

Program Description (continued) | Program for English Teaching Assistants

The Fulbright Germany Diversity Liaison provides support and guidance, for example, through educational toolkits, DEIA workshops during the In-Country Orientation Seminar, and regular office hours throughout the grant period. English Teaching Assistants cooperate closely with a German teacher of English at their host school. They are placed in large and small communities, in cities and rural areas.

The ETA program in Germany offers a unique opportunity to advance your teaching skills and engage in your German community. You can create new learning opportunities for American Studies in- and outside the English language classroom, and with new ideas and teaching methods you spark your students' interest in the USA. Your cultural outreach goes even beyond your host community; Fulbright ETA are invited to present their home country also at other types of schools and in different regions of Germany.

ETA Profile Descriptions from Alumni

The following comments are representative of feedback from many of the ETAs in Germany. They summarize the personal requirements and duties typically connected with an ETA assignment in Germany.

Personal Profile

Adaptable: Within the school, you will be expected to learn "on the job" and adapt to a new environment. You will need to consult with your mentor teacher and observe your surroundings in order to learn about how your school organizes itself. You will likely have many different classes and often your schedule will change as a result of meetings or class trips, and it is important to be aware of these changes.

Organized: Related to the above point, you will need to stay on top of your schedule, manage online and paper documents, meet deadlines, and collect information from your school. For example, you should always have the relevant text necessary for any given class, just as the students are expected to come prepared. As a Teaching Assistant you are also responsible for being timely and reliable and showing up to class at the correct time and without unexcused absence.

Self-starting: The school is a very busy environment and it is important that you take the initiative in order to implement your ideas (e.g. projects), change your schedule, start clubs, or attend events and activities at the school. It is especially important to speak up if you have valuable information about a topic to share with a teacher.

Communicative: It is critical to stay in frequent contact with your mentor teacher and the other teachers you work with, as appropriate. Not only will this allow you to share ideas or troubleshoot potential issues, but also to receive important information about your workday (such as when a teacher knows s/he will not be able to give a lesson or would like you to do something special with his/her class). Dealing with different types of people every day, you will need to be a good communicator. Being a 'connection to knowledge' for students will mean explaining information clearly in a way that your students will understand.

Team-oriented: A school operates as a team, so it is important for you to work together with your colleagues. The teacher and assistant form a vital team within the classroom. For a lesson to run smoothly you will both have to work well together.

Informed: You will quickly realize that the scope of your responsibilities extends beyond English instruction. Students and teachers alike will have questions for you about life in the United States, travel, and politics, among other topics. You will quickly develop positive relationships with your colleagues and students if you are willing and able to discuss themes like these in an informed way. It can be especially rewarding, for instance, to bring along materials from English-language items you read on your own.

Positive attitude: Being a teaching assistant is not all fun, it can be a challenging task. But it is overcoming those challenges that make the assignment so rewarding. It's important you tackle every challenge with a positive attitude. Not only will this help you succeed in those challenges, but it will also leave a positive influence on your pupils and those around you.

Expected Duties of an ETA

Responsibilities:

Enhance English lessons by supporting and supplementing English teachers in the classroom.

On a daily basis, you are expected to:

- Participate actively in lessons (can be in front of the class, as a member of a smaller group, or one-on-one)
- Act as a live translator/dictionary
- Assist with higher-level phrasing and vocabulary
- Get students talking!!

At times, you are expected to:

- Do a warm-up/introductory exercise or play a game with a class
- Prepare and conduct a lesson on a cultural topic
- Deliver an informative presentation on an academic topic
- Lead and facilitate a class discussion
- Give your opinion/perspective as an American
- Fill in for a teacher

- Give feedback on written or oral work
- Conduct preparation for oral exams or presentations
- Offer extra help/discussion time
- Help with or attend school events

You should feel comfortable:

- Using German to assist students with translations/vocabulary questions and to communicate with school administrators and staff
- Taking initiative to offer supplementary cultural information and materials where appropriate
- Being flexible
- Adjusting to individual teacher's expectations and planning methods

Other responsibilities:

- Inform yourself about the different course offerings at your school, including those outside of the English Department, as well as activities outside of the classroom. Use this information and consult with your mentor teacher in order to create a schedule with a variety of different courses.
- Attend your scheduled courses and actively contribute in accordance with what you and the classroom teacher have agreed upon. This may range from simply going around the classroom and offering help all the way to teaching a double-period on your own. In the latter case, it is essential that you prepare the necessary materials beforehand (the sessions and materials organized by the Pädagogischer Austauschdienst (PAD) can be especially helpful here).
- Provide feedback to the faculty about classroom sessions and ideas for improvement. Effectively, you bring an extra pair of eyes, ears and hands into the classroom.
- Organize and carry out a special initiative (or multiple) on your own. Discuss your idea with your mentor teacher, set aside an appropriate amount of time, and determine what resources are needed (your school may be willing to reimburse you for expenses like postage). There are many potential ideas for projects that will connect students to the United States and your fellow ETAs can help you to develop an idea.
- Take on non-classroom obligations (such as one-on-one tutoring within the school) at the request of your colleagues. The extra support will be highly appreciated and offers you the opportunity to get to know the students, their personal interests and strengths outside of the classroom.