

UMassAmherst

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International Programs Office

**Information for Students**

**University of Massachusetts Exchange  
with Baden-Württemberg**

**2019 - 2020**

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Dear UMASS/ Baden-Württemberg Exchange Participant,  
Congratulations on your acceptance to the UMASS/Baden-Württemberg education abroad program. We hope that studying in Germany will be an exciting and rewarding experience for you, both academically and in terms of your personal goals and development.

This booklet contains information about your stay in Baden-Württemberg; you should read it before you embark on your travels, and you should keep it with you while you are studying abroad. A copy will also be available online on the IPO webpage. The booklet will help you plan your departure, it will provide tips about living in Germany, and it will guide you in the process of returning to your home university. If you have any questions not covered here, you should ask Regine John at UMASS Amherst or the Resident Assistant Director, Silke Uebelherr, in Freiburg.

After familiarizing yourself with the German university system and social customs, you will find that a successful semester/year abroad is well within your reach. Challenges and difficulties in getting settled are expected, but you will find that with a little patience and a willingness to learn from difficult situations, you will soon feel at home in Germany.

Always remember, the experience you have in Germany and the success you achieve studying abroad depends on the initiative, effort and dedication that you contribute.

Wishing you all the best and *viel Erfolg!*

## Important Contacts

### Program Address and Contact Person at UMass Amherst

**Regine John**

**Director of Programs in Germany**

**International Programs Office**

**70 Butterfield Terrace**

**University of Massachusetts**

**Amherst, MA 01003-9242**

**Tel. (413)-545-5252**

Email: [reginejohn@ipo.umass.edu](mailto:reginejohn@ipo.umass.edu)

URL: <http://www.umass.edu/ipo/education-abroad>

### Resident Assistant Director in Freiburg

The UMass Baden-Württemberg Exchange maintains a Center at Ernst-Zermelo-Straße in Freiburg, not far from the main university buildings.

Regular office hours are:

Mon & Wed: 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Tue & Thu: 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 pm,

Fri: 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 pm.

The office is closed for lunch from 12-12:30 p.m.

The correct address is:

**Silke Uebelherr**

**University of Massachusetts**

**Ernst-Zermelo-Straße 1 (142-143)**

**79104 Freiburg**

**Germany**

**Telephone from US: 011-49-761-203-6911**

**Fax from US: 011-49-761-203-6912**

**Email: [suebelherr@ipo.umass.edu](mailto:suebelherr@ipo.umass.edu)**

0761 is the area code for Freiburg within Germany. This is a business number, but it can be used for emergencies.

The UMass Center is staffed by a Resident Assistant Director, Silke Uebelherr, who will help with any questions regarding administrative or academic matters, once you have settled in Germany. The Resident Assistant Director, a native German, handles most of the day-to-day operations of the program and also coordinates housing for the participants.

At the end of the September/March orientation courses students spend three days together at an orientation and advising session and the Center invites all students for a second gathering towards the end of the semester.



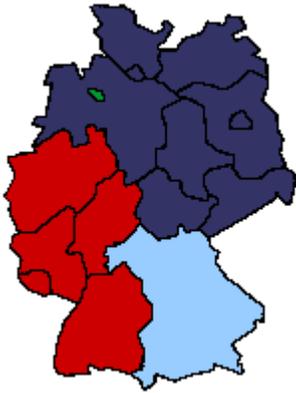
## Cases of Emergency

*Police (or Ambulance) 110*

*Fire Department 112*

*Europe-wide emergency number 112*

*You can call these numbers from any phone for free.*



## U.S. Citizen Services in Germany

Which Consulate Serves Your Area?

### Berlin

The U.S. Embassy in Berlin offers a **full range** of services for American citizens in the states of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia.

<https://de.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>

### Frankfurt

The Consulate General in Frankfurt provides a full range of services for American Citizens in the states of Hesse, Baden-Württemberg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saarland.

Emergency after Hours:

If you are an American citizen with an after-hours emergency, such as the hospitalization, arrest, or death of an American citizen, please call (069) 7535-0 from within Germany. For calls from the U.S., please call 01149-69-7535-0.

NOTE: Lost, stolen, or expired passports can only be replaced during normal business hours, and do not constitute after hours emergencies.

Address: Gießener Str. 30  
60435 Frankfurt am Main

<https://de.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/frankfurt/u-s-citizen-services/>

### Munich:

The Consulate General in Munich provides a **full range** of services for American citizens in the state of Bavaria.

<https://de.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/munich/u-s-citizen-services/>

# Germany - At the Heart of Europe



**Population:** 82,79 million

**Size:** 357,021 km<sup>2</sup> (about half the size of Texas)

**Adjacent countries:** Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland.

**Borders:** 3,757 km (2,334 mi)

**Geography:** Germany is located in the center of Europe. It forms a bridge between maritime West of Europe and the continental East, between the warmer South and the cool North. Germany is a triad of mountain ranges, uplands and low-land plains – the Bavarian Alps in the South, the pleasant wooded mountains of the *Mittelgebirge* in the center of the country and the low country along the North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts in the North.

**Longest Rivers:** Rhine 865 km (537 mi), Elbe 700 km (435 mi), Danube 647 km (402 mi) in Germany

**Highest point:** Zugspitze (2,962 m) - 31% of the country is covered with forests.

**Coastal line:** 2,389 km (1,484 mi)

**Climate:** Germany's climate is temperate. The average temperatures are around 20-30°C in the summer (June/July – August/September) dropping around 0°C in the winter months (November/December – February/March)

**System of government:** The Federal Republic of Germany is a parliamentary federal democracy with a social market economy, freedom of religion and freedom of the press. Germany is a member of the European Union (EU).

**Capital:** Berlin (3.5 million inhabitants)

**States in the Federal Republic:** 16 - Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland Palatinate, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia

**National Flag:** Three horizontal stripes in black, red, gold

**Emblem:** Stylized Eagle

**Official Language:** German. German is the mother tongue of 100 million people and is the mother tongue spoken most frequently in the European Union

**State Holiday:** October 3, Day of German Unity

**Anthem:** Third verse of August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben's "Das Lied der Deutschen" to a melody by Joseph Haydn "Kaiserhymne"

**Parliament:** Bundestag

**Railway system:** 35,000 km, **Freeways and roads:** 645,000 km, **Cycle tracks:** 40,000 km

**Time zone:** In Germany, clocks are set to Central European time. From the end of March to the end of October (summertime) they are put forward one hour.

**Electricity:** 220/230V and 50 hertz

**Life expectancy:** 81 years (78 years for males and 83 years for females)

## The State of Baden-Württemberg

Baden-Württemberg in southwest Germany is bordered by France and Switzerland. The region enjoys Germany's mildest climate and includes a mix of cosmopolitan centers and modern industrial/technical areas, medieval towns and vacation resorts, vineyard-covered hills, the mountains of the Black Forest and the ancient volcanoes of Hohentwiel.

The region provides a wide range of cultural and recreational activities: you can hike in the *Odenwald*, taste wine from the *Kaiserstuhl*, tour the Porsche factory, celebrate the "*Ball der Vampire*" in Heidelberg, shop at the farmer's market on Freiburg's *Münsterplatz*, ski in the Black Forest, sail on Lake Constance, and discover the works of Otto Dix in the new *Kunstmuseum* in Stuttgart.

For extensive information on Baden-Württemberg go to:

<http://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/en/home/>

For extensive information about Germany go to:

<http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en/>

## Program History

The UMass Baden-Württemberg Exchange began in 1964, sending both graduate and undergraduate students to Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. As of 1969, the program involved a bilateral exchange of students and faculty.

In 1983, the Exchange expanded to include all nine universities in the state of Baden-Württemberg. About thirty to forty students from universities in Baden-Württemberg now study at the UMass campuses, all at the graduate level, and about the same number of American students study at the universities in Baden-Württemberg at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The expansion has brought an increase in the academic fields available in Germany.

The program remains focused, however, on upper-division undergraduate and graduate students who enroll directly in German university courses or pursue independent research, or both.

## The German Educational System

### Separate tracks

The German educational system begins to place children into separate tracks at the age of ten according to their abilities and interests. About a quarter of German children enter schools, which prepare them for a university education, *Gymnasien*.

Education at the *Gymnasium* is more rigorous than the high school education the average American receives. The *Abitur* or *allgemeine Hochschulreife* (the examination that qualifies for entry into the university that students take at the end of secondary school) is generally accepted in the US as the equivalent of at least one year of college-level study. German students enter the university with more base knowledge in their major than a typical American student. Therefore, many of the courses offered in German university departments as an *Einführung* (introduction), are already more specific in content than an American university 100-level introductory course.

## Types of Tertiary Institutions

The Federal Republic of Germany supports four types of tertiary institutions:

1. the *Universität*, where a course of study lasting three years leads to a Bachelor and an additional two years to a Master. Students may also pursue a Ph.D. or a *Staatsexamen* (civil service examination);
2. the *Fachhochschule* (University of Applied Sciences), where teaching is more practically oriented and Bachelor and some Master degrees are offered; and
3. the *Kunsthochschule* (art institute), *Musikhochschule* (music conservatory), and other specialized institutes, where a program of study takes approximately three years. Bachelor and Master degrees are now also available in most fields and have become the norm in Europe. German universities are 90% state-supported. Students may receive government loans and subsidized meals and local transportation.
4. Recently a fourth type has been introduced, the Universities of Cooperative Education (UCE). The courses take three years, in which theoretical and practical learning alternate. That means that a period of university is followed by a period of practical education in a company which is the educational partner of the UCE.

## U.S. vs. German University Education

Traditional German university education was divided into the *Grundstudium*, concluded by the *Zwischenprüfung* or the *Vordiplom*, normally taken after two years, and the *Hauptstudium* lasting two to three years. Germany is now offering Bachelor and Masters programs based on the Anglo-American model. American undergraduate students will typically feel challenged in Bachelor courses when the course is conducted in German. American graduate students fluent in German will feel challenged in Master-level courses conducted in German.

## Heavily Populated Universities

Universities are crowded due to the fact that all students obtaining the *Abitur* are entitled to university admission. Admissions to the most competitive fields (such as medicine) are processed through a central computer, which places students according to the results of the *Abitur*. Those applying to restricted or *Numerus Clausus* fields may have to wait a number of years for admission. UMass/Baden-Württemberg Program participants are able to take courses in most Baden-Württemberg university departments with a few exceptions.

## Mission to Specialize

German tertiary education, including the Bachelor, is not so much meant to broaden one's general knowledge; that is still the task of the *Gymnasium*. German university students specialize in their studies upon entering the university. German students primarily take classes in their chosen discipline. UMass/Baden-Württemberg participants can choose to take a range of courses in many disciplines; it is easy to complete General Education requirements while studying in Baden-Württemberg.

American students will typically feel that German courses in the humanities and social sciences are less time-consuming than American courses in these disciplines. Homework is typically limited to reading, and grades are typically based on one or two assignments: a *Referat* and *Hausarbeit*, or a *Klausur* (oral report, research paper, final exam).

## **German University Faculties**

The German University is composed of faculties (*Fakultäten* or *Fachbereiche*), which are subdivided into departments. Faculties are located all over town, and sometimes you need to take public transportation to move from one to another. A *Mensa* (cafeteria) is usually located near each of the separate clusters of faculties.

## **Departmental libraries**

At some universities, each department has its own library, generally with open stacks. Seating, however, is limited. Only a small number of books can be taken out, and those only on weekends.

## **University libraries**

Most university libraries (*Universitätsbibliothek* or *UB*) have closed stacks, although the UB in Konstanz has completely open stacks and Freiburg has a circulating library as well. If books are not located in open stacks, you must submit your book requests in the morning to pick up books the same day. You can use the books at home or in the library. The libraries generally close at 10 pm on weekdays, and are open 9-1 on Saturdays, although a few may have more generous hours. Regular introductory tours are given at the various libraries. Some universities have a *Semesterapparat*, special stacks with books and binders reserved for courses. Students are expected to photocopy the materials and return the books and articles to the stacks so that they are available to all students.

## **Different Course Expectations**

Classes meet less often and for shorter periods than in the US, typically once a week for an hour and a half. Quizzes and homework assignments are not common, except in language and practical courses. Syllabi are gradually being introduced, and seminars are typically constructed around student presentations. It is common that an entire seminar will focus on reading and discussing one or two texts, although survey or thematic courses are becoming more popular at some universities. Reading lists are sometimes provided by the professor, and they can be comprehensive; they may list a hundred works on relevant topics, with the choice of what is read left up to the student.

## **Different Work Rhythms**

American undergraduates can find the German system perplexing and frustrating. All students must monitor their own progress, as their instructors keep no grade books. They must learn to work independently, and they must choose their own reading. The system is stimulating for students with a sense of purpose and a strong foundation in their major field, and who know how to conduct research.

In fact, the familiar rhythm of a US semester is absent, with no official registration period and no final exam schedule in many cases. German students seem to work in extremes with some attending only a few classes and spending little time preparing for them, and other students may study night and day. The former are apt to be those who have several semesters left before their exams, while the latter are in the midst of preparations.

At the same time, university work is ongoing; students often stay at the university during semester breaks, especially when working on projects and research or preparing for exams. Dormitories do not close at the end of the university term.

## **Different Social and Study Expectations**

American students complain at the beginning of their stay in Germany that they have too much free time and too little to do. German students in the US complain that they have too many class hours each week, far too many homework assignments and quizzes, and that American students spend too much time studying and memorizing.

The German university is not a social institution. Though some clubs are loosely associated with the university, there is no student union on the American model, nor any broad student organization concerned with the social welfare of the student body. Individual academic concentrations (*Hauptfächer*), like major subjects, have voluntary student organizations (*Fachschaften*) that offer advice and guidance to beginning students, and they regularly host fundraising parties. Most universities offer intramural sports or fitness classes through *Hochschulsport*. The low-key atmosphere of these classes means that even those who are not athletic can find a fun class to attend. This is a great way to meet German students.

Students eat lunch, the main meal of the day, at the *Mensa* (cafeteria) and there are small cafeterias for coffee and snacks located in the university buildings. Besides these few areas, the university-sponsored facilities devoted to social and leisure activities are extremely limited by US standards. A film club may show films once a week in one of the academic buildings, concerts are occasionally hosted at the university, and there may also be department-sponsored parties. But in general, university facilities are used for academic endeavors.

Most of the universities do not have campuses, except for newer institutions such as Konstanz. On the other hand, most dormitories have a thriving social life of their own with informal sports teams and clubs and often with social clubs or bars.

## **The University of Massachusetts Exchange as a Bridge to the German University**

The UMass Exchange helps bridge the differences between the university systems by offering language training and academic advising, by providing housing and a small staff that is available for support and advice. Every university has an International Office or *Akademisches Auslandsamt*, which provides an array of services, and, in many cases, extensive and reasonably-priced excursions to places exchange students may otherwise never visit, such as traditional farms, castles and churches located high in the Black Forest, and village carnival festivals.

## **Courses in English**

Although the language of instruction at German universities is usually German, universities increasingly offer selected courses in English.

Most universities also offer a **Tandem or Buddy Program** for international students who would like to get in touch with German fellow students and also get help with the German language and other issues.

## The Universities

Baden-Württemberg is home to the oldest, most renowned and prestigious universities in Germany, such as the universities of Freiburg, Heidelberg and Tübingen. It includes several of the German universities that were selected as top schools in the [Excellence Strategy](#).

For more information and links to the Baden-Württemberg universities please go to:

<http://www.ipo.umass.edu/?go=BW> and look up the links on the program page. For info on each university you can also search for “Baden” under “Programs” on <http://www.umass.edu/ipo/education-abroad>.

## University Registration and Course Enrollment

Exchange participants staying in Freiburg are enrolled by the program (*Immatrikulation*), which will later also terminate them as students (*Exmatrikulation*). At other universities, the International Office/*Auslandsamt* can give specifics on this process. UMass/BW participants will also be helped with course enrollment at the weekend orientation.

### Fall/Spring Pre-Semester Language & Culture Course and Orientations

The intensive language and orientation courses address special challenges of the German language as well as cultural differences and in some cases include bureaucratic matters. Performance in the courses is graded, and three credits are granted to undergraduates upon satisfactory completion and may also count towards the coursework in a German major or minor. The courses are not graduate level courses; however, non-degree graduate students may receive non-degree credit. Regular attendance and satisfactory completion of homework, tests and final examination are mandatory.

### Transferring between Universities

Due to the over-enrollment at German universities and the shortage of student housing in university towns, students are strongly discouraged to transfer to another university.

### Course Selection and Enrollment

Make sure to submit your International Credit Approval Form (or Planned Course of Study Form or Overseas Registration Form) with the US courses you would like to complete while in Baden-Württemberg to the UMass/IPO Program Director before you leave.

About two months before classes begin in Germany go online to:

<http://www.ipo.umass.edu/?go=BW>

Make preliminary course choices based on the updated links to the university course listings. **All program participants will meet in Freiburg and spend a weekend together, usually towards the end of their pre-semester language courses.** During this weekend, students will discuss their course choices and credits with the Program Director and the Resident Assistant Director. Mannheim students, due to the different academic calendar, will meet with the RAD in Mannheim and receive help with their course choices via email, but will still need to attend the Program Orientation.

When the Fall/Spring Pre-semester Language and Orientation courses come to an end or earlier, program participants should have made most of their course selections. (You may want to sign up for your German language courses during the pre-semester course and should contact us early on about your choices!)

Registration for and enrollment procedures in courses varies from university to university, from department to department, even from course to course. You may have to walk to the actual department to enroll or in some cases you can do it online. You will need to discuss your course choices your advisor at your home university via email. The Resident Assistant Director assigns a date for the final course enrollment notification, usually a few weeks into the semester, and informs the UMass International Office of your selection for the upcoming semester.

We advise you to pick more courses than you need, visit them all at the beginning of the semester, and attend the ones you find most interesting. You may find that you do not want a grade in a course, but you would like to attend the lectures simply for interest in the subject. You can even receive a *Teilnahmeschein* (Audit) for sitting in on lectures. Listening to discussions in German about your major, minor or personal interest is a great opportunity to learn new vocabulary. So even if the course seems too difficult at the beginning of the semester, you may find that by the end of the semester you have learned a lot simply by attending the lectures.

Students attending universities in cities other than Freiburg can receive additional advising through the local *Auslandsamt*. The Resident Assistant Director visits students at other universities at least once during the semester for advising and counseling.

### **Course Availability**

Do not expect to enroll in any given course listed in a university's catalogue or online. Instructors may change course offerings up to the day the semester begins. Courses are often cancelled.

Each academic department, *Seminar* or *Institut* publishes a description of course offerings, a *Kommentiertes Vorlesungsverzeichnis*, before the beginning of the semester. These are available at department offices and online. Notices of course changes are also posted on a bulletin board, *Schwarzes Brett*, outside the departmental office and in a central administrative area in the academic building of the respective department. Upper level courses, advanced *Proseminare* for undergraduates, and *Hauptseminare* for graduates frequently require early enrollment, and notices appear on the departmental *Schwarzes Brett* and online.

### **Be Flexible**

The German university system demands flexibility on the part of exchange students. You cannot expect to fulfill all the requirements you need at home. Your language skills and final course offerings will affect what you take. Take courses in fields that are familiar and comfortable to you. If you have never taken a science course, for example, it is probably not wise to do so for the first time in Germany.

On the other hand, you should explore courses. Often there is no harm in sitting in on classes during the first few weeks of the semester before selecting the courses you will take for credit.

### **Grades and Credits**

The **European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)** is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across the European Union and other collaborating European countries. For successfully completed studies, ECTS credits are awarded. One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS-credits that are equivalent to 1500-1800 hours of study. One ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work.

The new Bachelor and Master's degree programs increasingly use the ECTS to award academic credits. However, German universities are still in the transition phase and many have not completely adopted the new system of awarding academic credits and producing transcripts. Therefore, the old credit transfer procedures outlined below are still applied at many universities in Germany.

Unless they are engaged in research, exchange participants are expected to enroll full time. Undergraduates must earn a minimum of 12 US credits each semester and graduate students 9.

German universities do not have centralized or departmental registration, primarily due to the law governing the protection of personal data. In addition to the lack of centralized registration, there is no centralized recording of grades and transcripts are not automatically produced at the end of each semester. To obtain a transcript containing a record of courses taken and grades earned, you need to follow the procedures outlined to you during the orientation in Germany.

### **Earning a Schein/Credits**

To receive credit for courses taken at a German institution, you must earn a **grade or graded Schein** in each course. Letter grades (**NOT Pass/Fail**) will appear on your UMass Amherst transcript. At the beginning of the course, the professor will explain what is required to earn a *Schein* in that particular course. The requirements may be different for each course:

At most German universities students receive a *Schein* that is *benotet* (graded) and issued by the instructor when all course work is completed. In Seminars an oral presentation (*mündliches Referat/Thesenpapier*), a paper (*schriftliches Referat/Hausarbeit*), and/or final exam (*Klausur*) is required. The final exam may be oral or written. A *Protokoll*, i.e. minutes of a class discussion, does not merit academic credit. Credit is not awarded for a *Teilnahmeschein*, given for auditing a course. *Teilnahmescheine* are quite common in Germany, but do not confuse them with *benotete Scheine* (graded).

You may be required to write a *Hausarbeit*, or term paper. Although group efforts are sometimes permitted, as with a presentation, a *Referat*, a *Hausarbeit* is usually written by one student. The information presented in a *Referat*, however, often serves as a foundation for the *Hausarbeit*. Frequently, the paper is not due immediately at the end of the term and you need to clarify the due date with your instructor. Many German students work on their *Hausarbeit* during the semester break.

Please keep in mind that students at German universities are expected to do independent reading during the course of their studies. If required to take an oral or written final exam, you may be expected to be more conversant in the topic than is possible from just memorizing lecture notes. Ask the professor for a suggested reading list to complement the course in order to prepare for the exam.

A *Schein* is not always awarded in a lecture course, or *Vorlesung*, but the professor will administer a final exam or allow a student to submit a paper if a request is made at the beginning of the semester. You should therefore explain that, as a U.S. student, your performance in class must be assessed in order to allow you to receive credit at your home institution.

### **Obtaining the Schein**

Once you have completed the requirements for a course, you must obtain the *Schein* yourself, directly from the secretariat of the appropriate department. When you pick up the *Schein*, it should already have been signed by the professor. The secretary will validate it with the university seal.

The *Schein* will contain the following information:

your name  
course title  
your professor's name  
year and semester  
number of hours per week  
how you earned the Schein (e.g., by term paper, final exam, etc.)  
your grade

Please copy the *Scheine* and send the original *Scheine* to the Center in Freiburg. The Resident Assistant Director will return originals to you. Make sure to keep the original *Scheine* in a safe place. Please note that the UMass transcript does **NOT** replace *Scheine*, which you may still need to present when applying to Graduate School.

When students hand in papers that they do not expect to have returned by the end of the semester, they must either pick up the grade form at a later date or must arrange with the lecturer for the form to be sent to the Center in Freiburg. Provide a stamped and addressed envelope. If the delivery of the grade is unnecessarily delayed, students must communicate directly with the lecturer or instructor. If this action does not achieve the desired result, the Resident Assistant Director will pursue the matter. We will again explain the process in detail after you arrive.

**Please note that Mannheim and Konstanz use different procedures and issue official transcripts.**

Once all *Scheine* are submitted, the Center submits your transcript information to the Director of German Programs at the UMass Amherst International Programs Office.

**Your grades will show on your UMass transcript, but will not affect your GPA.**

## Courses

The German university system offers different types of courses, and you can be expected to do different activities in each course. A *Vorlesung* (lecture) will usually take place in a larger lecture hall. You will probably see many different levels of students attending the course; this is because the content is set up simply to be informative. Students who are preparing for exams, as well as those who are merely interested in the subject will sit in on the lectures. The lecture is almost always given by a professor, and there is little to no discussion of the material by the students. German students may not ask for a *Schein* (grade) in a *Vorlesung*, but as an international student you may ask the professor for a grade. S/he will probably ask you to write a paper on a topic covered in the course or offer you the option of an oral exam. A *Vorlesung* may also come with a written exam at the end.

A *Proseminar* is a course equivalent to a 200-400/500 level seminar. The structure of the course is often based on student oral reports. The professor may lecture for the first few minutes of each class session, but most of the information you will receive comes from reports by other students about the assigned readings. You may find that in some *Proseminare* there is too little discussion or interpretation of the readings, you may get lucky and find a course where class participation is encouraged. You will usually be required to give an oral report and will have to write a research paper. There is sometimes an option to take an exam for a *Schein* at the end of the semester.

A *Hauptseminar* is similar to a *Proseminar*, but here class participation is required. These courses are equivalent to graduate student seminars, as the topics discussed will usually be specific in theme, and you will be required to have broad background knowledge in the discipline. You will be required to give an oral report and write a research paper.

An *Übung* (practice/tutorial/discussion section) often is a course in which practice in a skill is required or is offered in combination with a lecture. You will probably have homework and exams in these courses.

Each Baden-Württemberg university offers many courses that are intended for international students. In these courses you will practice language skills or learn about German culture.

### Credits

	undergraduates	graduates
Pro- und Hauptseminare*	3-4 credits	3 credits
Übungen	2-4 credits	3 credits
Vorlesungen (+ Prüfung)	3-4 credits	3 credits
Language & Culture Courses	varies	varies
Pre-semester Language Course	3 credits	3 credits
englischsprachige Kurse	varies	varies

\*undergraduates are usually not admitted to a Hauptseminar or Oberseminar. Inquire with the instructor.

In Europe, the number of credits awarded is based on the workload and academic level, **NOT** the contact hours. The above overview can only serve as a guideline, and actual credits for each course will be determined upon enrollment and may be adjusted after completion of a course. Thus the number of UMass credits you will receive for each class also depends on how much work you put into each class. Therefore you need to keep copies of the syllabus, the exams you took, the papers you wrote, etc. Taking introductory courses in a third language is not recommended.

For 3 credits undergraduate students are expected to take a substantial comprehensive **written exam**, and/or submit a **well-researched analytical paper** of at least 3500 words plus a bibliography of at least 5 book titles, not Internet sites. Graduate students must submit a 5000-word paper plus bibliography.

### UMass General Education Requirements

Take a look at <https://www.umass.edu/gened/students/frequently-asked-questions-faq>

#### ***“If I study abroad or on exchange in the US, will that change my Gen Eds?***

*When you do an approved exchange or study abroad program through UMass, you will work with the program staff to make sure you understand how the program fits into your academic program. Occasionally, due to different credit systems at the institution they attend, students who go on a UMass/Amherst-approved exchange or study abroad program will choose to change to transfer GenEd requirements. This is done by filing a Change to Transfer General Education Requirements form in the Records Office (207 Whitmore). It is recommended that students file the form as soon as possible following the exchange, but no later than the beginning of their last semester at UMass/Amherst. “*

For info on UMass GenEds requirements see also

<https://www.umass.edu/gened/students/fulfilling-requirements>

<https://www.umass.edu/gened/objectives-designations/curricular-designations>

Talk to your instructor at your host university and try to get rather detailed course descriptions for the classes you wish to count for GenEds. For Social World GenEds you are expected to show proof of 10-12 pages of writing.

Submit a copy your papers and, if possible, your graded written exam via email to the Resident Assistant Director and the IPO Program Director.

If your professor will only let you take an **oral exam**, the instructor needs to provide a written and signed **Protokoll (minutes)** of the exam. The minutes should include the questions asked, a summary of the answers you gave, and the duration of the oral exam. An oral exam will not be sufficient to satisfy a GenEd.

**Be sure to bring back copies of your written work, syllabi and course material in case your home department needs to see descriptions of your course work.**

## UMass Transcripts

The Resident Assistant Director sends grade reports to UMass Amherst after each semester. Grade reports for the *Wintersemester* are processed in April or May, depending on when students submit their *Scheine and Mannheim transcripts*, and in September or October for the *Sommersemester*. Processing at UMass takes at least three weeks.

On transcripts, course titles appear in English in abbreviated form for undergraduates, and in full for graduates. Grades are not averaged into UMass students' cumulative grade point averages. Non-UMass students will be sent transcripts upon written and signed request.

## Requesting Transcripts

Under federal regulations, students must make a request for official transcripts.

Requesting official transcripts via SPIRE:

If you ever had access to SPIRE, please request your transcripts via your student center.

You have the option of having the transcript mailed, picking it up in the University Registrar's Office (213 Whitmore) or authorizing someone to pick up your transcript for you.

Requesting official transcripts via mail or fax:

If you do not have a SPIRE login or you are a non-degree student, the University Registrar's Office will send out your official transcript(s) upon receipt of your written authorization. Your request must include:

- your signature
- all names used on your academic record (last, first, middle/maiden/other name)
- Student ID # or Social Security number
- your date of birth
- your address, telephone number and email address
- any additional information which will enable us to locate your record

Your letter of request should be mailed to:

<http://www.umass.edu/registrar/transcripts/index.htm>

See also

<http://www.umass.edu/registrar/students/transcripts/how-request-official-transcript>

## **Non-degree Graduate Students**

Exchange participants enrolled as non-degree graduate students can receive a transcript of their coursework in Germany, but they will not receive credit toward a degree. Most graduate schools do not accept transfer credit. However, anyone with an undergraduate degree who enrolls in the Exchange must be either a degree or non-degree graduate student for the duration of the time in Germany with the Exchange.

## **Before You Go**

### **Passports and Passport Pictures**

To enter Germany, you need a passport; a visa is not necessary for American citizens. (If you are not a citizen of the United States, be sure to have a proper visa if it is required by Germany. Failure to possess one can result in non-admittance to the country.) Passport applications are available at many post offices and town halls, as well as the passport offices of designated Ports of Entry. See

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>

### **Applying for a Passport**

In some towns you can apply for a passport at the Clerk's Office in the Town Hall. Call for specific information. Many post offices have applications. Passports are valid for ten years for anyone over 18.

It can take up to eight weeks to obtain a passport by mail through a post office. Apply early. Your passport will serve as your picture identification card in Germany, much the same way a driver's license is used in the US. Make photocopies of the first two pages of your passport and leave them with your family or a responsible person in the US and with the exchange coordinator at UMass Amherst.

## **Visa/Residence Permit**

All persons who wish to study at a high school, college or university in Germany are required to obtain a residence permit. Depending on your host city and the length of your stay you will have to apply either for a traditional label-based residence permit that can be issued on the spot or for the electronic residence permit (eAT) that may take 6-8 weeks.

Citizens of the United States of America, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, as well as a few other countries may apply for their residence permit after entering Germany without a visa. Citizens of other countries are required to apply and obtain a residence permit prior to entry (an option also open to US citizens) at the German Embassy in Washington, the Consulates in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York or San Francisco.

For more info please go to:

[www.germany.info](http://www.germany.info) and look up student visa requirements

If you are NOT an American citizen you should check with your embassy or consulate for visa requirements as early as possible BEFORE you leave for Germany.

Always check before travelling, especially outside the EU and the *Schengen* countries, of course.

### **Financial Documentation - Important**

*For your residence permit you will need to show [Proof of Sufficient Funds](#). Please see your online UMassAbroad account and the APPENDIX for more information and a form you should use for this purpose. It is essential that you and your parents complete the form and have it notarized. In addition, you will need to provide bank statements, scholarship letters, other original or notarized documentation of sufficient funds for the period of your stay and take this with you to Germany. Konstanz requires original notarized documents and an official statement from the parents`employer or bank stating their regular monthly income.*

### **Extra Passport Photos**

You will need at up to six passport photos in Germany for various purposes. **For the residence permit a biometric photo is required.** Please inquire with your host university for the specific photo requirements.

### **Immunizations**

Special immunizations are not required for entrance into Germany. Consult your physician or college clinic about your specific travel plans and recommended immunizations. UMass Amherst students may consult a travel health clinician at UHS (7-5000).

### **International Student ID Card**

The ISIC card entitles students to reductions on museum entrance fees, theater tickets, local transportation, etc. Also included is basic accident and medical insurance. In addition to the insurance benefits, the International Identity Cards provide 24 hour Emergency Assistance Services and a comprehensive communications package called ISICConnect: <https://www.isic.org/>

### **International Youth Hostel Card**

A youth hostel card enables you to stay in inexpensive student hostels throughout Europe. Buy your card from an STA Travel office (see [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com)) or a travel agency. The card expires in December of the year in which it is bought if you buy it before October 1. Cards are cheaper in Europe, though when buying it in Germany give your German address, otherwise you'll have to pay approximately twice as much.

### **International Driver's License**

You do NOT have to have an International Driver's License to drive in Germany, if you stay in Germany less than one year, nor will you normally need one to rent a car. Your state-issued driver's license can be used for one year in Germany, if you are over 18 years old. Note: stick shifts are the standard in Europe. If you do rent a car, don't expect an automatic. Also, gas is 2-4 times more expensive in Germany than in the US.

### **International Certificate of Vaccination**

This document, which is available through the U.S. Public Health Service, may be filled out by any person authorized to give vaccinations and must be validated by a department of health. Ask your physician for

details. This document is important only if you plan to travel outside of Western Europe, as some countries require certain vaccinations for entry.

### **United States Customs**

Registration with U.S. Customs: Register foreign-made personal articles such as cameras and lenses with Customs before you depart. Otherwise, you could be held liable for duty upon reentry. You may register items with Customs at any Customs Office or at your port of departure, but you must do so **BEFORE** you leave the U.S.

### **Record of Important Information**

Make a record of important numbers (passport, phone, bank account, etc.) Also make a photocopy of your ticket, passport, and credit card as well as the address of the Resident Assistant Director and leave them with your emergency contact person in the U.S. Keep the original documents accessible, but safe while you are traveling.

### **Money Matters**

#### **Estimated Monthly Expenses**

Plan to have about Euro 850 available per month, depending on your personal habits and the fluctuating exchange rates (visit <http://www.oanda.com> to check current rates). A dormitory room averages Euro 230-350 per month, and the noon *Mensa* meal, the main meal of the day, costs from Euro 2-4 at most universities.

You will spend a minimum of 5 or 6/11 months in Germany. If you plan extensive travel in the two-month semester break (mid-February to mid-April) or at the end of your stay, you will need extra funds.

#### **How much money do you need to take with you for the first 6 weeks?**

Here some quotations from students:

“In the first six weeks EVERYONE wants money....”

“I spent about \$1800 in the first month. I bought winter clothing and a bicycle.”

“I needed a lot of money for the first few weeks ... I don't remember how much exactly but at least 2 or 3 times as much as I usually spend now per week. I needed to buy some basic stuff that I hadn't even thought about before getting here (i.e. bed sheets, pillow), buy a semester ticket (local transportation), various fees, etc. I had expected that I could pay for a lot of it with a credit card which turned out to be incorrect.”

“I had to pay rent and have money for food. And then, people go to Ikea to get bed sheets, towels, and other stuff. I also went clothes shopping and ate out a lot at first. I don't think I actually spent that much, but \$1200 to \$1800 would be good to plan to have at first. The additional shopping and traveling money depends on how much each person wants to spend.”

“The first month in Germany might cost twice as much as subsequent months (approximately Euro 1,800), as you will pay a security deposit for your dormitory room and you may want to buy some small appliances.”

You will need approximately Euro1800

- 100 € or more for the student services fee
- 600 -800 € for the dorm room first rent and deposit

- 70 - 170 € for the semester ticket for your city's public transportation system
- Money for food, laundry, dorm accessories (sheets, etc), excursions, travel

## Accessing your money

### ATM Card

The best method of transferring money is by using an ATM card that works in a machine on the CIRRUS network, and drawing on money deposited in your checking account at home. This method provides the best exchange rate, and you can take out the exact amount you need in Euro. **Your PIN may not have more than four digits** to operate in many European ATMs (*Geldautomat*). Since most European ATMs have no letters on their keyboard please make sure to memorize your PIN as a number, not as a word or as letters. Money can easily be deposited by someone at home and then withdrawn in Germany with an ATM card.

### Exchanging Money

Banking charges for exchanging money tend to be higher in the US than in Europe, and, unless you are in a large city, rates are not always current. Convert a small amount of money (\$200-300) into Euro before leaving for Germany for any emergencies when you arrive and carry it in a fanny pack or money belt. Have enough money for start-up expenses.

If you intend to exchange larger amounts of money, it is worth your while to go to several banks and *Sparkassen* and compare their exchange rates and fees. The differences can be quite substantial.

### Banking

While in Germany you need to open a bank account in a regular bank. Bank accounts are provided without a monthly charge to students. You will pay your dormitory rent by setting up automatic payment from money you deposited in your German bank account.

You should open a checking account, *Girokonto*. A *Girokonto* makes it easier to transfer funds to another person's account (*Überweisung*), the normal way in Germany to pay regular bills such as rent, phone bills, etc., and to have payments sent to your own account. Ask a worker at the bank how to fill out banking paperwork and how to set up regular transfers.

In Baden-Württemberg you can choose between the Volksbank, Sparkasse, Baden-Württembergische Bank, Commerzbank, and several others. Please note that not all bank employees are fluent in English.

Let your own bank in the US know that you will be studying abroad and that you will be using the account from abroad. Your US bank will thus not suspect any fraudulent use of your Visa/ATM card, it may lessen the fees for you and increase the withdrawal limit. Most ATMS in Germany will allow you to withdraw up to 500 EURO per time, not day.

You cannot check your account balance from a German ATM, and you need to keep careful track of how much you have taken out and factor in the exchange rates.

## **Transfers from Home**

### **AmEx Money Orders**

American Express money orders are of little use to students in Baden-Württemberg. The only American Express office in Baden-Württemberg is in Heidelberg.

### **Wire Transfers**

Wire transfers from US to European banks are fast. They are also expensive. Your US bank may have to process cable transfers through a major, internationally recognized US bank, which then deals with a corresponding bank in Europe. This bank then completes the transfer to a bank near you in Germany.

### **International Money Transfer Tips**

Here are some ways to save money when transferring money internationally:

1. Shop around and compare. Look for the option that best suits your needs.
2. Transfer a large amount once, rather than smaller amounts often.
3. Pay attention to tier limits. How much you pay usually depends on the amount of the transfer. Don't transfer a large amount of money using a service geared more to smaller amounts, or vice versa.
4. Pay attention to the total cost! The fees you pay may be low, but the exchange rate high. In order to make true comparisons, look at the total amount the recipient receives. Sometimes a higher fee is worth it if the exchange rate is better.
5. Sometimes you and the recipient will get a better deal with remittance services if you send money in the local currency and let the recipient convert the amount into the local currency, getting a better exchange rate. Example: Send dollars to someone in Germany and let them convert the amount into euros. But for larger sums, a forex service will offer a better deal.
6. Don't pay for speed if you don't need to. If the money doesn't have to be transferred within a few hours, you can save money by choosing a longer time period of time – a few days or even a week or more.

### **Total Cost**

No matter which type of money transfer service you use, the total cost of any international currency transfer depends on four main factors:

- The transfer fee charged by the bank or money transfer company
- The amount of money you are transferring
- The speed of the actual transfer (within minutes, hours, days, weeks, etc.)
- The currencies involved and exchange rate at the time of the transfer

### **Credit Cards**

Credit cards are still not as widely accepted as in the US. But VISA and MasterCard are accepted in many places, except for small towns and villages, and in many grocery stores. Sometimes stores require a minimum purchase of Euro 10 or more, however, and some stores will not accept any credit cards at all, but only cash or the German EC-Karte debit card. European ATM and credit cards are chip cards!

## **Program Scholarships**

Students receiving scholarships through the B-W Exchange receive 5/10 monthly installments. In some cases scholarship payments are only available beginning the second month of your stay. Check with the Resident Assistant Director on details of scholarship payments.

## **What to Bring**

### **Clothing**

German students dress less casually than American students, yet their wardrobes are generally smaller than Americans'. You don't need to take much with you in the way of clothing. Jeans are acceptable for most occasions, and one outfit for more formal wear will be adequate. Germans, although they may not insist on a new outfit every day, are neater than Americans. Americans are easily identified in Europe by the comparatively sloppy way in which they dress, with sneakers, sweatshirts and baseball caps. Take this into account when packing.

### **Think Layers**

Take clothes you can layer for warmth. The weather in Baden-Württemberg is milder than in New England and is without New England's weather extremes. Seasonal changes will be less noticeable with September and May usually being the sunniest months. Though Freiburg is called Germany's sunniest city, it, along with the rest of Baden-Württemberg, receives more precipitation than the US northeast, and tends, therefore, to be chilly. You may need warm clothes even in summer. Bring shoes or boots that will stand up to rain and snow, and take along a warm jacket and something waterproof. You will need an umbrella; if you do not already own one, you can buy one cheaply in a German department store.

### **Think Laundry**

Laundromats are not common in Germany and are expensive. Dormitories do have washing machines. If you do your wash in a Laundromat, beware of the 90 degree Celsius *Kochwäsche* cycle. This literally boils the wash and will shrink and fade anything that can possibly be shrunk or faded. This cycle is primarily for cotton underwear and sheets. 40 degrees Celsius is for jeans and most clothes. 30 degree Celsius is for delicate clothes. When in doubt, read the label of the clothing for instructions. Drying is also expensive, so take along easy-care clothing. Most Germans air dry their clothing on racks (*Wäscheständer*).

### **Appliances**

If you plan to take electrical appliances (razor, hair dryer, etc.), you need a converter/adaptor unless your appliance is convertible to 220/230V current, in which case you still need an adapter. It is easier to purchase the adapter in the US. Make sure it fits into a deep round socket. Do not bring an electric clock. European current runs on 50 cycles, so you will lose ten minutes on an hour.

You can buy appliances fairly cheaply in Germany at discount stores or "Saturn". Ask several Germans where to shop for certain items as it may save you a lot of money. To improve your German, bring or buy a radio that operates at 220/230V or works on batteries.

Your laptop will probably function fine without a converter. Check your owner's manual if there is a switch on your laptop. You will need to find an outlet changer, one that allows your laptop plug (three-prong) to fit into a deep round socket. You can find this in German hardware stores in the electrical aisle.

Most student residences do not have WiFi. You may want to bring a LAN cord and a router to set up your own WiFi network.

### **Prescriptions, Medications, Toiletries**

Your student health insurance through the program covers the cost of prescriptions. However, if you take medication regularly, bring a supply for at least two months, and make sure you can send for additional supplies if you cannot find a German equivalent.

If you wear glasses, take along a copy of your prescription to avoid a reexamination in case your glasses need to be replaced. Contact lenses are a lot more expensive in Germany and not paid for by your health insurance, unless your vision is extremely impaired. Take along aspirin and dental floss. Both are more expensive in Germany.

### **Sheets and Towels**

German pillows are sized differently than American pillows, and you may have a comforter or feather bed requiring a special cover. Wait until you arrive in Germany to purchase sheets and pillow cases; they are frequently on sale at department stores or can be found at an IKEA store. Dormitories usually provide bed linens though you may want to purchase your own.

### **Books**

Bring a basic German-English dictionary. Books are very heavy, and they can take up a large portion of your airplane luggage weight allowance. Only bring books that are absolutely necessary.

### **Winter Clothing**

If you send winter clothing, label it "used clean clothing" to avoid a duty charge. (You normally have to pay delivery charges in Germany on packages you receive.)

Air mail for large items is very expensive. Students in Freiburg may use the Ernst-Zermelo-Straße address to receive packages. (For postage rates and other information visit: <http://www.usps.com/> and <https://www.deutschepost.de/de.html>)

Students at other universities should send their items in time for them to reach Freiburg during the orientation weekend, pick them up in Freiburg, or have them mailed to their universities. Packages cannot be forwarded.

## **Housing**

Housing in university towns can be scarce. For that reason, the BW Exchange makes every attempt to find dormitory housing for the participants but can't guarantee that individual preferences will be met. Students are notified in advance about housing arrangements. Students are responsible for making monthly rent payments for 7/12 months whether they occupy their rooms at the end of the semester or not.

### **Dormitory Living**

Dormitories in Germany are administered by the respective *Studentenwerk/Studierendenwerk* (<http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en>) of each university and are heavily government subsidized. Except at new universities, such as Konstanz, they are not located at the university, and you use public transportation or a bicycle or go on foot to get to and from classes.

Dormitory spaces are scarce, and only 10% of German students live in them; the rest live in private rooms, shared apartments (*Wohngemeinschaft – WG*) or commute.

### **German Dorms**

German dormitories offer distinct advantages over American dorms. Students are older and more mature; the dorms are, therefore, quieter than the typical American dorm. Housing is almost always in single rooms, and kitchens on every floor allow residents to prepare their own meals, either communally or individually. Most rooms are equipped with wash basins.

Most dorms have substantial social and sports programs, and many have a social room or bar. In a dorm, your chances of having regular, informal contact with Germans are substantially increased.

### **Student Housing Rules**

- Smoking in the building/room is prohibited
- The main entrance door should be locked after 10 p.m. for security reasons
- Lock your door and windows when you leave the room
- Do not keep large amounts of money and valuables in the room.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbors upon arrival
- Be considerate to your neighbours. Nighttime peace is between 10 pm and 7 am.
- Help save water and energy. Switch off electrical appliances and lights when not in use.
- Ventilate your room daily. Switch off the heating when airing the room. Never leave your window for a longer time in tilted position in winter. Make sure it's closed when you are not in the room.
- Cooking in the rooms is not allowed. Use the kitchen!
- Clean up after yourself!
- Ask your neighbors if a 'Putzplan' (cleaning schedule) exists and comply with it
- Make sure you understand the recycling system of the garbage and follow the rules
- Keep evacuation routes free
- No pets
- You are responsible for the behavior of your guests

Upon checking-out:

- Make an appointment with the housekeeper for checking-out at least two weeks before departure
- Remove all personal belongings including bicycles from the bike rack
- Clean the room including windows, floor, furniture, etc.
- Make sure that all items on the inventory list are still there
- Clean your compartment in the kitchen
- Dispose of your garbage

### **Meals and Cooking**

Most dorms and student houses have common kitchen facilities on each floor where every student has his/her own shelf and refrigerator space. In Germany breakfast and the evening meal are light and frequently cold; the hot noon meal is cheaper at the *Mensa* than anything you might cook yourself. Students can eat up to two meals a day at the university cafeteria, always called the *Mensa* (Latin for "table"). A hot meal is served at lunchtime (11:30-1:30) and usually consists of a few choices of meats with gravy,

vegetables, salad and sweets. Vegetarian options are also widely available. Many cafeterias also offer a less expensive daily *Eintopf*, a thick soup or stew. Milk, juice and soft drinks may be purchased on the side. Supper, served at 6 pm, is usually a cold meal.

### **Food Shopping**

You will find that you will shop more often than you usually do. Yet, take into consideration the store hours, as most stores are closed on Sundays and many most of Saturday. Try shopping at the local farmer's market, usually held two times a week. This will save you money and the products are FRESH! Consider that you are probably sharing a refrigerator with many people, so you cannot store as much food as you are probably used to storing. When you shop, be sure only to buy what you can carry home. Bring along cloth bags; paper or plastic bags will cost you a few cents at the checkout. Do not expect the cashier to bag your groceries; you will have to do this yourself. You will quickly learn to juggle paying and bagging your groceries at the same time. Weigh your produce before bringing it to the checkout lane. When buying soda or water or even glass jars of milk or yogurt, you will probably be charged with a *Pfand* (deposit); if you bring the bottle back you will receive a refund. Save money by shopping at Aldi, Lidl, or Netto where you can find quality groceries and other items at discount prices.

### **Health Insurance**

Your program fee includes comprehensive student health insurance coverage through the *Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse* - AOK <https://foreignstudents.aok.de/your-aok-health-insurance/services/> from the date of your matriculation as a student at a German university. Your student health insurance with AOK will run for the whole semester. Federal law requires that you have health insurance as long as you are staying in Germany. Cancelling the health insurance, therefore, is only possible with the cancellation of registration with the city and proof of exmatriculation.

Students over the age of 29 may not be eligible for student health insurance and must inquire with the program about potential coverage and alternatives.

Please refer to the UMass travel insurance policy for coverage of travel between the United States and Germany, medical evacuation, repatriation, or accidental death, dismemberment and loss of sight benefits (<http://www.umass.edu/ipo/education-abroad/health-safety>).

#### **The AOK provides**

Free choice of more than 130.000 contract doctors and contract dentists.

#### **Medical and dental treatment**

All costs paid for treatment on the health insurance card.

#### **Pharmaceuticals and surgical materials**

The AOK will pay the costs of all pharmaceuticals and surgical materials that can be, and are, prescribed by a contract doctor or dentist, up to a fixed amount, or up to the chemists' retail selling price less about 10% which you will have to pay yourself.

#### **Therapeutic services**

The AOK will pay the fees agreed with the contract therapists for medically prescribed remedies (e.g. medical baths and massages.) About 10% of the costs you will have to pay yourself.

## **Medical aids**

For prescribed medical aids which fall within the range of benefits the *AOK* is obliged to provide (visual aids, hearing aids, artificial limbs, orthopedic aids) the *AOK* will pay the costs up to a fixed sum or, if a sum has not been fixed, to the amount of the contractually agreed prices. However, as the patient you will have to pay about 10% of the costs yourself.

## **Dentures, repairs**

The *AOK* will pay a contribution towards the cost of medically necessary dentures amounting to 50% of the contract dentist's fee and the chargeable costs of dental services. The same applies to repairs.

## **Hospital treatment**

There is no time limit to the entitlement to in-patient hospital treatment if prescribed by a doctor.

The *AOK* takes on the costs agreed with the authorised hospitals, such as, for example admission charges, special fees and hospital and nursing charges.

Insured people over the age of 18 have to pay a supplement of 10 Euros per calendar day for a period not exceeding 28 days in a calendar year.

## **Sport therapy and physiotherapy**

If specific physiotherapy is prescribed by the doctor in order to restore health, which is carried out in groups under medical/ therapeutic supervision/ instructions, the *AOK* can take on the costs of these rehabilitation measures less the 10% of your own contribution.

## **Health insurance outside of Germany**

Your health insurance coverage is valid in the case of temporary residence (travelling) in a country belonging to the European Economic Community or a country with which a social insurance agreement relating to health insurance has been made.

More information will be provided at our orientation in Germany.

Before traveling outside of Germany, make sure you have sufficient coverage. Take your *AOK* insurance card with you for trips within Europe. For some countries you may need to purchase additional travel insurance.

The *Studentenwerk* offers legal and psychological counseling free of charge to students.

## **Visiting the Doctor**

You may want to ask friends and roommates to recommend a doctor or dentist; this is better than simply searching the phone book for a doctor. Normally you will make an appointment before meeting with a doctor, but some doctors offer *Sprechstunde* (office hours) when you can see the doctor on a first come-first serve basis. Call ahead of time to verify the doctor's protocol and to make sure the wait is not too long. It may be helpful to ask if your doctor speaks English; your health is not a topic on which you want to worry if you are conveying yourself correctly. In an emergency, do not hesitate calling **110** (the German 911) or going to the Emergency Room (*Notaufnahme*) at the nearest hospital; your insurance will cover the expenses.

# Getting to Your German University

## International Travel

You will make your own travel arrangements. Airfares change frequently and vary from airline to airline. Consult several travel agencies, watch for ads in newspapers, and surf the internet. The better informed you are, and the more flexible you are willing to be, the better airfare you will find.

## Booking Your Flight

Student travel agencies offer discounted rates – check STA, Student Universe, or similar agencies.

Internet search engines provide a quick and easy method for comparing airline prices, flight plans and times. Take a look at [www.yapta.com](http://www.yapta.com), [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com), [www.skyscanner.com](http://www.skyscanner.com), [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com), [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com), just to mention a few.

Booking directly with an airline, either online or over the phone, can sometimes end up being the best option in the end – and if plans change, you don't have to go through a third party to make changes to your itinerary! **Book a round-trip ticket**

## Where to Fly

The closest international airports are Frankfurt or Stuttgart in Germany and Basel or Zürich in Switzerland. Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Zürich have excellent train service to the other university towns.

## Air and Train

Many inexpensive flights land further away from your university town. Consider the cost of ground transportation when making flight arrangements. Train fares are relatively expensive in Europe, and air travel even more so. For information on train fares and connections within Germany, visit:

<http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/>

To find the train station at the airport, look for this symbol.



Train stations are located at each airport; simply follow the signs from your airport gate to the train terminal. You do not have to buy your train ticket before your departure; you can buy the ticket at the *Reisebüro* (travel office) in the train station. Seats on the train are plentiful and trains travel continually throughout the day. If you do have a long train ride, you may want to ask for a reserved seat. Because you will typically have a lot of luggage, you may want to choose a travel plan that does not require you to change trains. This may mean waiting for an hour or so, but it will be worth the wait.

In Frankfurt there are two train stations:

Frankfurt am Main Airport long-distance station (Fernbahnhof) is served by long-distance trains, mostly ICE services running on the Cologne–Frankfurt high-speed rail line.

Frankfurt Airport regional station (Regionalbahnhof) is an underground railway station at Frankfurt Airport. It provides local S-Bahn and Regionalbahn services to the city and the Frankfurt/Rhine-Main Metropolitan Region.

If your schedule uses the Fernbahnhof, don't go to the Regionalbahnhof, which is also in the airport – it is the station for local trains, e.g. to Frankfurt Main Station (Hauptbahnhof) from where you may connect to your destination.

For rail connections beginning in Switzerland see <http://www.sbb.ch/en/index.htm>

The biggest coach company serving all major German cities and also destinations abroad is FlixBus:  
<https://www.flixbus.de/>

## Arrival in Germany

Morning arrivals are best. Weekend and after 4 p.m. arrivals may require you to stay in a hotel or youth hostel for a night or two. **As soon as you have your arrival information available send an email message indicating the date and time of your arrival to:**

[reginejohn@ipo.umass.edu](mailto:reginejohn@ipo.umass.edu) AND to [office@umass.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:office@umass.uni-freiburg.de)

The Freiburg Resident Assistant Director, Silke Uebelherr, will then send you an email with arrival instructions. These will include suggestions on means of public transportation, where to pick up the keys to your dorm room and other relevant information for the first few days of your stay. In addition, students may receive instructions from the International Offices of their host universities.

### Anmeldung (Police Registration)

All residents of Germany are required to register with the police within **two weeks** of moving to a new address. When registering with the city you will have to show a residency statement from the landlord (*Wohnungsgeberbestätigung*). You will receive this statement from the *Studierendenwerk* when moving in.

You will need to register your address at the appropriate *Bürgerbüro*. If you are in Freiburg, you can register with the help of the Resident Assistant Director. If you go to another university, the *Auslandsamt* there will give you the appropriate instructions on how to register with the *Bürgerbüro*. If you change your address during the year, you must re-register.

Further information will be provided during the orientation weekend at the end of September/mid-April and also during your host university's orientation program.

### Residence Permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis)

You must obtain a residence permit: Bring your passport, The Anmeldung (see above) *Studentenausweis* or *Immatrikulationsbescheinigung*, a biometric passport-sized picture, proof of health insurance, documentation of your scholarship, if you have one, and of other financial sources.

Information on these procedures is provided during the orientations at the host universities.

## Employment

Students looking for paid part-time employment in Germany must observe the German labor law regulations for international students. Most students from non-EU countries are not allowed to work for more than 120 full days or 240 half days per year parallel to their studies. All German and international students who earn more than EUR 450 per month are liable to pay contributions to the German pension fund. These contributions are transferable within the EU, students from non-EU countries can apply for a refund.

For most employment you will need a German **tax identification number**. Do not forget your passport and visa or residence permit when applying for that number.

## Procedures When You Leave

Before you return to the US, cancel your address registration and residency permit (Abmeldung). **Send a copy of your 'Abmeldung' to UMass in Freiburg.** This will prevent problems if you reenter Germany or take up residency there another time. You will receive more detailed instructions from the Freiburg UMass office before you leave Germany.

## Getting Around in Germany

### On Foot, by Bicycle, or on Public Transportation

At all program sites in Germany you will be able to get to the university and shopping areas by means of public transportation or on foot. A bicycle may come handy. Look for notices of secondhand sales at the *Mensa*, in dormitories, or bicycle shops. Note that as a student you are insured against theft of your bicycle. Take a picture of your bike, and use two different kinds of locks on your bike. You will be required to “park” your bike responsibly and to report to the police immediately if your bike is stolen. With your student ID card, you will be able to purchase a discounted '**Semesterticket**' for the whole semester for unlimited use of public transportation.

In 2013 intercity traffic was deregulated and in addition to Deutsche Bahn numerous coach companies offer service between cities. The coaches usually have on-board service and offer Wi-fi. Ticket prices vary depending on how well in advance you book. But even the most expensive ticket is still only a fraction of the price of a train ticket. Deutsche Bahn also runs long distance busses. BahnCards will be accepted in their coaches.

### Cars Not Recommended

The BW Exchange does not recommend the purchase of a car. In general, a car is unnecessary. Medieval towns were not built for the automobile and parking spaces are very difficult to find and expensive. Moreover, automobile insurance is expensive and car inspection standards rigorous. If you rent a car for a short period of time, make sure you familiarize yourself with German and European traffic regulations and signs before you drive. In many cities with universities there are '*Mitfahrzentralen*', where people with cars offer to take others for a small amount of money with them, or you can use the online service *Mitfahrgelegenheit* (<http://www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de/>).

### Eurail Passes

During the long spring vacation most program participants travel within Germany and to other parts of Europe. Rail passes will be useful. Check with a travel agent in the US on current prices for Eurail Passes. If you are under 26, you may purchase a Eurail Youthpass. If you are 26 or over, other options exist, from 15-day passes to three-month passes. Eurail Passes are best bought in the US, and go into effect when you first use them. (They must be stamped at the train station before you board the train for the first time.) Eurail Passes allow you unlimited travel within most of Western Europe (Great Britain is not included) by second class on Youth Passes and first and second class on full-fare passes (visit <http://www.eurail.com>). Be sure to still reserve a seat on longer trips.

### Interrail Passes

They are cheaper than the Eurail Pass and enable you to travel in Europe and Britain for a period of two to four weeks. However, you must pay one-half the train fares in the country of purchase, and produce

evidence that you have lived in the country for six months. Your evidence will be the date of the residency permit stamped in your passport (see below). Depending on when you get your permit, you may not be eligible for an Interrail Pass until March (<http://www.interrailnet.com> - enter Germany for country of residence). For rail travel within Germany one can purchase a Bahncard, which entitles you to a 25 or 50% fare. One or two longer trips would pay for the *Bahncard* (visit <http://www.bahn.de/>).

## Staying in Touch

### Computers and E-Mail

Computers are not as readily accessible at the universities in Baden-Württemberg as they are in the US. You will most likely receive a computer account from your German university, but you will find fewer public computer terminals and those with long lines of users, slower computer and connection speeds, and limits on the amount of time you may spend on-line.

The easiest way of getting Internet access is via the university computer center. All students have to do is present their matriculation (university registration) certificate. Some of the student residence halls meanwhile have broadband networks. Some dormitory rooms allow internet connection with a laptop for a fee of about Euro 15 a month. But Internet access is often already calculated into the monthly rent.

Other options for getting on to the Internet are the Internet cafés, hotspots (wireless) ([www.cafespots.de](http://www.cafespots.de)) or by ordering an Internet connection from a provider. But the same applies here, too: Check all the offers carefully before you sign a contract. You can find a list of providers at: [www.billiger-surfen.de](http://www.billiger-surfen.de) and other websites. Major European university towns offer WiFi access through [Eduroam](http://www.eduroam.org) and you should set up your laptop, tablet and phone for Eduroam here at UMass before you leave. You will then be able to use Eduroam WiFi with your UMass profile and password.

### Telephone

To make a call from Germany to a foreign country you have to dial the international code:

00-(country code)-(area code)-(local number).

The country code for the United States is '1':

001-area code-local number

For rates for calls through different providers check these websites: <http://www.teltarif.de/> & <http://www.billiger-telefonieren.de/>

### Public Phones

These can mostly be used with cards (in some cases also with credit cards: But, beware! That is expensive). Phone cards, such as those offered by Deutsche Telekom, cost 5, 10 or 15 Euros in the T-Punkt stores, in post offices, in some stationary shops as well as in Internet or telephone cafés. In addition, coin-operated payphones can also occasionally be found.

Printed phonebooks or telephone directories (listed alphabetically or by name) or classified directories, also called Yellow Pages, are another important information source.

## Mobile Phones

The program requires all students to have a mobile phone and **to provide a German mobile phone number within two weeks after arrival. This will be the number we will use to communicate with you in case of an emergency.** This means that you will need to buy your own prepaid SIM card after your arrival in Germany. The program and the International Office of your host university will assist you with the process of purchasing a SIM card.

The conditions and services for mobile (cellular) phones differ from one network provider to the next as far as purchase costs, pre-paid or monthly charges, and free phone numbers or special rates are concerned. Detailed advice - that can go as far as producing a caller's personal phone profile - should certainly be used. Initial info on this is available from [www.handytarife-rechner.de](http://www.handytarife-rechner.de).

Some phone contracts contain minimum contract periods that can run up to between two and five years. Or they can have clauses on a minimum monthly charge. That can become very expensive. So do make sure that you read all the small print first, before you sign any contract. If you are uncertain, contact the consumer advice center (*Verbraucherzentrale*) at ([www.verbraucherzentrale.info/index.php](http://www.verbraucherzentrale.info/index.php)). DO NOT ENTER INTO A PHONE CONTRACT without seeking our advice prior to signing it.

While pre-paid phone plans tend to be very affordable compared with US plans, calls to the U.S. will be very expensive. For communication with the U.S. we recommend other services like WhatsApp, Skype or Viber.

**Before you leave the U.S.** you should make sure that your cell phone works in Europe and that your provider allows you to insert another SIM card. Verizon phones are usually locked and use a non-compatible technology.

## Post-Office

All towns and cities have mailboxes and you can also find them close to railway stations and at airports. They are easy to recognize: yellow box with a black postal horn. You have to buy stamps for your letters and postcards. You can get these from the post offices, either by going to the counter or drawing them from a stamp dispensing machine. For the latest postage prices, check the Internet at: [www.deutschepost.de](http://www.deutschepost.de).

## German Media

### Radio and TV

Everybody who has a television or radio in Germany has to register it with the German central license-fee collection authority called *Beitragservice ARD, ZDF, Deutschlandradio* ([www.rundfunkbeitrag.de](http://www.rundfunkbeitrag.de))

Wikipedia offers a list of all TV and radio stations and programs:

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_der\\_Fernsehsender](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Fernsehsender)

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_deutscher\\_Hörfunkprogramme](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_deutscher_Hörfunkprogramme)

### Newspapers

Germany's press and media landscape is very diverse and varied. Besides national and local daily papers, there is also an enormous market of magazines on all kinds of topics - from politics and the economy, to business and industry, education, science and research through to hobbies, student magazines or pet

magazines. And up-to-date international press and media products are also available, at least in the larger cities. The widest range of print products and publications will probably be found in the press shops at railway stations and airports.

## **Cultural and Leisure Activities**

University towns have considerable cultural offerings including museums, concerts, theater, and movies. You are not restricted to mere cultural consumption, however. You may also participate actively in for example a theater troupe, a choir or an orchestra. Socializing outside the home is a regular part of German life; there are untold numbers of *Kneipen*, where you can sample local specialties in food and drink. Clubs and student bars are a standard feature of university towns.

### **Sports**

Most towns have good municipal facilities for swimming and jogging, and private facilities for such sports as racquet ball, squash, and tennis. Nearly all the universities have extensive sports facilities, and lots of opportunities for country walking and hiking. And we encourage you to become a member in one of the numerous private sports clubs (*Sportvereine*). Most universities offer intramural sports or fitness classes through *Hochschulsport*. The low-key atmosphere of these classes means that even those who are not athletic can find a fun class to attend. This is a great way to meet German students.

### **Local Law**

- German law applies
- Authorities can request to see your passport
- Drugs and narcotics including marijuana and amphetamines are strictly illegal
- Very strict requirements regarding weapons and firearms
- Fascist, racist & Nazi propaganda is outlawed (literature, music, paraphernalia)
- Blood alcohol limit is 0,5 ‰ when driving
- Driver is responsible for every passenger wearing a seatbelt
- Cycling when drunk: police may confiscate your driving licence
- No loud noise on Sundays
- Do not address a police officer with ‚Du‘

## Appendix

### Conversions

Germany uses other measures than the US. Here are a few examples for conversions. For all conversions check this website: <http://www.convert-me.com/en>

1 Gallon:	3.8 Liters
1 Pound:	0.454 Kilogram
1 Mile:	1.6 Kilometers
1 foot:	0.3 Meters
1 inch:	2.54 Centimeters

To compute degrees Celsius to Fahrenheit add 32, multiply by 9 and divide by 5.

### Helpful Web Sites

<http://www.campus-germany.de/>

Multilingual web site with information on studying in Germany.

<http://www.germany-tourism.de/>

German National Tourist Board.

<http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/Startseite.html>

Official German Information Center

<http://www.daad.de/>

German Academic Exchange Service.

<http://www.dwelle.de/>

Germany's International Broadcasting Service..

<http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country\\_profiles/1047864.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1047864.stm)

BBC Country Profile.

## Packing Checklist

The best advice is to travel light. Choose luggage that is easy to carry and travel with; consider bringing small bags; a backpack may be useful for weekend travel. For your emotional comfort, you may want to pack one or two items you feel are personal necessities, but you will find that large amounts of clothing, gadgets, and books can be unnecessary burdens. Among bulky clothing items, take only the essential coats and sweaters that are appropriate for the climate. Bringing clothes you can layer with is a good idea. You can acquire additional items in your host country. These will have the added advantage of fitting in with the local fashions and making you less recognizable as a foreigner. Use the following basic list as a guide to pick and choose what is essential for you. Be sure to consult the specific information provided by your program, as well as recommendations from former participants.

After you are done packing, walk around the block to see if you can manage your luggage! Keep in mind that you may need to carry your luggage on uneven surfaces, on and off public transportation, and up and down stairs –so it is important to pack light! Check with your airline for size and weight restrictions on luggage and with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for prohibited travel items.

*Note: Expensive or valuable items such as jewelry, iPads, iPhones, and laptops can mark you as a target for pick-pocketing and theft. Safeguard your personal items and don't leave them unattended.*

### Carry the following items on your person

- entry documents (passport, visa, program acceptance letter, immunization records, etc.)
- cash (in host country's currency equivalent to US\$200-\$300)
- credit cards and ATM cards
- list of ATM and credit card numbers with contact phone numbers for reporting lost or stolen cards (pack separately from actual cards)
- copy of passport (separately from passport)
- driver's license or state I.D.
- arrival information, including important names, numbers and addresses in your host country
- prescription medications and legible copy of prescription
- emergency information card for your wallet
- passport/money belt
- flight e-ticket confirmation

### Documents to pack in your checked luggage

- copies of passport and visa
- information about health coverage
- extra passport-size photos

### Clothing (consider the host culture and climate)

- good pair of walking shoes
- sandals
- shorts
- skirts and pants
- shirts
- socks
- undergarments
- bathing suit
- attire for more formal occasions
- sweater(s) or sweatshirt
- sleepwear
- light jacket
- poncho or rain jacket
- winter coat, gloves, scarf, hat

### Toiletries and medicine

- toothbrush
- small supply of toothpaste, soap, and shampoo
- comb and brush
- sunscreen, moisturizers, and cosmetics
- deodorant
- small first-aid kit
- contraceptives and condoms
- pain relief medication
- tampons and pads
- razors and blades
- extra eyeglasses and sunglasses
- extra contact lenses and cleaning solution

### Electronics

- laptop or tablet
- adapters
- USB stick
- camera and charger
- iPod/MP3 player
- Phone (if you have a phone with a SIM card make sure it is unlocked so you can use a foreign SIM card)

### Miscellaneous:

- towel and washcloth
- inexpensive and reliable watch
- English-language books (to read and swap)
- luggage lock and tags
- travel bag
- backpack or purse

### Gift suggestions for your new friends

- clothing and items with UMass logo
- cookbooks with American recipes
- regional non-perishable foods (maple products, salt-water taffy, cranberry products etc.)
- photographs of your area or calendar with U.S. scenery
- hand-made crafts

## **Cross-Cultural Skills**

*From Kohls, Survival Kit for Overseas Living*

Tolerance for ambiguity  
Low goal/task orientation  
Open-mindedness  
Non-judgement  
Empathy  
Communication  
Flexibility; adaptability  
Curiosity  
Sense of humor  
Warmth in human relationships  
Motivation  
Self-reliance  
Strong sense of self  
Tolerance for differences  
Perceptiveness  
Ability to fail

## **Prescription for Culture Shock**

Get sufficient rest  
Gather information  
Ask for help  
Look for logical reason; make sense of your environment  
Don't disparage the host culture  
Find a host national friend  
Use all the wisdom and patience that you have  
Use your sense of humor  
Have faith in yourself and your hosts  
Don't fall into self-pity  
Be active - mentally, physically and socially  
Maintain a regular, well-balanced diet

## Staying Safe

Safety is an important issue no matter how experienced a traveler you may be. Though many students and those who live abroad/have lived abroad will say that they feel much safer abroad than in the U.S., that does not mean that it is true nor that you should not be smart and aware of safety issues. You have an important role in minimizing potential danger. **IT IS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY!**

In most instances of physical danger, alcohol is involved, and the victim does not have full control of his/her faculties and/or rational thinking.

Statistics show that violent crimes are lower in other countries when compared to U.S. statistics, but petty theft is often much more prevalent. Likewise, apartment theft is becoming more common among students. Whether this is because students stand out as being more affluent Americans or because they are less attuned to local safety practices, students need to be cautious while abroad. The first line of defense is to leave sentimental and extremely valuable items at home. Students must understand that what is considered "safe" behavior at home may not be "safe" behavior abroad.

Ultimately, it is important that both students and parents acknowledge that UMass cannot control the actions of individuals who choose to violate local host laws, nor can it influence how the local police will handle reports of crime. While we will carefully assist any student who is the victim of a crime abroad, UMass is not responsible for items that are lost or damaged due to theft or vandalism.

In larger cities, you can quickly go from safe areas to unsafe areas by crossing from one street to the next; in other words, area safety may differ from block to block. When you travel, make sure you know where you are, where you are going, and if you have any questions, ask your fellow students.

Some key things to keep in mind to avoid becoming a victim of crime, particularly while traveling:

- Don't get in a car with strangers. Don't hitchhike.
- Consider taking a taxi home if you are out late.
- Familiarize yourself with the city/neighborhood during the day.
- Be discreet when consulting maps.
- Locate the closest police station
- Stay in public areas; don't wander down empty, dark streets or through a park at night.
- Stay in groups of two or more.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- When at a bar, never leave your drink to go to the bathroom or to dance, and then come back and drink it.
- Avoid wearing flashy jewelry or risqué clothing.
- Pickpockets and purse-snatchers are common. Always keep a hand on your purse or backpack, especially at cafes, in parks and in subways.
- Wear a money belt when traveling and always keep your passport in an inaccessible location.
- Carry your wallet in a front or breast pocket; never carry it in a back pocket.
- Carry your purse or bag with the strap hung diagonally across your torso.
- When walking down the street, carry your purse toward the building side and away from speeding thieves on the street.
- Avoid sleeping on public transportation.
- Avoid unruly people, crowds and/or protest groups, or any other potentially volatile situation (even those involving other Americans or friends!)
- Be aware of local news.
- Do not assume that because something is legal in the U.S. it is legal abroad.
- Make yourself aware of traffic/pedestrian rules -most students who get hurt in auto related accidents do so because they are not aware of pedestrian and vehicle rules in other countries.
- **WHEN YOU TRAVEL** make sure your resident director knows where you are going and how to reach you in case of emergency.
- Develop a plan with your parents for regular communication; in case emergency you will already have a mode of contact established.
- This safety information is **NOT** all-inclusive! The best way to be prepared is to take the time to research any questions or concerns you may have before going abroad. Be aware that cultural differences exist, and that these may color your perception of safety and the personal decisions **YOU** make while abroad.

# Grade Conversion Table

## ECTS and German Grades

University of Massachusetts Amherst\*

ECTS Grades	Percentage Achieving the Grade	German Grade Equivalents	UMass Equivalents
A	10	1	A
A	10	1,25 (=1-)	A
A	10	1,5	A
A	10	1,75 (=2+)	A
B	25	2	A-
B	25	2,25 (=2-)	B+
B	25	2,5	B+
C	30	2,75 (=3+)	B
C	30	3	B
C	30	3,25 (=3-)	B-
D	25	3,5	C+
D	25	3,75 (=4+)	C
D	25	4	C
E	10	4,25 (=4-)	C-
FX	-	4,5	D+
F	-	4,75 (=5+)	D
F	-	5	F

\* Please note that this table represents a guideline for the conversion of grades. There may be exceptions to the conversions suggested above and in some cases it may be necessary to contact the instructor of a course and ask for the grade distribution in a particular class to determine a conversion.

## **Pre-semester Language Courses and Arrival Dates**

**Language and Orientation Courses at Baden-Württemberg Universities  
Fall 2019**

**UMass Orientation in Freiburg – 20 - 22 September 2019  
Mandatory for all new students in the program!**

### **Heidelberg**

#### **Dates**

4 – 27 September 2019

#### **Arrival**

2 September 2019

### **Mannheim**

#### **Dates**

1 – 30 August 2019

#### **Arrival**

1 August 2019

### **Tübingen**

#### **Dates**

9 – 27 September 2019

#### **Arrival**

2 – 6 September 2019

**Reminder: Arrival on a weekend is not possible at any of the schools!!**

## Proof of Financial Resources

### Finanzierungsnachweis

für die Erteilung einer Aufenthaltserlaubnis zu Studienzwecken

Alle ausländischen Studierenden, die nicht Bürger der EU, der EWR oder der Schweiz sind, benötigen für die Dauer ihres Studienaufenthaltes an einer deutschen Hochschule eine Aufenthaltserlaubnis zu Studienzwecken, die von der örtlichen Ausländerbehörde am deutschen Wohnort erteilt wird. Für die Aufenthaltserlaubnis müssen Studierende nachweisen, dass sie über ausreichende Finanzmittel zur Deckung der Lebenshaltungskosten für die Studienzeit in Deutschland verfügen ("Finanzierungsnachweis"). Hierfür gilt ein Richtsatz von zur Zeit 735 € pro Monat.

Als Finanzierungsnachweis gelten:

- Eine schriftliche Bestätigung von den Eltern, dass sämtliche während des Studienaufenthalts in Deutschland anfallenden Kosten von ihnen übernommen werden. Diese Bescheinigung muss beim für den Wohnsitz zuständigen Ausländeramt im Original und in deutscher Sprache (oder in beglaubigter Übersetzung) vorgelegt werden. Die Unterschrift muss durch eine Behörde (z.B. Stadtverwaltung, deutsches Konsulat etc.) oder einen Notar beglaubigt und mit einem Dienstsiegel versehen sein. Außerdem müssen Einkommensnachweise der Eltern vorgelegt werden. Es kann das umseitig abgedruckte Formular benutzt, oder die Erklärung auch in anderer Form erbracht werden.
- Weiterhin kann als Finanzierungsnachweis auch ein entsprechender Stipendiennachweis vorgelegt werden. Wenn das Stipendium weniger als 735 € beträgt, ist der Restbetrag nachzuweisen.
- Eine förmliche Verpflichtung (§ 68 AufenthG) von Verwandten oder Bekannten. Die Verpflichtung ist gegenüber einer Ausländerbehörde oder der deutschen Auslandsvertretung abzugeben. Sie kann für die gesamte Studiendauer abgegeben werden. Die Personen, die sich verpflichten, müssen gegenüber der jeweiligen Behörde nachweisen, dass sie in der Lage sind diese Verpflichtung auch tatsächlich einzuhalten.
- Ein Sperrkonto, das bei einer Bank in Deutschland eingerichtet wurde, wobei ein bestimmter Betrag gesperrt wird und Sie monatlich nur einen festgesetzten Betrag (Betrag muss 735 € oder mehr sein) abheben dürfen. Die Gültigkeitsdauer der Aufenthaltserlaubnis errechnet sich aus dem gesperrten Betrag. Ein Sperrkonto wird nicht von allen Banken angeboten.

## Proof of Financial Resources

in order to obtain a student residence permit

All international students who are not citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area or Switzerland require a student residence permit for the duration of their period of study at a German university, which is issued by the local Office of Foreigners' Affairs at the place of study in Germany. In order to obtain this permit, students must prove that they have sufficient financial support to cover their living costs during their study period in Germany ("Finanzierungsnachweis"). The current monthly minimum is 735 €.

- As valid proof of financial resources can be used:
- A written confirmation from parents that they will take responsibility for all expenses connected with the study period in Germany. This must be a document in the German language (or an official translation). It must be certified with an official stamp by an official authority (e.g. local administration, German Consulate etc.) or by a notary public. The document, with signatures in the original (not a fax or a copy) must be presented upon registration in Germany. Additionally, a certification that your parents have sufficient funds to finance your stay (e.g. confirmation of the bank, bank statements of the last three months) has to be presented. You can use the form overleaf for the proof of financial resources.
- A scholarship confirmation can also be valid as proof of financial resources. If your scholarship grants you less than 735 € per month, you will require proof of financial resources to cover the difference.
- A formal written commitment from relatives or acquaintances (§ 68 of the Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz)). This commitment must be submitted to an Office for Foreigners' Affairs in Germany or to a German diplomatic mission abroad and it can be submitted for the entire duration of the study period. The persons who commit themselves must prove to the respective authority that they are in a position to maintain this commitment.
- A blocked account, opened at a bank in Germany, from which a particular sum is blocked and you are only allowed to withdraw monthly a fixed sum (this sum must be 735 € or more). The period of validity of the residence permit is calculated from the blocked sum. This service is not offered by all banks.

Finanzierungsnachweis  
zum Studium in Baden-Württemberg  
**Proof of Financial Resources**  
für  
for

.....  
Vorname, Name / First Name, Family Name

---

Hiermit bestätige ich, dass ich für sämtliche Kosten, mindestens aber 735 Euro pro Monat, aufkomme, die während des Studienaufenthaltes der obengenannten Person an der Universität \_\_\_\_\_ anfallen werden.  
English: I hereby confirm that I am willing to meet all the costs - at least 735 Euro a month - which will arise during the above mentioned person's course of study at the University of \_\_\_\_\_.

.....  
Vorname, Name / First Name, Family Name

.....  
.....  
Adresse / address

.....  
Ort, Datum / City, Date

.....  
Unterschrift / Signature / Signature

---

.....  
Beglaubigung der Unterschrift durch eine amtliche Stelle mit Dienstsiegel  
**Official certification with signature and stamp or seal**

Bitte ergänzend einen Einkommensnachweis des Unterzeichnenden mitbringen.

Additionally, please bring a certification **(with signature and stamp or seal)** that your guarantor himself has sufficient funds to finance your stay (e.g. confirmation of the bank, bank statement AND income statement – a simple account balance is NOT sufficient). Please note: Do not send in advance. Please take this original form with you to Germany

## Broadcasting Contribution Fees

As of January 1, 2013, there have been major changes to broadcasting fee regulations ("TV licence"), in particular for people sharing a flat or a house.

### 1. What are the regulations for the new broadcasting contribution fee?

With the amended German Broadcasting Act, coming into effect on January 1, 2013, the new broadcasting *contribution fee* has replaced the former broadcasting *charge*. The "Gebühreneinzugszentrale" (GEZ = central broadcasting charges collecting agency) also has been renamed: "ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice" (Contribution Collection Service for Public Broadcasting ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio).

As of January 2013, there is a **fixed flat rate per home** for all receiving devices. Each household in one home (i.e., a flat or a single house) has to pay €17.98 per month, regardless of the number or type of devices available or used. Devices are TV and radio sets as well as PCs and mobile devices (i.e., phones) with Internet access. This flat rate includes all types of usage, including usage in cars, and it has to be paid quarterly.

### 2. Who has to pay?

**For each home, the contribution fee has to be paid only once**, regardless of how many people live there!

This is a huge improvement for all those **sharing a flat/house** or living in other forms of communal living: Until now, every flatmate or housemate had to pay the contribution fees for his/her devices individually. The new regulation is regardless of the fact of who has a head lease or whether each flatmate/housemate has a lease contract of his/her own or not.

This means that one adult flatmate/housemate must register and pay the broadcasting contribution fee for the home they share. The flatmates/housemates are free to choose who should register and pay.

The flatmate/housemate paying the fee for all is entitled to collect from the other flatmates/housemates liable for contribution their share of the mutual fee, of course.

All tenants of the shared flat will have "joint and several liability" for the contribution fee. This means that if the designated contributor does not pay, the "Beitragsservice" (Contribution Collection Service) is allowed to put a claim for the outstanding contribution fee upon one or all of the other flatmates liable for contribution!

The **nationality** of the tenants **does not matter**. There are no special rules for international students, neither for students receiving scholarships nor for students on exchange programs (e.g., Erasmus).

The broadcasting contribution fee also has to be paid for homes that are registered as secondary residences.

### 3. What constitutes a "home"?

In general, within the framework of the Broadcasting Act, every separate room or set of rooms constitute a "home" that

- is used or can be used for living and sleeping purposes, and
- can be entered through a separate entrance directly attached to a staircase, an entrance hall or room, or from the outside—i.e., by not going through another living space.

### 4. Are student accommodation units a "home"?

- Single apartments count as "one home": Tenants of these have to pay € 17,98 per month (exception: exempted BAföG recipients).

- Double apartments as well as small shared apartments will probably be accepted as "one home". For these, one flatmate has to pay € 17,98 per month.
- Our other student accommodations (mostly single rooms in shared hall communities with common kitchen/sanitary rooms and with a separate floor entrance) are more difficult to classify within the framework of the Broadcasting Act. It is highly probable that the "Beitragsservice" will try to count each room on the floor as "one home" liable for individual contribution fees. We recommend to try to get your floor unit registered as one household and have one tenant pay the fee.

### **5. How does the "Beitragsservice" (Contribution Collection Service) get tenants' data?**

The residents' registration offices transmit the data of all adult persons to the "Beitragsservice" for the purpose of collection and inventory of possible contributors' data. Data transmitted include name, date of birth, family status, current and last previous address as well as the date of moving in.

In addition, it is compulsory for everyone living in a home to inform and notify the "Beitragsservice" (also refer to FAQ no. 9). Landlords/ladies are obliged to provide information about tenants to the "Beitragsservice" in case the "Beitragsservice" can prove that it has no other way to ascertain the person(s) living in a specific home.

### **6. As a tenant, am I obliged to provide information?**

Everyone living in a home is obliged to register with the "Beitragsservice" and notify it of any changes in their data; for people living in a shared flat or house, this is only necessary once.

In addition, every contributor is obliged to provide the "Beitragsservice" with extensive information upon request.

### **7. Can I "dodge" paying—and what happens if I do not pay?**

Because the contribution fee is based on households = homes, no one can "dodge" paying any longer. In the past, one could avoid paying the broadcasting charge by claiming one did not own any receiving devices liable for the charge; the GEZ then had to prove otherwise. Now, you would have to prove that you don't even have the *possibility* to receive any broadcasting under any circumstances—if you cannot prove that, you have to pay unless you have been exempted.

A deliberated or grossly negligent failure to pay is an administrative offence and can be penalized with an administrative fine!

### **8. Can I sign off because I do not own a TV set?**

No. For one thing, the contribution fee is valid for all kind of receiving devices, i.e. also radio sets, car stereos, PCs and mobile devices with Internet access, etc. It also applies if you do not own any receiving devices. The contribution fee is required solely for the *possibility* of receiving public TV or radio programs.

### **9. Can the "Beitragsservice" (Contribution Collection Service) demand to enter my home?**

No, this was not allowed for the former GEZ, and it is not, and will not be, allowed for the "Beitragsservice"! Entering your home is not necessary anymore, because the broadcasting contribution fee is required per home and independent of the number of receiving devices (if any).

### **10. Where can I receive further information?**

For more information, please visit [www.rundfunkbeitrag.de](http://www.rundfunkbeitrag.de) (in German).

If you have any further questions, please contact the [Social Advice Centre](#) at the Studentenwerk. We will be happy to help you.

## **For arrival info and other useful info for your host universities**

### **Freiburg**

Contact Silke Uebelherr at [office@umass.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:office@umass.uni-freiburg.de)

### **Heidelberg**

[http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/courses/prospective/admission\\_int/guide/online\\_guide\\_index.html](http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/courses/prospective/admission_int/guide/online_guide_index.html)

### **Karlsruhe**

<http://www.intl.kit.edu/istudies/3242.php>

### **Mannheim**

<https://www.uni-mannheim.de/en/academics/coming-to-mannheim/exchange-students/>

### **Konstanz**

<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/international-office/study-in-konstanz/exchange-and-non-degree-studies/>

### **Stuttgart**

<http://www.ia.uni-stuttgart.de/iu/essp/>

### **Tübingen**

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/international/study-in-tuebingen/erasmus-and-exchange-to-tuebingen/>