

## **Reasonable Accommodation (*Nachteilsausgleich*) - Reduction of the Required *Wartesemester* (waiting semesters)**

You can file a claim for special circumstances that prevented you from acquiring your higher education entrance qualification (HZB) earlier.

### **Special circumstances**

Before filing your claim for special circumstances, please consider carefully whether the claim has reasonable prospect of success. Many applicants put too much hope in claims for special circumstances. Not every factor you might consider relevant justifies a claim for special circumstances in the admission procedure. To justify a claim for special circumstances, the factors you put forward must lead to severe impairment, must already **exist in your person at the time you are filing your claim** and **must be beyond your control**. Please consider carefully whether the factors you are putting forward really qualify as special circumstances. As a rule, a claim for special circumstances must be submitted at the same time as you submit your application for admission.

When you are filing a claim for special circumstances, you must provide appropriate evidence to support your claim. For information on what documents are considered appropriate evidence, please refer to the section on examples of justified claims. Please bear in mind the following: The evidence you include to support your claim must illustrate the special circumstances you are claiming in such a clear way that outside parties will be able to understand your arguments merely by consulting the respective documents. You can facilitate the processing of your claim by submitting, along with the required evidence, a short written statement in which you present arguments to support your claim. Documents issued by bodies that hold an official seal must bear an impression of that official seal. Photocopies must be certified.

If you are submitting several applications for admission (e. g. one for universities and one for universities of applied sciences in the service procedure) you may be required to file a separate claim for special circumstances (each to be submitted together with all required documents) for each of these applications for admission.

### **Reduction of the required *Wartesemester* (waiting semesters)**

When places are allocated according to the number of *Wartesemester* (waiting semesters) applicants have accumulated, the number of semesters that have elapsed since the applicant acquired his/her higher education entrance qualification (e. g. *Abitur*) will be taken into consideration. However, there may be circumstances that prevented the applicant from acquiring his/her higher education entrance qualification earlier and thus caused the number of *Wartesemester* he/she accumulated to be lower. Should this be the case, the applicant will be treated as if he/she had acquired his/her higher education entrance qualification at an earlier date when places are allocated according to the number of *Wartesemester*. This means, the applicant will participate in the admission procedure with the number of *Wartesemester* he/she would likely have accumulated had he/she not been prevented from acquiring his/her higher education entrance qualification earlier.

Example: Claudia applies for admission in the summer semester 2007. Her *Abitur* certificate was issued in May 2005, i. e. she has waited three semesters. However, she can provide evidence that, due to illness, she had to repeat 11th grade. If she had not had to repeat 11th grade, she would have obtained her *Abitur* in May 2004 and would thus have waited 5 semesters. In the admission procedure, Claudia will thus be considered to have accumulated five *Wartesemester*. Should the number of *Wartesemester* required for admission to the degree programme of her choice in the summer semester 2007 be four or more, Claudia will be admitted. Should, however, the required number of *Wartesemester* be six or more, she will not be admitted despite her claim for a reduction of the required *Wartesemester* having been accepted.

Please bear in mind: Providing proof of the existence of the circumstances you are referring to in your claim (e. g. illness) alone does not suffice to justify a claim for reasonable accommodation. Rather, you must also provide proof of the fact that the circumstances you

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are referring to prevented you from acquiring your higher education entrance qualification earlier. A letter issued by your school stating the reason for and duration of the delay in the acquisition of your higher education entrance qualification as well as other appropriate documents to prove the existence of the circumstances that led to the delay can serve as proof.

## **Justified claims**

Listed below are examples of reasons existing in the applicant and beyond the applicant's control that prevented him/her from acquiring his/her higher education entrance qualification earlier that can justify a reduction of the required *Wartesemester*: (letter issued by the applicant's school stating the reason for and duration of the delay in the acquisition of his/her higher education entrance qualification as well as other appropriate documents to prove the existence of the circumstances that led to the delay)

### **1. Special social circumstances**

- 1.1 Special medical conditions
  - 1.1.1 Prolonged periods of absence from school due to illness (statement from specialist medical practitioner).
  - 1.1.2 The applicant is severely handicapped and has a degree of disability of at least 50 (*Feststellungsbescheid des Versorgungsamtes* (letter issued by the *Versorgungsamt* confirming that the applicant is considered severely handicapped)).
  - 1.1.3 Prolonged periods of severe handicap or illness other than those specified under 1.1.1 or 1.1.2 (statement from specialist medical practitioner).
  - 1.1.4 Other comparable special medical conditions (statement from specialist medical practitioner).
  - 1.1.5 The applicant was pregnant while still at school (letter issued by a medical practitioner to verify the fact of pregnancy or birth certificate of the child).
- 1.2 Special economic circumstances (appropriate documents to serve as proof).
- 1.3. Other comparable special social circumstances (appropriate documents to serve as proof).

### **2. Special family-related circumstances**

- 2.1 The applicant was caring for his/her own underage children while still at school (birth certificates of children).
- 2.2 The applicant was caring for relatives in the ascending line with care needs or for his/her siblings while still at school (letter to confirm relatives' eligibility for care level I or II according to *Sozialgesetzbuch XI* (social code, book XI, SGB XI) or letter issued by a medical practitioner to confirm care needs).
- 2.3 While still at school, the applicant was caring for underage siblings living in the same household that would otherwise have gone uncared for (birth certificates of siblings).
- 2.4 Death of a parent or both parents before the applicant acquired his/her higher education entrance qualification if the applicant was unmarried and under the age of 25 when his/her parent(s) died (death certificate of parent(s) and certificate confirming the applicants marital status at the time).
- 2.5 The applicant had to move schools several times due to his/her parents moving home (certificate issued to the applicant when leaving a school (*Abgangszeugnis*) as well as certificate of residence (*Meldebescheinigung*) of applicant's parents).
- 2.6. Other comparable special family-related circumstances (appropriate documents to serve as proof; special family-related circumstances that can be considered include:

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The applicant had intended to take up studies in the degree programme of his/her choice earlier and it is evident that he/she had worked towards that aim. However, he/she had to postpone his/her university studies due to special family commitments, e. g. the need to care for his/her own underage children or the need to work to help finance his/her husband's/wife's university education without having to claim financial support from the state.)

3. **A minimum of one year of uninterrupted membership of the A, B or C squad of a German national sports federation**  
(letter issued by the responsible national sports federation to confirm membership).
4. **Other comparable special circumstances**  
(appropriate documents to serve as proof).