

# FAQs leave semester/ leave of absence



A leave semester – yes, no, maybe...?! There are various reasons to take a semester off and you may ask yourself many questions before and as well after the leave semester. In our overview, we would like to provide the corresponding answers. **Please keep in mind that these are only hints and that our list does not claim to be complete.**

## What is a leave semester/ leave of absence?

A leave semester is an official interruption of your studies. Whether it is pregnancy, an own illness, a stay abroad or an internship – a break during your studies can have various reasons. In your application for your leave of absence, you have to indicate and, if necessary, prove the respective reason. Please inform yourself by contacting the student office or examination office of your university/college.

Leave semesters are not treated like normal semesters of study but they do count as university semesters. You remain enrolled during this period and keep your status as a student.

(see §21 Sächsisches Hochschulgesetz in connection with the respective enrolment regulations)

**Attention, international students:** the maximum duration of stay for study purposes in Germany (§16b AufenthaltsG) is 10 years, the count starts after entering the country for studying reasons (including possible necessary study preparation, e.g. Studienkolleg or language courses, as well as further qualification through a master or PHD program). (See Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift Aufenthaltsgesetz, number 16.2.7)

## Am I allowed to take examinations during a leave semester?

The universities or academies should (not: must!) enable students during a leave semester to take examinations. Please contact your respective examination office. (see § 21 Absatz 3 Sächsisches Hochschulgesetz)

**Attention:** If benefits according to Bürgergeld are received during a leave semester, students are not allowed to take examinations or to be engaged in any other studying activities (Bürgergeld for international students see below!)



## Can I still get BAföG during a leave semester?

No. During a leave semester you do not have a claim on BAföG. The BAföG office must be informed immediately on your leave of absence by handing in the enrolment paper. If BAföG has been received during a leave semester, this will be reclaimed by the BAföG office. This also applies to a retroactive leave of absence.



## Do my parents still get child allowance during a leave semester?

This depends on the reason for your absence. If you move forward in your studies while being absent, there is still a claim on child allowance (e.g. leave of absence due to exam preparation or mandatory internship). The Familienkasse must be informed immediately on a leave semester.

**Attention, international students:** it depends on the purpose of your stay in Germany, whether there even is a claim on child allowance. Please feel free to book an individual counselling at our Social Counselling.



## Can I keep my student health insurance during a leave semester?

In a leave semester, insurance obligation does still apply. You still have to be insured via family insurance (until the age of 25), student insurance (mostly from the age of 25 to 30) or insured voluntarily (mostly starting from the age of 30).



## Do I have a claim on Bürgergeld (SGB II) during a leave semester?

In specific cases there is a claim on benefits according to Bürgergeld during a leave semester. Not every reason for a leave of absence allows financial support through Bürgergeld. There is, for instance, a claim in case of absence due to pregnancy or child education and in case of own illness or health impairment. Furthermore, other conditions have to be fulfilled. The Social Counselling can discuss whether there is a claim on Bürgergeld after discussing your individual situation. Please do not engage in any studying activities while receiving Bürgergeld in the leave semester, otherwise you may be asked to repay all benefits you received during the whole semester.

**Attention:** Social benefits may endanger many international students' residence permit, as a secured livelihood is a condition for e.g. their study-related residence title. Feel free to book an individual social counselling before the application.

## Do I have a claim on Housing Allowance (Wohngeld) during a leave semester?

Mostly yes, as there is no claim on BAföG. Nevertheless, other conditions have to be fulfilled as well. For instance, at least a low income has to be existent but the income limit must not be exceeded. The individual situation has to be considered. You find further information in our document:



[www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/sites/default/files/22-06\\_faqs\\_wohngeld\\_web\\_de.pdf](http://www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/sites/default/files/22-06_faqs_wohngeld_web_de.pdf)

## Do my parents still have to pay maintenance for me during a leave semester?

If your parents have enough financial capacity to support you during your active study period, they can continue doing so during a leave semester as well. In some cases, parental maintenance can have priority to social benefits. It is a matter affected by family law then, please inform yourself at a law firm for family right or consult the free legal assistance provided by the Studentenwerk.

## What do I have to consider when having a job during a leave semester?

During a leave of absence the special regulations for students regarding the liberty of social security (also called "Werkstudierendenprivileg") are cancelled. However, the mini-job regulation is not affected by this, as it is not dependent of the status as a student. Therefore, students with more income then on Minijob basis per month in a leave semester are completely insured by social security (e.g. health, care, unemployment and pension insurance). A potential family insurance or student health insurance is not possible during this time.

**Hint:** international students who are in Germany for study reasons can, independent of taking a leave semester, work 140 full/ 280 half days per year ((since 1 March 2024 (§16b, section 3 AufenthG)) but should still recognise the possibility of paying all social security contributions if they earn more than the actual Minijob income limit per month.

**Before the application for a leave semester, please inform yourself at the Social Counselling on possible consequences for your individual situation.**



## Do I have to pay the “Semesterbeitrag” during a leave semester?

In § 3 of the Studentenwerk’s “Beitragssordnung” you find general information on exemption from the semester contribution.

 [www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/beitragssordnung](http://www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/beitragssordnung)

A leave of absence confirmed by your college / university does not automatically lead to an exemption from the semester contribution. The contribution exemption has to be applied for at the Studentenwerk.

 <https://www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/en/exemption-payment-semester-fee-and-reimbursement>

# Social Counselling

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## Contact

Studentenwerk Leipzig — Social Counselling

Post address: Goethestraße 6, 04109 Leipzig

E-Mail: [sozialberatung@studentenwerk-leipzig.de](mailto:sozialberatung@studentenwerk-leipzig.de)



[www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/beratung-soziales/sozialberatung](http://www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/beratung-soziales/sozialberatung)

## Your advantages

- ✓ detailed advice on your individual situation
- ✓ support making your decision
- ✓ consultation is free of charge
- ✓ anonymous consultation upon request
- ✓ We are sworn to professional secrecy

The social counselling team of the Studentenwerk Leipzig will also be happy to advise you on other possible social benefits - e.g. half-orphan's pension, parental allowance, maternity allowance or ALG I/ Bürgergeld.