

Projects for an Optimal Start of Studies at KIT

Mentoring, Online Services, Orientation Tests, and Integrated Buddy Program: The State of Baden-Württemberg Funds Programs to Facilitate the Beginning of Studies at KIT



KIT students are offered programs to facilitate the start of studies and help prevent dropouts. (Photo: Anne Cordts, KIT)

All beginning are difficult. This also holds for starting studies. Questions like “Did I choose the right subject?” or “Will I cope with the requirements?” decide on dropping out of or continuing studies in the early phase in particular. Measures taken by universities to support their students in this phase are now funded by the state under the “Fonds Erfolgreich Studieren in Baden-Württemberg” (FES, fund for successful studies in Baden-Württemberg). Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is currently carrying out four projects to facilitate the start of studies and thus setting the course for successful graduation.

“We already offer numerous services to facilitate the start of studies and increase the probability of successful graduation,” says Professor Alexander Wanner, KIT Vice President for Higher Education and Academic Affairs. “Funding from the state is very helpful for constant further development of such programs.”

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“Successful Studies in Baden-Württemberg” – Projects at KIT

The project “**Studienlotsen, Mentoring und entschleunigte Studienpläne**” (study pilots, mentoring, and slowed-down study plans) has already started successfully at KIT. It covers services to support German students in the initial phase of their studies. [...]

The project “**Betreuung, Pflege und Weiterentwicklung der Online-Angebote des MINT-Kollegs für Studieninteressierte und Studienanfänger*innen**” (support, maintenance, and further development of online offers of the MINT Kolleg for prospective students and student beginners) focuses on facilitating transition from German schools to university in the MINT subjects (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences, and engineering). [...]

The **orientation test for the selection of studies** to be developed by KIT and the universities of Stuttgart and Ulm starts one step ahead: Through selection interviews, knowledge and aptitude tests, German applicants are given an individual feedback. [...]

For students from abroad, KIT plans to **extend its socio-integrative buddy program** and to offer preparatory language and scientific courses. “Learning from each other and with each other” is the heading under which students from abroad are assisted by a fellow student from the same department, if possible. The buddies help beginning foreign students directly after admission to find their way around, the right contact persons, and to organize studies properly. For students of KIT, the buddy program represents an opportunity to experience another culture and language. With tutorials and preparatory courses, KIT also plans to facilitate transition from the working and learning culture in the students’ home countries to studies in Germany. The program of two semesters includes German language courses as well as exercises and practical laboratory lessons in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

About the Successful Studies Fund (FESSt)

Under the FESSt program, the state of Baden-Württemberg supports orientation semesters, tutorial and mentoring programs as well as innovative teaching and learning formats at its state universities. For 2019 and 2020, EUR 21.6 million will be available. With these funds, the state government plans to push the positive development of the universities in Baden-Württemberg in the past years. The ratio between beginning students and graduates (dropout rate) in the year of 2016, for instance, was far better than in 2012. With 19% dropouts

over all subjects and types of universities, Baden-Württemberg is far below the average of 27% of other big university states, such as Bavaria, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia, and Saxony. This is confirmed by the study “Die Schwundbilanzen bei den deutschen Studierenden an den baden-württembergischen Hochschulen” (dropout statistics of German students at universities in Baden-Württemberg) made by the German Center for University and Science Research on behalf of the Ministry of Science in 2018.

Being “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association“, KIT creates and imparts knowledge for the society and the environment. It is the objective to make significant contributions to the global challenges in the fields of energy, mobility and information. For this, about 9,300 employees cooperate in a broad range of disciplines in natural sciences, engineering sciences, economics, and the humanities and social sciences. KIT prepares its 25,100 students for responsible tasks in society, industry, and science by offering research-based study programs. Innovation efforts at KIT build a bridge between important scientific findings and their application for the benefit of society, economic prosperity, and the preservation of our natural basis of life.

This press release is available on the internet at http://www.sek.kit.edu/english/press_office.php.

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This year’s **anniversary logo** recalls the milestones reached by KIT and its long tradition in research, teaching, and innovation. On October 1, 2009, KIT was established by the merger of its two predecessor institutions: the Polytechnic School and later University of Karlsruhe was founded in 1825, the Nuclear Reactor Construction and Operation Company and later Karlsruhe Research Center in 1956.