the decline in inflation and the associated improvement in employment prospects, as well as to the fact that the generation of war veterans was now finishing their studies. Since the end of the nineteenth century, German universities had slowly begun to admit women, whose enrolment initially increased steadily until 1933. During the Great Depression, many students delayed their graduation due to the poor prospects on the job market. The total number of students increased as a result. After 1933, the number of students decreased. There were several reasons for this: Jewish people were pushed out of universities and the academic world by antisemitic legislation, the Nazi regime sought to reduce the number of female students, career paths outside academia enjoyed a higher reputation and were often also associated with better job prospects. At the beginning of the Second World War, many students were drafted into the Wehrmacht. The number of female students, on the other hand, increased during the course of the war.

## Source

### Enrollment in Academic Institutions of Higher Education <sup>a)</sup>

Semester/Year	Students <sup>b)</sup>		%	Students per 10,000 Residents <sup>c)</sup>
	Total	Number of Female Students		
SS 1914	79,511	4,313	5.4	11.7
WS 1914/15	36,201	7,409 <sup>g)</sup>	20.4	5.3
SS 1915	22,900	4,813 <sup>g)</sup>	21.0	3.3
WS 1915/16	20,010	4,927 <sup>g)</sup>	7.6	2.9
SS 1916	22,225	5,793 <sup>g)</sup>	26.1	3.2
SS 1917	23,387	7,752 <sup>g)</sup>	32.3	3.4
SS 1918	25,430	7,573	29.8	3.8
WS 1918/19	46,180	7,861	17.0	6.9
ZS 1919 <sup>d)</sup>	61,656	3,017	4.9	9.8
SS 1919	100,133	8,578	8.5	15.9
WS 1919/20	115,336	8,335	7.2	18.3
SS 1920	115,633	8,676	7.5	18.7
WS 1920/21	119,609	8,693	7.2	19.3
SS 1921	120,196	8,890	7.4	19.2

SS 1922	120,557	8,882	7.4	19.7
SS 1923	125,306	9,883	7.9	20.3
WS 1923/24	114,363	9,421	8.2	18.5
SS 1924	100,751	8,368	8.3	16.3
WS 1924/25	93,566	7,532	8.0	15.1
SS 1925	90,970	7,612	8.4	14.6
WS 1925/26	87,348	7,637	8.7	14.0
SS 1926	95,255	8,539	9.0	15.1
SS 1927	101,005	10,336	10.2	15.9
SS 1928	111,582	12,894	11.5	17.5
SS 1929	122,374	15,955	13.0	19.1
SS 1930	129,708	18,813	14.5	20.2
SS 1931	134,767	21,195	15.7	20.8
WS 1931/32	126,632	20,256	16.0	19.6
SS 1932	127,580	19,998	15.7	19.6
WS 1932/33	121,137	18,910	15.6	18.7
SS 1933	115,197	17,739	15.4	17.7
WS 1933/34	108,053	15,629	14.5	16.6
SS 1934	92,622	12,680	13.7	14.1
SS 1935	72,802	10,175	14.0	10.9
WS 1936/37	64,482	8,343	12.9	9.5
WS 1937/38	58,325	6,698	11.5	8.5
SS 1939 <sup>e)</sup>	56,477	6,249	11.1	8.1
H.T. 1939 <sup>e,f)</sup>	36,239	5,875	16.2	5.2
2.T. 1940 <sup>e,f)</sup>	39,885	8,590	21.5	5.7
SS 1941 <sup>e)</sup>	40,968	13,641	33.2	5.8
WS 1941/42 <sup>e)</sup>	52,344	14,887	28.4	7.4
WS 1942/43 <sup>e)</sup>	63,636	21,607	33.9	9.0
SS 1943 <sup>e)</sup>	61,066	27,174	44.5	8.6
WS 1943/44 <sup>e)</sup>	44,783	27,442	61.3	6.3

a) Universities and polytechnic, veterinary, agricultural, forestry, and philosophical-theological colleges, business schools, sports and mountaineering academies; not including teachers' colleges, and art and music schools.

b) Enrolled students, including foreigners, excluding guest students.

WS 1914/15 – SS 1919 excludes students excused from coursework due to military service (60-70% of the students on average). Although they have not been categorized by gender, they have been excluded from these statistics on student enrollment. Beginning with SS 1925, students on leave or otherwise excused from coursework are no longer counted.

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c) Population of the Reich at the midpoint of that year. The percentage of students in the winter semester is calculated on basis of the population figures for the previous year (midpoint).

d) In the spring of 1919 an intermediary semester was added to facilitate veterans' transition to university.

e) Based on the borders as of December 31, 1937.

f) The summer semester of 1939 was followed by a fall trimester; 1940 was divided into trimesters; there was another trimester before the summer semester of 1941.

g) The pronounced fluctuation in the number of female students results primarily from the varying and sometimes incomplete statistical information found in "*Allgemeines Vorlesungswesen der Oberschulbehörde Hamburg*" [The Hamburg Higher Education Office's General Enrollment Information], which listed 827 female students for the SS 1914; 3,340 for the WS 1914/15; none up until the WS 1916/17; and 894 for the SS 1917.

Source of original German text: *Sozialgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch*, Volume III, *Materialien zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches 1914–1945*, edited by Dietmar Petzina, Werner Abelshäuser, and Anselm Faust. Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1978, pp. 169–70.

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