

## Information on applications for disadvantage compensation

### Disadvantage compensation - Improved average grade

An applicant's average grade is an important criterion in the admissions process. Thus, disadvantages that an applicant encountered while working towards his/her entrance qualification (e.g. *Abitur*) that prevented him/her from obtaining a better average grade than actually obtained should be set off. If evidence for such circumstances and their consequences can be provided, the application for admission will enter the admissions process with an improved average grade.

If you want to apply for an improvement of your average grade you are required to submit a **report issued by the school (not individual teachers)**. Usually, the school is in a position to assess if and to which degree the unfavorable circumstances had an influence on your academic achievements.

We recommend requesting this report from your school as early as possible to ensure you receive it prior to the application deadline. This report must include the grade (with one decimal) that you would have achieved in absence of the unfavorable circumstances. If reference is made to other documents, e.g. school certificates or specialist medical reports, these documents must be included as well.

Exception: In individual cases where the progress of the applicant's achievements (school certificates are to be submitted as supporting documents) clearly shows that he/she achieved better grades before the occurrence of the unfavorable circumstances and worse grades after, and the circumstances cited are without a doubt the reason for the negative development, a report issued by the school does not need to be submitted.

---

### Examples

Examples for cases where applications for disadvantage compensation are usually accepted include:

#### 1. Exceptional social circumstances:

- A) Health reasons:
  - a) Extended absence from school due to illness within three years prior to the achievement of the entrance qualification (specialist medical report).
  - b) Extended severe impairment, if not already covered by a) (specialist medical report).  
Other comparable health reasons (specialist medical report).
  - c) Pregnancy within three years prior to the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification (specialist medical report or child's birth certificate).
- B) Exceptional economic circumstances (supporting documents are required).
- C) Other comparable exceptional social circumstances (supporting documents are required)

#### 2. Exceptional family circumstances:

- A) Care for biological minor children within three years prior to the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification (children's birth certificates).
- B) Care for relatives in the ascending line or siblings in need of care within three years prior to the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification (certificate of classification into Care Level II or III (*Pflegestufe*) according to the Code of Social Law, book XI (*Sozialgesetzbuch XI*) or a medical certificate confirming that the relative is in need of care).
- C) Care for underage dependent siblings living in the same household as the applicant within three years prior to the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification (siblings' birth certificates).
- D) Loss of a parent within three years prior to the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification or loss of both parents prior to the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification, unless the applicant was married or over the age of 25 at the time (parents' death certificates and declaration of marital status at the time).

# Information on applications for disadvantage compensation (Improved average grade)

Bachelor's programs with restricted admission

- 
- E) Parents moved/relocated several times resulting in a several school changes within three years prior to the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification (leaving certificates and parents' registration certificates)
  - F) Other comparable exceptional family circumstances (supporting documents are required)

### 3. Team of the Federal Sport Association (*Bundessportfachverband*):

Member of one of the Federal Sport Association's teams listed below for at least one consecutive year within three years of the achievement of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification (certificate issued by the responsible Federal Sport Association):

- A) Olympic team & paralympic team or A team
- B) Secondary team or B team
- C) Junior team 1 and 2 or C team or D/C team
- D) Team sports squad (*Teamsportkader*)

### 4. Other comparable exceptional circumstances (supporting documents are required).

---

## Information regarding applications for disadvantage compensation

### Guidelines for school-issued reports as supporting documents for applications for disadvantage compensation

Schools should adhere to the following guidelines when issuing reports:

1. The carefully considered decision whether the school where the Higher Education Entrance Qualification was obtained issues a report as a supporting document for an application for disadvantage compensation lies with the head of the school. The school may decline to issue a report, especially if it does not have sufficient information or expertise to assess the pupil (e.g. due to the fact that he/she attended the school for only a short period of time).
  2. The report is to be signed by the head of school and must include the following:
    - a. a short description of the pupil's academic career;
    - b. details on the nature and duration of the unfavorable circumstances beyond the pupil's control. The school may only include proven facts.
    - c. assessment of the noticeable and credible consequences that the unfavorable circumstances had on the pupil's academic achievements according to the teachers of the individual subjects;
    - d. a clause stating that the report is only to be presented to TH Köln in the context of an application for admission and may not be used for any other purpose,
    - e. an official seal.
  3. If the school is convinced that the circumstances (beyond the pupil's control) have had a negative effect on the pupil's academic achievements, it is to assess which improved grade or higher score could have been expected in the absence of said negative effect. To this effect, the longtime overall development of the achievements in each subject must be considered. The resulting improved grade or higher score of the Higher Education Entrance Qualification must be indicated.
  4. Only in cases of slight differences in the academic achievements can such a report be based on general experience. The description of cause and impact must be conclusive, especially if there is a considerable difference between the actual grade and the improved grade.
  5. If necessary and possible, a psychologist or social education worker employed by or responsible for the school may contribute to the report.
-

# Information on applications for disadvantage compensation (Improved average grade)

Bachelor's programs with restricted admission

## Checklist

**Improved average grade – Please submit all of the following documents**

**school certificates**

**and**

**report issued by the school** (not individual teachers) indicating the average grade (with one decimal) that would have been achieved in absence of the unfavorable circumstances. If the report makes reference to other documents, e.g. school certificates or specialist medical reports, these documents must be submitted as well.

**and**

**Evidence of the existence of the unfavorable circumstances**, e.g. children's birth certificates, death certificate of a parent, proof of illness.

---