



German

Study languages: Make the world your place

“Learning another language provides you with an invaluable skill set, one that will differentiate you from the pack. Combined with any degree, it will open up opportunities to travel and work around the world.”

Alexander Komarovsky
BCom (International Business),
BA (Economics), DipLang (German)

In our world of global communication and travel, language specialists find themselves constantly in demand. German involves the study of a language that is closely related to English. German culture and creativity form much of the Western heritage in literature, music, visual art, architecture, philosophy and the sciences. It's easy to see that the study of German can enhance the study of many other disciplines.

German is one of the world's major languages and one of the two principal languages of Europe. Germany is one of the world's largest contributors to research and development, and its well-funded universities are an important destination for scientists and students. Knowledge of German language and culture has long been an asset whether one lives in Europe or in other parts of the world.

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Why study German?

The links between Germany and New Zealand are strong in education and research. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), among other organisations, offers generous scholarships for New Zealand students to spend time in Germany to perfect their knowledge of German, the culture and their particular field of study. German is the second most important language in scientific research, and Germany's overall contribution to research and development ranks number three in the world. You will also improve your chances of obtaining a work visa for Germany if you can demonstrate good language skills.

German at Otago

German is taught through a communicative approach, enabling students to use the language actively from day one. You will have many opportunities to improve your language skills at all levels – in class, online and in more informal learning environments. Our classes are small and this helps us to get to know our students. We also offer a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as the German play, which has been a very popular tradition in our programme for over 60 years.

Apart from studying German, you can also choose papers that will give you a perspective on the social and cultural life of German-speaking countries, including Austria and Switzerland, and the role these countries have played and still play in Europe and the world.

No background required

You can study German at any level. If you have studied German at school or elsewhere, you will be able to build on your knowledge and skills, and the German programme will determine which paper will best suit your level of German.

Degrees

German is a major of the Bachelor of Arts (BA), a three-year degree programme. You can also graduate with a minor, or a diploma in German while completing your degree in a different major. Students who are interested in conducting further research on German language and culture can join our honours, MA or PhD programmes. You can also study German as part of the major in Global Studies or the major in Tourism, Languages and Cultures, which both have language acquisition as their core component. German papers may be taken for interest, and will count towards your degree.

Student exchange

The University of Otago offers an international exchange programme that is of particular benefit to language students. You may spend one or two semesters at one of Otago's partner universities in Heidelberg, Tübingen or Leipzig. You pay only your New Zealand fees, and complete your qualification within the same timeframe as if you had never been away. Competitive scholarships are available to support students on exchange.

Career opportunities

A BA with a major in German will open job opportunities in both the private and public sectors – in business, trade, consultancy, tourism, and education, as well as in foreign affairs and other government agencies. Recent Otago graduates who have included German in their degree now work as consultants, marketing managers, journalists, teachers and librarians, all around the world. German graduates are generalists and have many transferable skills. Your ability to analyse and communicate effectively as well as the international perspectives that you will have gained by studying German at Otago will certainly give you an edge.

Combining another degree with German as a minor or as a diploma also increases students' options in the job market. Increasingly, studies in law, commerce, international business and communications are enhanced when you can offer cultural experience or language skills alongside your major area of study.

PROFILE

Joshua Livingstone

BA(Hons) (First Class) (German)

My love affair with German began at high school with the arrival of German international students. Self-taught in German, I was lucky enough to live in Germany for a year after finishing high school. When I returned to New Zealand I decided I wanted to polish the German I had learned, which led me to studying German at Otago.

The small classes, the easily-accessible faculty, and the broad topics covered were some of the best aspects of my Bachelor of Arts with Honours in German. Events like the weekly Stammtisch and having the chance to really flex my language muscles in the classroom with others of various levels of ability led me to love the Otago German students' community.

I highly value language learning, and I think there are many benefits that extend beyond simply being able to speak in another language. Intercultural communication, an awareness of other societies and cultures, and discovering how language functions all help students to become well-rounded and socially aware.

I wrote my thesis on Angela Merkel's handling of the migrant crisis of 2015, and the research skills I acquired have proved invaluable in my career. Media analysis, writing about complex and nuanced topics, and an understanding of the state of international migration have all been useful in my current position.

Combining my love of German with my love of politics at the University of Otago led me to a job at parliament in Wellington. My ability to undertake research has formed a core part of my responsibilities, and is one of the things my employer really values.

I cannot state enough how satisfying and enjoyable my time with the German Programme was. If you're considering studying German, I highly recommend that you do so – and not just so you can eavesdrop on German tourists!



For questions about
German

otago.ac.nz/german

