

# **FAQ regarding the Osnabrück Cognitive Science Master Online Studies (OS-COSMOS)**

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## Introduction

We are happy to have received many questions regarding the Cognitive Science Master Online Studies Program (also Online Master Program / OS-COSMOS / COSMOS). Here is a compilation of the frequently asked ones:

### 1. Eligibility

#### **What makes me eligible for the Online Cognitive Science Master Program?**

The (academic) entry restrictions for the remote track are the same as the on-site track of the Cognitive Science Master (<https://vt.uos.de/5bor8>). Additionally, the remote track is tailored to prospective international students who did not receive a Bachelor degree in Germany and cannot study Cognitive Science at the University of Osnabrück on-site.

#### **You state that the Online Master Program is for international students. I am an EU citizen, can I apply?**

Yes, if you did not receive your Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) from a German university nor are you a German national you might apply.

#### **I check all the eligibility "boxes" but live in Germany, can I apply?**

One goal of the DAAD is for the project to make German academia accessible to prospective students who could not study in Germany, aside from an online format. If you reside in Germany and want to apply for the online master, it contradicts the goal stipulated by the DAAD. However, there may be exceptions that could apply to your specific situation. Please contact us explaining your situation to see if you qualify.

#### **I am not an international student / I finished my Bachelor's degree in Germany, can I apply for the COSMOS Master program?**

No, the option to study the Cognitive Science Master remotely is a DAAD-funded project and will only allow a limited number of international students to start their studies.

#### **I have been admitted to the on-site Cognitive Science Master, can I switch to studying in the COSMOS Master program?**

No, the COSMOS Master is not a replacement for the on-site study program but an addition to it. Therefore, nothing changes for students that have already been admitted, whether you started your studies yet or not.

**I have been admitted to the COSMOS Master program, can I switch to studying in the on-site Cognitive Science Master?**

Yes, as the COSMOS Master program is part of the regular study program, students are allowed to switch to the on-site Cognitive Science Master. Please contact us explaining your reasons to switch to the on-site program.

**I do not have a bachelor's degree in Cognitive Science / in a comparable field, can I apply for this program?**

According to our [regulations](#), "Applicants must have a Bachelor degree in Cognitive Science (or a comparable degree) with an overall mark of at least 2.0 (this corresponds to grade B according to ECTS) in order to study Cognitive Science in the Master Program at the University of Osnabrueck. Applicants with a Bachelor degree (or comparable degree) in Artificial Intelligence, Biology, Computer Science, (Computational) Linguistics, Mathematics, Neuroscience, Philosophy or Psychology are eligible for admission to the Master Program." However, towards the bottom of the page (under "How to apply"), it states that "Students who do not have a Bachelor degree in Cognitive Science must include in their application materials a statement explaining why they wish to change their previous field of study and obtain a Master Degree in Cognitive Science. Please be as specific as possible." Therefore, if a student's degree falls outside of cognitive science, they may still apply, but must indicate their motivation (and if applicable, a previous experience that relates to Cognitive Science as well).

**Is there any preparatory work I can do before admission? / I have limited programming experience, can I apply?**

The preparatory work you might do largely depends on which modules (Neuroscience, Neuroinformatics, and Artificial Intelligence) you would like to pursue. Students are required to choose two. Regarding admission, there is technically no "required" preparatory work. However, prospective students who do not have a degree in cognitive science must indicate in their application letter why they would like to switch their field of study—this is where your prep work could be helpful.

Additionally, Neuroinformatics and Artificial Intelligence (and in some cases Neuroscience) require programming experience. While lacking this experience is typically not an issue when it comes to admitting prospective students, it would be beneficial to take basic programming courses as you will certainly need this skill for your courses. We recommend that you start with Python since most courses use this programming language. Here are some good resources: <https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-python> , <https://www.w3schools.com/python/>

If your background is on the technical side, on the other hand, it might ease your start to the program if you catch up on some neuroscience basics. For example with the courses "Understanding the Brain: The Neurobiology of Everyday Life" <https://www.coursera.org/learn/neurobiology> or "Medical Neuroscience" <https://vt.uos.de/c1719> .

**I am an international student living in Germany / not living in Germany and would like to join the lecture sessions only for few weeks / a semester, is that possible?**

If you don't want to be enrolled as a regular student, you may enroll as a Guest Student at the university and have access to some courses from the Institute of Cognitive Science. You can find more information on the [Guest Student website](#).

## **2. Application Process**

**What is the application process and when is the deadline for applying?**

The applications will open around the end of April for the winter semester and around the end of October for the summer semester. You can find information on the procedure on the [IKW website](#) and the [university website](#).

You will need to send in your application via [uni assist](#). You need to create an account with them and inform yourself of their procedures. You can see which documents you need to send on the websites. If you want to apply for the Online Master make sure to tick the correct box in the application form. Make sure you have copies of all the important documents, start crafting your motivation letters (one for online studies, one if your Bachelor is not in Cognitive Science), and remember that you not only have to submit your documents digitally but also send hard copies of your documents to Germany in time.

**ATTENTION:** Your application can only be accepted if you sent it to the right place. Check out the [official website](#) for more information.

**How can I properly express my motivation for studying online in the motivation statement?**

There are three parts to the motivation statement and it is important that you express your individual reasoning. Here are some questions and ideas to spark your thought process:

1. Why do you want to study online?

Here we ask for your motivation. Are there any reasons why you prefer this study mode? If you have good reasons for why you cannot move to Germany, address them here.

2. Why will I be successful in an online course?

This is the place to describe why you will successfully complete your studies online. Which skills and competencies do you have that will help you to study remotely and online? On which experiences are you going to draw when it comes to studying online successfully? This could be organizational skills, experience with asynchronous work or learning settings, etc.

3. How am I able to complete the course of study online?

Do you already have an idea of how to approach the task of studying online? This could cover aspects of the technology that will help you study or maybe you already have an idea of how to plan your studies on a day-to-day basis.

## **Can the COSMOS Master be started in the winter semester and in the summer semester? Like the on-site master program?**

Yes, the Online Master Program—just like the on-site master—starts in both the winter and summer terms. For application deadlines check out the [application website](#)

## **What are the admission requirements? How are participants selected?**

There are only a few hard requirements for admission that differ from the on-site master program (see <https://vt.uos.de/cosmos>). Namely, you must not have completed your Bachelor degree at a German university or be a German national.

Students are admitted based on their submitted qualifications with an emphasis on the motivation letters (which states reasons why you want to study Cognitive Science and why you want to study online.)

## **I am not a native English speaker but my previous Bachelor / Master / PhD degree was in English. Do I still have to do a language test?**

No, we accept it as an equivalent if the entirety of your program was in English. It is best if you get a separate certificate from your university that states your English proficiency and that the program was entirely in English. This is necessary because the admission office cannot rely on a course name or weblink or following up with you.

## **How long will I have to wait to hear back from you after I submitted my application?**

The selection of applications will take place after the applications are closed (find the application deadline [here](#)). Afterwards the applications will be reviewed. There is no definite date on when you will hear back from admissions. Typically, within a month or two after the admission deadline.

## **3. Study costs**

### **What are the fees for the remote Cognitive Science Master?**

The fees are equal to the regular in-person study fees. Upon acceptance, you will also need a proof of German health insurance to be admitted to the university. Please get in touch with us as soon as your application is accepted ([os-cosmos@uos.de](mailto:os-cosmos@uos.de)).

### **Are there scholarship options for the remote Cognitive Science Master?**

We do not know of any scholarships that are specifically suited for this course of study. Generally, you could search scholarships for the following: online studies, internationals studying in Germany, women in sciences, etc. Specific academic travel scholarships might

also be available to cover costs of the on-site period. Additionally you can also check out the [university scholarship page](#).

### **How much money will I need for the yearly on-site period?**

We cannot name you an exact amount of money that you will need for the on-site period, as it depends on many factors that are specific to you. To get an idea here is a non-exhaustive list: You will need to pay for the visa (depending on regulations specific to your country of residency / citizenship), flights to and from Germany, health insurance, local transport, housing, food and money for additional expenses. *(For 4 weeks of summer school, excluding flights, 1500€ are recommended by the international office.)*

Be advised, depending on the visa you apply for when coming to Germany, additional costs might arise – you may need to have money in a blocked out account. Please check which visa options are suitable (with your local German embassy) for the country you are travelling from. You can also check out the [international office website](#) for more information or contact them with specific visa-related questions.

### **What are the total costs of studying Cognitive Science Online per year (2 semesters)?**

The cost for two semesters of studying is the sum of the semester fees for two semesters (approximately 700€), the cost of the yearly on-site period and individual / unforeseen costs related to your degree (you might need or want to buy a new computer, technology, an interesting book about ethics in artificial intelligence, ...). Additionally, you will need to cover your cost of living, internet access, etc. Details on the individual parts can be found above.

## **4. Workload while studying**

### **For how long will I be studying?**

The COSMOS master is a full-time study program consisting of 4 semesters (2 years).

### **Is it possible to take this program part-time? Can I work while studying?**

This is a full-time study program that contains the same workload as the on-site master's program. Students are expected to take an average of 30 ECTS a semester (120 ECTS total), which corresponds to about 15 hours of lectures/class time a week, excluding homework, projects, and other assigned learning activities. Overall, students can expect to spend at least 40 hours a week on coursework. If students take a lighter load, we cannot guarantee that they will successfully complete the degree as the online program is funded by the DAAD for a limited amount of time.

You are free to work alongside the program as long as you can complete the workload within the intended 4 semester period.

## 5. On-site period

### How much money will I need for the yearly on-site period?

This question is answered: [Please find the reply under “Study costs”](#)

## 6. Course plan

### What does the typical course of study look like for the COSMOS master?

The program requires students to take 120 ECTS to complete the studies. A list of how these credits are compiled can be found on the [Online Master Program website](#).

Typically, students have to take courses totaling 30 ECTS per semester. The study project spans two semesters and is most often taken in semesters 1 & 2 or 2 & 3. At the same time, you will also take the courses from your two focus areas, interdisciplinary credits and electives. The master thesis is commonly written in semester 4 with little to no other courses.

### What time are the classes conducted and are these live sessions?

All classes are conducted between 8AM to 8PM Central European Time (CET).

It depends on the classes that you take, most classes are recorded and can be rewatched at your own pace. However, some classes in addition to the lecture videos, have discussion sessions that are held live (This is to ensure more interaction between the student and instructor). Conclusively, most classes offered for COSMOS students can be taken asynchronously unless otherwise stated. All course content will be available on StudIP (the university's learning management system).

### **Cognitive Science is made up of so many areas—not “just” Neuroinformatics, Neuroscience and Artificial Intelligence. Is it possible for me to take courses from other focus areas that are not intended to online students?**

You will have a chance to work on topics spanning your focus areas through taking part in a study project, taking interdisciplinary credits or taking courses from the third (but not your selected) focus area as elective credits. As of now, courses that are not interdisciplinary and part of a focus area are not intended to be available to online students.

Conclusively, if a course from another focus area is online/ hybrid, you may take it but you are not guaranteed to gain enough ECTS in that area to fill the module. If you managed to gain all the ECTS for that particular focus area (given that they are all hybrid/online) then you can take it as a major

### **Where can I read more about the focus areas Neuroinformatics, Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience at the institute?**

You can find out more about the research done at the institute and specifically in the three focus areas here: [Artificial Intelligence](#) , [Neuroscience](#) , [Neuroinformatics](#)



You can also have a look at the [courses offered at the institute](#). In the description of the course you will see which module it belongs to. Be advised that not all courses will be available to COSMOS students.

### **What are interdisciplinary courses?**

The availability of interdisciplinary courses differs each semester. Feel free to take a look at previous [interdisciplinary courses](#) offered in the past to get an idea what they are about. Simply search “interdisciplinary courses.” Most of the offerings have brief descriptions. Generally speaking, interdisciplinary courses approach a topic through the lens of different disciplines of Cognitive Science.

### **What are electives / elective courses?**

Electives are courses that you take outside of your chosen focus areas. This can consist of a variety of topics such as courses from other modules, interdisciplinary courses, or even courses that technically belong to your focus area if you have already filled up your credits. This will be discussed in more detail during welcome week.

### **Can students propose a topic for the study project?**

Yes, students are welcome to propose their own topics. You can find more information [here](#).

### **Is it possible to write my thesis at one of the university labs?**

Yes, you will write the thesis with a supervisor from the cognitive science institute and can write it on a topic from their work group remotely (e.g. about the data of an EEG experiment that has already been collected).

It is possible to write the thesis in one of the labs in presence in Osnabrück. You will have to get in contact with a supervisor and organize your stay in Germany. You will need to get a student visa for the duration of your stay and organize the surroundings (accommodation, money in a blocked account, etc.) or do the data acquisition during your on-site period and finish writing remotely.

If you want to stay in Osnabrück for your thesis, please contact the cosmos team and for more information on the organization of your stay, please contact the [international office](#).

## **7. Jobs and Career**

### **Will there be on-campus job opportunities during my studies?**

Unfortunately, due to bureaucracy, it might not be possible/feasible for you to work in

Germany while studying remotely. This is because of the requirements attached to receiving a job in Germany, for example, a proof of residency / address and German bank account.

While the difficulty level might differ depending on the country of your citizenship (e.g. EU citizens might have it easier to work in Germany), some issues are sustained, such as the German address.

If you have further questions, please get in touch with the [International Office](#).

### **What career opportunities will I have after completing my masters in Cognitive Science?**

Graduates of Cognitive Science are qualified, depending on their chosen focus areas, to conduct research in IT, Psychology, Philosophy, Neuroscience and/or Linguistics. Additionally, graduates are well-suited to apply knowledge and concepts in the areas of human-computer interaction, IT, (partially) the clinical medical environment, and jobs close to psychology. (Translation according to <https://vt.uos.de/5bnhl>)

The online master degree provides an equivalent scientific qualification to the on-site master degree.

### **Will I have the chance to do a (German) PhD after my online studies?**

Yes. The degree you receive is equivalent to the on-site master degree and qualifies you to apply for PhD positions. You can find more information on the PhD programmes at Osnabrueck University [here](#).

### **Is there a PhD program at the Cognitive Science institute in Osnabrueck that can be taken online (similar to the master program)?**

Unfortunately, the PhD program is not online, although you may ask one of the teacher advisors if that would be possible.

### **What are prospects regarding working in Germany after completing the online master?**

As this is a newly-developed program, we do not have any data to answer this question. Generally speaking, graduates of the master program can work in academia and business both in Germany and internationally.

Be advised that there might be differences regarding the working visa options available to online students after finishing their degree as they would not have lived in Germany for the course of their studies. For further questions, please contact the [international office](#).

## 8. Other

### **Will my diploma state that this was an online program?**

No, it will not state that it was completed online. However, we can issue you a supplementary certificate indicating that this was an online program.

### **Is there a chance to collaborate with researchers at the institute during my course of studies?**

During your study project and your master thesis, you have the chance to work on current research at the institute. While the work you can do is influenced by the fact that you study remotely (e.g. you will not be able to record EEG data in an Osnabrück lab from abroad), it can also be a great chance to expand research projects (e.g. comparing human-computer interaction behavior of German participants with participants from the country you live in).

Either way, if there is a project you are interested in, feel free to contact the researchers and ask if you can be involved. From experience, most researchers are happy to have enthusiastic people join their teams.

### **Is the program ABET accredited?**

As the ABET is an American accreditation, most German programs (such as ours) are not accredited by that institution.

### **Is it possible to do parts of my studies in Osnabrueck and parts remotely back and forth?**

Unfortunately, that is not possible. We generally discourage students from switching back and forth between both programs. However, it is possible to write your master's thesis (4th semester) in one of the labs in Osnabrück. You will have to get in contact with a supervisor and organize your stay in Germany.

Do you have any questions that we did not address yet or want more details? Do not hesitate to contact us at [os-cosmos\[at\]uni-osnabrueck.de](mailto:os-cosmos[at]uni-osnabrueck.de)