

YESTERDAY IT WASN'T ENOUGH. TODAY IT'S UNSUSTAINABLE!

2023: our chance to win a fair wage



We're selling ourselves short!

Groceries, rents, electricity and heating – inflation is sharply driving up the cost of living. And our wages as student workers (SHKs)? At this point, they've even been overtaken by Berlin's minimum wage. To be underpaid this badly few can afford: The exploitation of SHKs is not only unjust in and of itself but also in its economic exclusion of many first-gen and working-class students from getting a first foot on the academic career ladder. Adding to this are increasing numbers of our workplace rights: universities are failing to provide an adequate working environment as well as equipment. Unpaid overtime as well as administrative tasks not covered by the SHK exemptions have become common place for many. But there is hope: together, we can fight for our rights, for fair wages and for the appreciation of our work.

1980, 1986, 2018, 2023: Together, we can win!

In 2018, after 17 years of stagnant wages, student workers all over Berlin fought for and won the TV Stud III, our current collective wage agreement (TV = Tarifvertrag = collective wage agreement). Due to our colleagues, we benefit from longer employment terms, 30 days of paid holidays per year and 10 weeks of paid sick leave! These achievements were remarkable, but our hourly wage (adjusted for inflation) still fell short of its highest level in 2001, made worse by the cancellation of the christmas bonus (an entire month's wages) in 2004. Now, a renegotiation of the TV Stud III is possible. This means that together with your colleagues, you can fight for further improvements to your wage and working conditions!

TV-L, TV Stud nationwide, TV Stud IV in Berlin? Now, it's up to you!

In October, the next round of collective bargaining for TV-L is starting (the wage agreement for all university employees other than student assistants and professors). The percentage increase in wages achieved there will be applied to TV Stud III as well. A first start, but more is on the cards: If we student assistants organise in large numbers, we can demand renegotiation of TV Stud III. 2023 is a promising year for us: not only are the TV-L bargaining round and the Berlin universities' budget negotiations coming up, but this Berlin-wide campaign coincides with a movement to establish a collective wage agreement for student assistants nationwide. So it's up to you now! Let us seize this chance, organise, and fight together for a fair wage and improved labour conditions!

What should improve

- hourly wage: _____ €/h
- „christmas bonus“
- less overtime
- job training/orientation
- work place
- equipment/supplies
- other: _____
(e.g., training courses, maximum class sizes, appreciation, scientific vs. non-scientific work, wage adjustments in line with inflation, ...)

More and more student assistants throughout Germany are organising and preparing a nationwide strike movement. What are you willing to do to fight for your interests?

- Talk to colleagues/become a TV Stud Berlin ambassador
- join a union
- organise a student assistants' meeting at my department
- join local actions, e.g. at the Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften
- strike for wage increases through TV-L
- strike for a better/new TV Stud
- I am already a TVStud Berlin Ambassador
- I am already a member of _____

The SHK Vernetzung Berlin may contact me in the context of the ongoing campaign for student assistants' working conditions:

first name: _____ university/research institution: _____
last name: _____ department: _____
mobile phone number (important!): _____ presumably employed until: _____
e-mail address: _____

I want to join the regular organising meetings in order to help organise my department

- yes no

1-on-1 conversation initiated by:

name: _____
mobile phone number: _____

Please submit this survey at your respective university group or the Berlin-wide SHK-Vernetzung.

By filling out this survey, you agree that the personal data you supplied can be stored and used. You agree that the SHK Vernetzung Berlin as well as the TV Stud bundesweit campaign can contact you. This applies solely to uses within the scope of the ongoing TVL and TVstud campaigns. The data will be kept at your university group and may be accessed by the Berlin-wide and nationwide campaign organisation. You may withdraw your consent and have your data destroyed at any time by contacting us.

For more information see tvstud.berlin & tvstud.de

Responsible: Julian Habers & Max Weidauer

Contact: vernetzung@tvstud.berlin



Some important facts

TV Stud III, TV L - What is that, anyway?

- » TV Stud III is a collective wage agreement. It applies to all student assistants at the 11 public universities in Berlin and dictates our wages, paid holidays, sick days and standard contract duration, amongst other things.
- » TV-L is a collective wage agreement for employees of the federal states, which includes research assistants, postdocs, and administrative university employees. Starting this year, percentage wage increases for TV-L will apply to our TV Stud III too.
- » This year's TV-L bargaining round will take place in autumn. That means, come autumn, we can fight for higher wages shoulder to shoulder with other university and state employees.

Inflation is bringing down our wages!

- » Thanks to TV Stud III, student assistants in Berlin are better off than our colleagues in other federal states. 77,6% of student assistants in Germany are considered 'at risk of poverty', meaning they have a total monthly income lower than 1,250€. In Berlin 'only' 64% are at risk, but that's still nearly two thirds and highlights the unsustainability of the universities exploitation.
- » Our wages are currently set at the Berlin minimum wage for public employees. At the same time, due to record inflation, our expenses are growing - especially for rents, groceries, electricity, heating, and other vital expenditures, inflation is far outpacing 10%.
- » The money for fair wages was already set aside: An inquiry by Tobias Schulze (Die Linke party, 2017) revealed that from 2010 to 2022, public Berlin universities received funds for roughly 30% higher wages for student assistants from the city. But instead of paying us 14,26€, they used these funds to fill other gaps in the budget or pay for prestige projects. If we don't ask for it, we won't get it!
- » Our wages are still much lower adjusted to inflation than they were in 2001 - the 10,98€/h student assistants got back then would be more than 15€/h today. Additionally, christmas bonuses were cancelled in 2004. For annual small wage increases thanks to the TV-L-linkage to matter, we need a decent base wage for TV Stud. And you and your colleagues can fight for that decent wage following the TV-L bargaining round!

Collective wage agreements work! Collective bargaining wins!

- » Berlin student assistants fare better than the national average not only in wages, but also in paid holidays, sick days, and contract term lengths. Collective wage agreements work!
- » Our colleagues have demonstrated in 1980, 1986, and 2018 that industrial action and collective bargaining can win. United in solidarity, we can continue that tradition now – for a better TV Stud in Berlin and a first TV Stud in the other federal states!



Foto: Kay Hirschelmann