

ZAPF

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this AK is to provide a hand-out which contains all the information regarding the study and life in German speaking countries for newly arrived international students.

ACCOMMODATION

This is the most important thing of all. You need to find a place to live and have a valid address. Without a valid address you cannot open a bank account or extend your visa, so it is crucial. There are many websites to find accommodation; below is a website to help you and a video link on how to find accommodation in Germany.

Most of the universities also offer temporary accommodation to students, so please check with your university.

A website to find accommodation: <https://www.wg-gesucht.de/>

A website to find accommodation (in Austria): www.willhaben.at

A video about life in Germany: Finding accommodation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzclQrld3rk>

A video about Student Hostels in Germany: Rent, Process and Experience

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5f-PDUJGHI>

TV AND RADIO BROADCASTING FEES

In Germany it is mandatory to pay a fee for TV and Radio even if you don't have one. It is 17,50 Euro in 2018. It is charged per household and not per connection within the house so you just pay per house irrespective of how many TV's you got in.

In case of Austria the fee is called GIS and it is only charged if it is proven that you have a broadcasting device.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In the initial days (before you can get the semester ticket) it is useful to take something called 'Tageskarte' which means 'day ticket'. It is valid for one entire day in the whole city. You can also find similar tickets with validity of few days, a week or even a month.

*information regarding the semester ticket is on page ([please insert the page number here](#))

DOCUMENTS AND TRANSLATION

Most of the time forms like visa extension, Rathaus job applications etc.. are only available in German.

Please mention what you can provide to your fellowmen to resolve this issue.

We suggest FSR to collaborate with international students office and translate each of those documents and hand in them the "unofficial translations"

RATHAUS (city registration office)

The Rathaus is a city registration office and all international students need to register in this Rathaus as soon as possible. For example, in Siegen and Hamburg it should be done within 14 working days of your arrival to Germany and in Innsbruck it is only 4 working days! So please check with the local city office.

Most importantly, if you don't have a permanent address, you should still go there and give them the details of temporary accommodation or one of your friends' address and later change it when you get a new address. Don't forget to carry your rental agreement for registration.

Do you need an appointment in the Rathaus? How do you make it? Phone number? Address?

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance is mandatory for everyone in Germany, so you must take one before you enroll at your university. As an international student you can only join a few insurance companies, and it also depends on where you study. So please check at the international office of your university before you get health insurance. Finally, don't forget to take the insurance card with you whenever you visit a doctor.

Please note that you need a letter from the health insurance company in order to get enrolled in the university.

HEALTH (Diseases and Vaccines)

This is the homepage of German health ministry:

<https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/en/topics.html>

You should take care of ticks, which are insects living in the forest, in parks or in the grassland. Ticks can transfer diseases like Borreliosis or tick-borne encephalitis (TBE).

The following are the documents regarding these two diseases for further information.

http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/246167/Fact-sheet-Lyme-borreliosis-Eng.pdf

http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/246169/Fact-sheet-Tick-borne-encephalitis-Eng.pdf

HOW TO VISIT DOCTORS

The most important thing is that you should always carry the health insurance card while visiting your doctor. One way of finding a doctor is to Google it.

What should they do on weekends?

What should they do in emergency situations?

Please explain the function of 116 /117 numbers

LIABILITY INSURANCE

It is possible that you may accidentally damage some third party property or assets (like damage in the kitchen or lab etc). German Private Liability insurance insures you against such mistakes and the financial liabilities that come with it.

If you are interested, please inquire for more information at your bank.

BANK ACCOUNT

After you get a valid address in Germany, you can get a bank account. International students must open a blocked account in which you have a restriction on the maximum amount you can withdraw per month. For the 2017-18 academic year, this amount is fixed at 720 Euro per month. In addition, you have to deposit a minimum of $(720 \times 12 = 8640)$ Euro in the beginning.

VISA EXTENTION

In the beginning you get a visa for 3-6 months. After your arrival to Germany, you need to extend your visa, which is usually done in the city you live in. You need to visit the office at least two months before your visa expiry date and schedule an appointment. Make sure you have your passport copy, visa copy, study certificate from German university, house rent contact, proof of an account with sufficient funds, health insurance and filled application form and a photo with you.

Approximately three weeks after interview you will receive a card called residence permit (AUFENTHALTSTITEL) and also a letter called work permit by post. The visa extension period and your new expiry date is mentioned on the card. Please carry this card with you all the time.

After your degree is completed your visa can be extended to a maximum of 18 months for you to search for employment or PhD.

LIVING AND SHOPPING

In General, shops are closed on Sundays and public holidays (see holidays section).

On some days there is a market (Wochenmarkt) where you can buy vegetables from local farmers, bread, cheese, meat etc.

What are the typical opening hours for supermarkets in your city? Where can they find shops like supermarkets, pharmacies, post offices, banks, bakeries etc.? Also, please mark the places, days and times for any specific markets.

ORIENTATION WEEK

Please mention the details of the orientation week at your university and other necessary details.

ENROLLMENT, SEMESTER TICKET AND LIBRARY CARD, PRINTING CARD ETC..

Please explain the procedure on how to enroll in your university and also how to get a semester ticket, a library card, a printing card etc. and how to pay for it.

SEMESTER TICKET

Most of the universities issue a card known as 'semester ticket' to students with which they can travel for free within a certain region around the university.

How much should they pay for the semester ticket? When it is valid? In which region can they travel with this semester ticket and by which means (bus,train,tram)? Is it mandatory?

UNIVERSITY WIFI

A lot of universities in the world have a common Wi-Fi server called Eduroam with which you can get access to free Wi-Fi within the university and also possibly your dorm. However, make sure you don't download anything from torrents or similar sites.

Eduroam is a wonderful example of globalization. Please check the following link to find the list of all the universities and research centres connected via Eduroam.

<https://www.eduroam.org/where/>

Please write any specific rules applicable for your university like for example limit of usage!

STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

All universities have an online portal to check the list of courses (and all its details) offered in that particular semester. Also, the students can get their study certificates, transcripts etc. on this platform. Please make sure you get the credentials (for logging in) during your enrolment at the university.

How do you get credentials? What is the system called? Please add the links for international students.

UNIVERSITY EMAIL

Every student gets their own email in the university domain. Please make sure that you check it regularly so that you don't miss any important official announcements from the department or the university in general.

There may be a possibility to redirect your emails to private account (like Gmail, Yahoo). Please ask the student council if you need help.

TIME TABLE AND CLASSROOMS

Please write how to find your lecture halls and also about how to create a time table/ how to get help for creating it.

LECTURES

It is very important to attend the first lecture of the course because there, the students can ask the professor for a potential change of the schedule and other important details like the language of the instruction. It is also important to know the requirements of each course and the minimum eligibility to participate in the final exam. So never miss the first lecture!

Please write an example for the eligibility criteria like 50% in the exercise sheets

MENTORING PROGRAM

Do you have any mentoring or peer to peer programs? Please mention the details.

COURSE COORDINATOR AND COUNSELOR

Most of the universities have a course coordinator or council or mentor who helps you in planning your studies. You can always discuss any questions regarding the course with them.

Please write your university coordinator details or any similar thing that you have.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

FSR please mention the details of the various programs that offer psychological support at your university and other necessary details.

OFFICES AND OTHER ROOMS

Please mention the office addresses of international students office, faculty office, examination office etc., and also some places where they can sit and work like a coffee shop or so.

REGISTRATION FOR EXAMS

Please explain how to register for exams and how the system works at your university.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Please write about the various scholarships that are available at your university and please add links and deadlines for applying.

TIMINGS

In general, Germans are punctual, so try to be on time or even five minutes early. There are two different time specifications. One is called s.t and other c.t. These mean the following:

s.t (sine tempore) means a lecture will start at the precisely the time mentioned. For example, 10.00 A.M. s.t means 10.00 A.M.

c.t (cum tempore) means it would start after 15 minutes after the mentioned time. For example, 10.00 A.M c.t means 10.15 A.M

BACHELOR THESIS

How many credits does it have? How much does it count into the final grade? How can a student find a supervisor for the thesis?

MASTER THESIS

How many credits does it have? How much does it count into the final grade? How can a student find a supervisor for thesis? What is the deadline for the submission of the master thesis? And when it is wise to register for it?

There is also a possibility to write your thesis somewhere else like another university or research centers like Max Planck or even in a company.

HOW TO FIND A SUPERVISOR FOR THE THESIS

This is highly dependent on both the university and the professor. Here is an example:

First of all make an appointment with the prof. You can ask questions like

1. What are the possible topics?
2. What are the conditions?
3. Is there a possibility to visit any conferences or so?

Do you have any programs or discussions to guide new students on how to choose a supervisors for thesis?

As a tip, it is often helpful to talk to the people who are already working before you join a work group.

HOLIDAYS

The public holidays in German speaking countries vary from state to state so check the following link:

<https://www.officeholidays.com/countries/germany/index.php>

Please note that the shops are closed on these holidays!

Keep in mind that there might be some courses or exams during the semester break. So always check before you book tickets to vacation!

MENSA

Canteen is called Mensa in German. In the university Mensa, all the students get subsidized meals. Make sure you carry your semester ticket or student ID when you go.

Where is the mensa? Are there veggie and meat sections? How to find the ingredients? How to pay?

MAXIMUM TIME FOR COURSES

What is the maximum time to complete each degree? Are there possible extensions if you are pregnant or ill?

To get your visa extended without any problems, it is recommended to complete your masters within seven semesters if it is a two year master course. In addition, make sure to get at least 20 credits on average per semester.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Introduce yourself to the new international students and talk about the opportunities you provide to join.

ADDITIONAL COURSES

Unlike many other countries, the German universities are quite flexible and encouraging, so you can take any additional courses outside physics like mathematics, music or whatever. Also, you can always contact the professor and discuss any details regarding the course.

Please add any specific rules or links that might help to find additional courses.

SPORTS/MUSIC/ART

Please add what your university offers in these respective fields

HOW TO LEARN GERMAN

Please mention the language courses that your university offers.

In addition to university courses, there are millions of websites, books, apps and several other resources that can help you learn German. Here are some useful resources.

1. <https://learngerman.dw.com/en/languages> (Website to learn German)
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOtqMNKs0Jw&list=PLYzp2xhTw9W1Z9RvnCoveC0W7pkwUMHXy> (Learn German from YouTube video lessons)
3. <https://www.vhs-aktuell.de/programm/german/german-as-a-foreign-language.html> (German courses and certification)
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUGhVMaDx7A> (A short guide to learning German on your own)
5. <https://dict.leo.org/german-english/> (German-English dictionary)

PART TIME JOBS

In general, students are allowed to work but not more than 20 hours/week during the semester period and 40 hours/week during vacation time.

Here is a quick video on how to find a part time job in Germany:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Hh_yiG0hgQ&t=59s

PLACES TO VISIT

Please mention the places to visit in your city and best way of transportation and all.

APPS FOR BUSES AND TRAINS

There is an app called DB Navigator. You can use it to know the best connections to travel to anywhere in Germany. In general, you can use this app to travel within a city or to distant places. It shows the connections of buses, trains and trams as well.

IOS: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/db-navigator/id343555245?mt=8>

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.hafas.android.db>

Please check out the following link for travelling in Austria:

<http://www.oebb.at/en/>

Moreover, for travelling long distances, you can also use services like Flixbus, Bus radar, BlaBlaCar and Ryanair. These are cheap ways to travel within Germany and in all of Europe as well.

<https://www.flixbus.com/>

<https://www.busradar.com/?currency=EUR>

<https://www.blablacar.com/>

<https://www.ryanair.com/gb/en/>

Sometimes, you get discounts if you buy a group ticket or weekend ticket, so check for all possibilities before you make a reservation.

BIKING

Many cities and towns have separate lanes for bicycle which makes it more comfortable to ride bicycles.

Here is the link to the traffic rules (for Germany)

Here is the link to the traffic rules (for Austria)

To find the lanes especially for bicycles, please observe the following sign boards.

Where can they buy used bikes? Where can they find repair shops? Please add information about the city biking system in your city!

KID SUPPORT

If you have kids don't worry, there are a lot of resources that can help you take care of your child.

Please add the resources your university provides for the kid support!

WINTER

Winters in Europe are very cold unlike tropical countries like India. The consequences are that buses and trains may be delayed or sometimes cancelled, so it is important to take this into account when planning the day.

SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES AND WEBSITES

Add your city website and social media pages of your university

All cities have Facebook pages and groups for international people living there and some especially for students. So if you have Facebook, join them for latest updates that happen around you in the city! You can also check for accommodation, used furniture or bicycles on those pages.

STUDENT DISCOUNTS

It is very nice that not only in German speaking countries, but also in all of Europe, students are given discounts literally everywhere from haircuts to entry tickets to museums, train

tickets etc. So make sure you carry your student ID card all the time while you are traveling in Europe and ask for discounts.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

As you may be aware, most of the Western countries do something called 'daylight savings' in which they turn their clock forwards (in summer) or backwards (in winter) for one hour. These are done on specific days at a specific time two times a year, so please make sure you don't miss it, especially if you are travelling. Usually it happens on the last Sunday of March at 2.00 A.M to 3.00 A.M and the last Sunday in October at 3.00 A.M to 2.00 A.M.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Ambulance: 112

Police: 110

FORMAL EMAILS

In Austria it is very important to use the title (like Dr, prof.) while writing official emails for example to professors.

In Germany, the titles are not that important and the family name is written at the end.

Please write the convention used in your university