

News Update

Reciprocal Exchange Model Trial for 2025

We are pleased to share an exciting update to our student exchange program. In 2025, SAGSE will trial a reciprocal model, meaning that students who host a German exchange student enter a probationary period with the view to becoming scholarship recipients and traveling to Germany for 10 weeks at the end of November 2025, or 2026 if they are only in Year 10 this year. Previously, students who hosted were guaranteed an interview for a scholarship, but not automatically granted a position in the program. With this change we will also be extending the application due date to Wednesday May 7th, 2025.

This trial is in response to valuable feedback from families and partner schools about the hosting experience post-pandemic. Students who host will enter a probationary period in which they must demonstrate the values of our organisation and show they are deserving recipients of the scholarship. Provide they meet these requirements, they will join more than 1500 Australian students who belong to the SAGSE alumni network!

More information on this process can be found on our website, SAGSE.org.au

NOTE: There will be some scholarships available to students who can demonstrate that there are adverse circumstances making it impossible for them to host a student this year. More information will be released on that later.

Key Information:

Hosting period: Mid-June to mid-August 2025, before German students undertake Free Travel and enjoy a Sydney Camp.

Who can apply: Families of German-learning students in Year 10 – 12. We encourage all families who are curious about international exchange, culture, and language to consider taking part in this exciting opportunity. If you are interested in hosting a German student, follow the link below to download the application form or head to our [Forms & Documents](#) page.

[Hosting a German Exchange Student](#)

[2025 Host Family Application Form - VIC](#)

[2025 School Consent Form Host Family - VIC](#)

Home Visit: SAGSE upholds the Victorian Child Safe Standards and will arrange a time to visit your home and meet your family. This is also an opportunity for you to ask questions about the exchange and hosting experience.

Please email hosting@gassaustralia.org.au with further questions.

Hosting & Scholarships in 2025

Who are we?

Since 1967 SAGSE's motto has been 'Goodwill in Action' which encompasses service to our communities and the fostering of lifelong connections, intercultural understanding, and a commitment to impact the world in positive ways.

Fritz von Einem Joosten established the 'Society for Australian-German Student Exchange' (SAGSE) in 1967 after emigrating to Australia and becoming a successful businessman.

Fritz had experienced the horror of war first-hand, and was seriously injured on the Russian Front during World War II. It was his founding belief that violence and conflict could be avoided if young people from different countries could meet and learn from one another. SAGSE awards scholarships for Year 11 and 12 students to travel to Germany in late November and return early February. The exchange program aims to give students an insight into a foreign culture and establish friendships between the two countries. Now renamed, 'Scholarships for Australian-German Student Exchange', SAGSE has provided scholarships to more than 1500 students since 1967.

Who are scholarship recipients?

Scholarship recipients are well-rounded young adults who have the capacity to be positive ambassadors for themselves, SAGSE and Australia. To be eligible for selection, students must be in Year 11 or 12 and either be studying VCE level German (Or IB, or equivalent) at the time of their application, or have previously completed their German studies.

Some of the attributes of an outstanding candidate may include:

- Open-minded and willing to expand their knowledge of global affairs.
- Previous leadership experience and/or engagement in co-curricular activities.
- Ability and willingness to share their culture with a curious German exchange partner.
- Passion for German language and culture.
- Maturity to deal with challenges during their time in Germany.
- Social adaptability and a willingness to immerse themselves in new experiences.
- Problem solving skills, particularly when dealing with interpersonal challenges.
- Enthusiasm for cultivating long-lasting relationships.

In 2025, SAGSE will offer a reciprocal exchange trial, meaning that successful candidates must have also hosted a German exchange student prior to their own trip. Where an applicant is experiencing hardship or circumstances which prevent them from hosting a German student, a separate process applies. These are managed on a case-by-case basis on a needs basis and are confidential.

1. Students seek approval from their school to apply for the scholarship and to host a German exchange partner.
2. Candidates submit their application, complete with teacher recommendation and school consent form, as well as confirmation that the German guest will have their own space in the home.

2. SAGSE begins the selection process and contacts families for home visit and initial interview. This visit is an opportunity for families to ask more in-depth questions about the exchange and to determine if it is a mutually good fit.
3. If successful, the host student automatically becomes a member of GASS (German Australian Students Society, our young alumni group) and thus enters *a probationary period for their exchange to Germany*. Students are assigned an individual mentor by GASS)

During this probationary period, students are expected to:

- attend GASS functions and be involved.
- demonstrate their understanding of and adherence to SAGSE's values as encapsulated in our motto *Goodwill in Action*.
- Submit a completed member endorsement form, in which their mentor or other GASSie endorses their application and confirms they have met the obligations of the probationary period.
- All existing selection criteria must also still be retained. For example, holding Australian citizenship or permanent residency, learning German at their school or VSL (or having previously completed VCE German).
- apply for a scholarship when in Year 11 or 12, using the current process of written application, group day and individual interviews.

This is the formal end of the probationary period and confirms their acceptance as a scholarship recipient, enabling them to travel to Germany over the Australian summer.

Hardship & Extenuating Circumstances

SAGSE is committed to creating a community where all members are welcome and accepted. The organisation recognises that there may be circumstances under which an otherwise suitable candidate is unable to meet the requirement of hosting a German exchange student.

These are considered on a case-by-case basis and may require additional home or school visits, interviews, or supporting documentation.

Examples

Student A lives in a two-bedroom apartment in the city, is otherwise an exceptional applicant and has been highly engaged in the German program at their school.

Student B is a strong school leader and passionate German learner; however, they have an older sibling with complex additional needs, requiring full-time care and adjusted living arrangements.