

'Better academic resources, work opportunities': Check why Indian students are preferring Germany over Canada

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The number of Indian students in Germany has shot up by 146% over the last five years.

(Graphics by Dinkar Sasi)

Indian students are choosing Germany over Canada to pursue higher education, a recent report by learning platform UpGrad showed. In the survey, only 9.3 per cent chose a dream for Canadian education, a decline of 8.55 per cent from last year.

However, 32.6 per cent showcased a desire for German higher education, a significant jump of 19.4 per cent as in the last survey, this number stood at 13.2 per cent.

Moreover, as per Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the number of Indian students has shot up by 146 per cent over the last five years. This year, India made its debut as the key country of origin, with around 42,600 students (which was 20,562 students in 2019), or 12 per cent of all international students, enrolled in Germany.

While the declining popularity of Canada might be due to the increase in the cost of living, the growing unfriendly policies for international students, and the Canada-India conflict, the rise in Germany education might be due to Indians' inclination towards Science, experts believe.

This trend has also been spotted in the recent data released by the Ministry of Education which showed the total number of high school students who cleared the Science stream increased from 45 lakh in 2020 to 52 lakh in 2022.

‘Better quality resources’

Paromita Bhattacharjee, who will be joining as a Postdoctoral fellow under Women in Research Fellowship at the University of Münster in April, shared why she picked Germany over other top nations. “I applied at the University of Exeter (UK) and the University of Pennsylvania (US) too, but Germany was my final choice as I realised that the facilities for my specialisation were much better in this country. The experimental setup, quality of faculty, fellow mates and resources is much superior, at least in STEM courses,” she said.

This, coupled with low tuition fees, is now attracting more Indian students, experts believe. “Indian students are increasingly choosing Germany due to its renowned STEM programmes, low tuition fees, and ample scholarship opportunities. Germany’s emphasis on research, practical experience, and affordability makes it an attractive option. While Canada also remains popular, Germany’s specialisation in STEM fields, financial advantages, and welcoming atmosphere are drawing more Indian students. Germany has seen a remarkable 107 percent increase in Indian students in the past four years,” said Saurabh Arora, founder of the student accommodation platform University Living.

English and local language — A mix of both

Indian students are not hesitant to explore languages. “Everybody flocks to English-speaking countries, but I chose a country which challenges my linguistic development and academic journey. Germany is mainly bi-lingual; therefore, it helps Indian students advance academically and socially,” said Jasper Singh, who will soon be heading to Germany to pursue a PhD in Sociology.

Another girl from Punjab who is currently in the process of applying for an Engineering degree in Germany shares the common thought. While she grew up listening to everyone wishing to head to Canada, she took it as a challenge not to follow the rat race of adding to the Punjabi population there. “Since I was in my teens, I wanted to make sure that if I go abroad, it would not be Canada. It is because I wanted to move out from my comfort zone. Heading to Germany, however, means I have to learn a new language and culture. It excites me to think that I may be a part of something that nobody in my vicinity is accustomed to,” she told [indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com).

No housing and accommodation crisis, yet

Another reason why Germany has been attracting Indian students, in comparison to Canada, is the ongoing accommodation and job crisis in the latter. Students have found Canada more expensive, especially the house rent and diminishing part-time jobs.

“While searching for a study abroad destination, I found Germany cheaper than Canada or the US. One of the biggest benefits is when I engage in a part-time job, it is usually related to my field of expertise and degree. This means I get to add to my technical skillset and resume while earning my living, rather than working at a grocery store, which my friends in Canada have to do. While I think that provides a different kind of skillset and experience, having a part-time job in my area of degree directly helps me build my profile,” shared Safin Chowdhury, who is pursuing a Master’s in Information Systems.

He also added that Germany is not facing a student accommodation problem, which is an ongoing issue in countries like the UK, the US, Canada and more. “Accommodation plays a vital role in the student experience, and it’s essential for Indian students to explore various options available in Germany. This includes university-provided housing, private rentals, shared apartments, and homestays. Factors such as proximity to campus, amenities, and budget should be carefully considered when choosing accommodation. Moreover, familiarising oneself with the rental market and legal rights as a tenant in Germany is crucial for a smooth housing experience,” Arora added.

Students also added that having a better post study work visa makes their choice easier. Upon completing their studies in Germany, students become eligible to work in the country under an extended 18-month Job Seeking Visa, commonly referred to as a post-study work visa. This additional period, known as a post-study work permit, is granted in addition to the study period specified in their German Study Visa. During these 18 months, students are free to seek employment related to their field of study and can engage in any job to sustain themselves financially.

It’s crucial for students to apply for this post-study work visa before their student visa expires, ideally during their last semester of studies. This timing is essential because the 18-month work period commences immediately after they receive their final exam results. By familiarising themselves with this process and planning accordingly, students can effectively transition from their studies to the workforce in Germany.

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