HOCHSCHULE FRESENIUS

ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

IDSTEIN

AS OF 2024

Dear prospective and current students

We designed this accommodation guide in order to support you with the accommodation search in your new place of residence. Studying abroad can be an exciting and life-changing time and we will do our best to support you as good as possible so that you can enjoy our time in Germany to the fullest!

We won’t lie: finding accommodation in Germany can be challenging, especially in the bigger cities. Hopefully this guide will give you a comprehensive overview about how to find accommodation in Germany, how to apply for a flat and what peculiarities you need to know about.

Please note that this guide does not feature a complete list of accommodation provider. We further do not work with any of the companies mentioned (unless indicated otherwise) and that these non-binding lists are simply an overview, not a recommendation.

YOUR INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

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Sources: https://allaboutberlin.com/guides/find-a-flat-in-berlin
https://www.bimm.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/bimm-berlin-accommodation-guide-202122-original.pdf

Before you start

IN GERMANY, SOME THINGS WORK DIFFERENTLY. HERE IS A SHORT OVERVIEW ABOUT CERTAIN PECULIARITIES.

You must pay a **deposit**: in Germany, almost all flats require a deposit (*Kaution*). You get it back when you move out. If you broke something, the landlord uses your deposit to pay for the repairs. The deposit is usually 3 times basic rent (*Kaltmiete*) - higher amounts are not legal.

Different types of leases:

Mieten: rent or let - refers to a contract between you and a landlord – the usual option.
Untermieten: sublet - means renting a room from someone who themselve has the contract with the landlord – more flexible but fewer rights than *Mieten*.
WG or *Wohngemeinschaft*: flatshare in which a group of people lives together to rent a property

Rent & other costs: in housing ads, rent per month will usually be divided into two parts:

Kaltmiete: "cold rent" is the basic rent for the room/flat
Warmiete: "warm rent" is the amount payable to the landlord. It usually includes water and heating. The "warm rent" consists of the "cold rent" and "*Nebenkosten*" (= additional charges).

The "warm rent" is based on standardized consumption. You will get charged extra if you use up more water/heating than your landlord has calculated. You will get a refund if you use less than your landlord has calculated. As energy prices are currently highly increasing, many people find it helpful to pay more for energy consumption in advance in order to avoid getting charged extra afterwards.

Additional charges are electricity, internet access (20 – 30 € / month) and license fees for public service broadcasting/TV tax (see next page; 18.36 € per month / flat). When in doubt, ask for a detailed overview of what is included in the rent

Unfurnished Apartments:

If you want to rent a flat:
Be aware that unfurnished really means unfurnished. There may be no stove, no fridge and even no light bulbs.
In a shared flat, kitchen, living room etc. will be usually equipped, but you may encounter your personal room empty without any bed or cupboard.
If in doubt, ask the landlord beforehand.

Before you start

Rent is paid by **bank transfer**

Rooms are **counted differently**: Flats are categorized by the number of rooms, excluding the bathroom and kitchen. '1 Zimmer' (1 room) would be a studio flat, plus a bathroom and kitchen, while '2 Zimmer' would refer to one bedroom, a sitting room, a bathroom and a kitchen.

TV tax: Everyone in Germany must pay TV tax (*GEZ* or *Rundfunkbeitrag*). This tax costs 18.36€ per household per month. If you live in a shared flat (WG), you can split the cost.

Registration (*Anmeldung*):
Everyone who wants to stay in Germany for longer than three months – including EU citizens – needs to register their residence (*Anmeldung*) at the local registration office (*Einwohnermeldeamt*) within two weeks of moving in or they will face a fine.

Extra fees that might apply:

- Drawing up the contract
- Administration charges
- Reference fees
- Inventory fees

Search for apartments

SOME SUGGESTIONS WHERE TO START YOUR SEARCH

APPLY ASAP!

CLASSIFIED ADS

- eBay Kleinanzeigen - The most popular classified ads site in Germany. It has more ads from tenants and private landlords
- ImmobilienScout24 - The biggest apartment listing site in Germany
- Immowelt - Another big apartment listing site
- Immonet
- Immobilo
- Wohnungsbörse

FLATSHARES

- WG-Gesucht - The most popular roommate search website in Germany. Very competitive
- WG Suche
- Alexandra Hohl – Real estate company

STUDENT HOUSING

Students-at-home – Student dormitory in Idstein, managed by Debus Immobilien (contact: r.debus@debus-hausverwaltung.de)

Student residence Max Kade - Student dormitory with furnished 1-room apartments (in Wiesbaden)

Hillside Wiesbaden - modern furnished studio apartments for students and professionals (in Wiesbaden)

Die Zimmerei – furnished apartments ready to move straight in (in Frankfurt, not in Wiesbaden)

Erasmusplay – apartments, studios and flatshares

Search for apartments

MORE SUGGESTIONS WHERE TO START YOUR SEARCH

SHORT TERM AND FURNISHED APARTMENTS

Wunderflats – Medium to long term furnished apartments. *Anmeldung* always allowed.

AirBnB, Wimdu and 9flats - Travel apartments, useful as a first accommodation. They rarely let you register your address

Smartments - Furnished business apartments (in Mainz)

City Home – temporary housing options

HousingAnywhere - Furnished apartments. Has a search filter for "Anmeldung possible". Receive 20% discount on the booking fee by signing up here.

Spotahome - Medium to long term furnished apartments. The listings have video tours and lots of photos. Get 30% discount on the service fee by using the promo code **FRES30**

Uniplaces - Medium to long term furnished apartments. The listings have video tours and lots of photos. Get 40% discount on the service fee by using the promo code **UP40FRESENIUS**

HomeLike – Furnished Apartments. Discount applied by signing up here. Further one-time 50€ discount using the promo code: **Fresenius2024-50**

Search for apartments

DON‘T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE COMMUNITY

FACEBOOK GROUPS

Wohnung mieten Wiesbaden

WG & Wohnung | Mainz & Wiesbaden

WG & Wohnung Wiesbaden gesucht

#NETWORK

THINGS TO CONSIDER

MOST PEOPLE CAN'T CHOOSE THEIR FLAT AND TAKE WHAT THEY CAN GET. YOU STILL SHOULD LOOK FOR A FLAT YOU LIKE AND BE AWARE OF SCAMS, BUT DON'T BE TOO PICKY.

Can you register your address?

After you move in, you must register your address (*Anmeldung*). Some flats don't let you register. That's illegal, but it might happen with sublets and temporary flats. Usually, the landlord does not know that you live there but in case the landlord finds out that you live there without permission, they can kick you out. If you can't register, it's also harder to receive mail and you can't get a tax ID. Always choose a flat that lets you register.

Live alone or in a WG?

If you want to save money, you can rent a room in a shared flat (*WG*). The flat already has internet, electricity, appliances and sometimes furniture (kitchen, living room etc. will be equipped, but you may encounter your personal room empty without any bed or cupboard). Arrangements for the flat have been made and your flatmates will include your share in these costs in the rent. A *Zweck-WG* is a *WG* where people live together to save money, not to be friends.

Neubau or Altbau?

New buildings (*Neubau*) are often quieter and better insulated. They have concrete walls and floors. Old buildings (*Altbau*) often have beautiful high ceilings, hardwood floors, and a more charm.

Storage and parking?

Many flats come with a storage room in the basement (*Kellerraum*), and bicycle racks in the interior courtyard. Some buildings have a basement garage.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

...WHEN CHOOSING A LOCATION

Neighborhoods

There are always popular neighborhoods in a city. These neighborhoods are usually more interesting, but they are busier, louder and more expensive. There is a lot of competition for apartments in those areas. If you want to pay less, or live in a quiet area, look for apartments outside these neighborhoods.

Crime

Generally speaking, German cities are safe, even at night, but some parts are less safe than others. The areas next to big train stations. There are more drunk people, drug addicts, street fights, vandalism and theft in those areas, but people will still leave you alone. You don't need to avoid the entire area, just the busy streets.

Public transportation

Wiesbaden has good public transportation. You can live far from the center if you live close to a train or subway station. Check beforehand how far you are from work or university.

Noise

Busy streets are very noisy because of the public transport, cars and ambulances. Ambulances are very loud and you can hear the public transports even when you close your windows. Busy areas with lots of bars and restaurants are also loud, especially late at night.

Parking

You don't need a car in Idstein, but if you want to buy a car, check if there is enough parking space. In central neighborhoods, parking spaces are hard to find and you often need a parking permit (120€ per year). Check if your building has a basement garage.

Parks + nature

Idstein has several parks and green spaces, even in the center.

COMMON FLAT SCAMS

DURING YOUR SEARCH FOR ACCOMMODATION, YOU MAY ENCOUNTER FLAT SCAMS. BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING WARNING SIGNS:

LANDLORD ABROAD

Landlords who say they are abroad themselves (often currently on holidays) and cannot show you the flat. They sometime ask for you to transfer a deposit first before sending the keys by mail.

MONEY UP-FRONT

Landlords who request your money before you have seen the flat. Don't pay anything before you haven't seen the flat and signed a contract.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

Ads that are "too good to be true": affordable, central location, luxurious facilities. Accommodation like this may exist, but chances are pretty rare.

AGENT FEES

Never pay an agent fee (*Maklergebühr* or *Provision*), unless **you** hired the agent.

THIRD PARTY

The landlord apparently involves a third party-company (e.g., booking.com) and asks you to transfer the deposit before receiving further instructions by the third party

RULE #1 →

If you are unsure about whether the offer is trustworthy for whatever reasons –please forward us the advertisement (international@hs-fresenius.de) and we will try to assess its trustworthiness.

COMMON FLAT SCAMS

SOME TIPS ON HOW TO AVOID SCAM

WAIT BEFORE YOU PAY

Wait before you pay: Don't pay anything until you see the flat in person and sign the lease. You have until the day you move in to pay the rent and deposit. There is no fee just to see a flat.

ONLY PAY BY BANK TRANSFER

In Germany, rent is paid by bank transfer. Never send money by Western Union or other payment services. If you pay cash, ask for a receipt.

USE COMMON SENSE

If the price is too good to be true, it's probably a scam. If it's too easy to get the apartment, it's probably a scam.

USE GOOGLE

Search the landlord's name and IBAN on Google. If they are a scammer, you might find some warnings online, or identical ads with different photos.

FLATTRUST

If you are searching from abroad, you can use the services e.g. of the ageny Flattrust. They are a reliable company, which will check the flat for you and let you know if it is a reliable offer.

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Tips from our students

- Download relevant apps such as WG-Gesucht or Ebay-Kleinanzeigen.
- Be prepared: Have a pre-written message and also fill your profile in application out, its very time saving.
- Turn the notifications on, so when a new ad comes up you will be the first ones to see that and apply for that. The candidates are usually among the first 20 ones that applies.
- Make sure to check each app at least 5-6 times a day.
- On appointment day, try to make conversation with the owner or the agent so they remember you
- Be in touch with the local kiosk in the neighborhood! They often know who is moving out, who is moving in, who needs a flatmate etc.

Shokoofeh Samari, International Tourism + Event Management (M.A.) student

Tips from our students

Always go to see the flat before signing the contract and paying the deposit, knowing the landlord always brings confidence when renting the flat. If not, don't trust them because it could be a scam.

If your landlord asks you for extra documents like "*Schufa*" here you can find the link to receive it. The first time that you ask for a *Schufa* in Germany you don't have to pay for it. Please note that they will ask you for an address in where you want to receive this document so that you have to introduce the address of the place that you stay now in Germany (for example I was in a hotel for a month, and I introduced the hotel's address in order to receive the letter). It takes about 2 weeks for the letter to arrive at the address.

I always recommend writing your own advertisement in German and English and posting it on websites like WG Gesucht or Facebook groups. In this advert you should include the following: the neighborhood in which you are looking for a flat, maximum stay, budget, why you are in the city and some personal details about yourself, e.g. your hobbies. You can also add a photo of yourself to make the ad more reliable! 😊

Sara Álvarez Sabucedo, International Business Management (M.A.) student

Get in touch

IT IS COMMON FOR LANDLORDS OR FLAT MATES TO WANT TO MEET PROSPECTIVE RENTERS PERSONALLY. ROOMS IN SHARED FLATS ARE USUALLY GIVEN AWAY BASED ON SYMPATHY.

- Be flexible, quick and write many applications!

- Make appointments to view flats/rooms personally and introduce yourself to possible flat mates. Speak or write in German. This will get you more responses. Moreover, many landlords only answer phone calls, other landlords only answer emails. Call as soon as you can, and if that doesn't work, send an email.

- If you get invited to a flat viewing in a shared flat, you are usually not the only person that will be invited. So-called "WG Castings" often take place, where your potential future flat mates will get to know you and other applicants.
  Don't let the term "casting" scare you – this can be a lot of fun and is meant to be a first indicator whether your personalities match.

#BEPREPARED

Prove to potential landlords that you are genuinely interested and stand out from the other applicants by providing landlords with a comprehensive portfolio. You could include:

- Letter of introduction
- Personal information questionnaire (Hochschule Fresenius can provide you with an appropriate document)
- *Einkommensnachweis* – Proof of income/sufficient funds/parental support (whichever applies)
- *Mietschuldenfreiheitsbescheinigung* – Letter of reference from your previous landlord (if available)
- *Schufa-Auskunft* - this is not necessarily required for students coming from abroad, but it’s always a good idea to make sure you have some evidence of your credit rating. Otherwise, anything declaring that you aren’t in any debt will suffice.

GET IN TOUCH

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Flat is the flat well maintained?
Appliances – what appliances fit the flat?
Internet access – what internet connections are available?
House rules (*Hausordnung*) – what rules does the *Hausordnung* have?
Landlord – are the current tenants happy?
Neighbors – what neighbors are there?
Pets – are pets allowed in the flat?

! TIPS FOR VIEWING THE FLAT

- Visit the area at night
- Compare different landlords and properties
- Don’t let landlords pressure you – listen to your feelings
- Take notes and make pictures

Sign the lease

HAVE A LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING TOPICS MENTIONED IN THE LEASE

- By which date do you need to pay rent?
- Will the rent automatically increase after a certain period of time?
- Is the contract for an indefinite period or does it have an end date?
- When do you have to terminate the contract in case you move out? All German contracts come with a notice period (*Kündigungsfrist*). Make sure to not miss this period! This is taken very seriously in Germany. In general, you have to let your landlord know three months before moving out, but exceptions exist.
- Are there any housing regulations that you need to be aware of? There may be certain “quiet times” or times when you are not allowed to bring out the trash or use a washing mashing within the apartment.
- Does the contract come with a handover report (*Übergabeprotokoll*)? Usually, the landlord and you will make notes of potentially preexisting damages, so you don’t have to pay for them when moving out. In case damages exist, make sure to take pictures when moving in, so you have proof that you did not cause these damages.
- In what condition do you need to have over the accommodation when moving out? For example, are there any requirements for redecoration before moving out?
- How much is the deposit and when will you receive it back after moving out?
  Important: The deposit may not exceed three months’ basic rent.

SIGN THE LEASE

MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND ALL THE CLAUSES TO AVOID BAD SURPRISES AFTERWARDS.

If you cannot understand some parts of the rental contract or some unusual conditions are present, don't hesitate to ask us for advice!
international@hs-fresenius.de

After you sign the lease, you will receive three important documents:

- The signed lease
- The *Übergabeprotokoll* (Handover report)
- The *Einzugsbestätigung des Wohnungsgebers/Vermieters* (move-in confirmation) - you need this for your *Anmeldung*

IMPORTANT

Don't forget to ask your landlord for a move-in confirmation (*Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung*).

You will need this document to register with your city after moving into your new place.

Move in

THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING

To dos

After you find a place, it's time to move in. You must register your new address at the *Bürgeramt*, maybe find a good liability insurance (*Haftpflichtversicherung*), get an internet contract, find an electricity provider and a few other things.

Familiarize Yourself

If you just moved to Idstein or the rhine-main region, you might need to buy furniture, appliances, etc. You should also familiarize yourself with how to sort your trash, how your electric bill works, and what to do if you lose your keys.

Legal issues

Maybe you want to join a tenants' union (Mieterverein). They can check your lease, and help you when you have problems with your landlord. Legal insurance can also help with that.

TERMS + ABBREVIATIONS

SOME COMMON TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS THAT YOU MAY COME ACROSS

Kaltmiete (KM)

Kaltmiete is the basic rent that you pay only for the room you will live in. It does not include utilities, electricity, internet etc.

Warmmiete (WM)

The warm rent (*Warmmiete*) is the amount that you actually have to pay to the landlord. Costs for electricity or internet, for example, are not usually included in the warm rent.

Nebenkosten (NK)/zzgl. NK

The ancillary costs (*Nebenkosten*) consist, among other things, of the costs for water, heating, building cleaning and waste collection. They are paid as part of the warm rent.

Wohngemeinschaft (WG)

WG is short for Wohngemeinschaft (shared flat). In a WG several people share a flat. Usually everyone has a private bedroom, while kitchen, living room, bathroom etc. are shared by all flat members.

1ZKDB (1 Zimmer, Küche, Diele, Bad)

1 bedroom, kitchen, hallway, bathroom

Kaution (KT)

A Kaution equals a deposit. A deposit is a certain amount (usually up to three months' rent) that is paid in advance to the landlord. This is a guarantee that you will leave the apartment undamaged when you move out later. If everything is in order, the deposit will be returned to you at the end of the tenancy. If there is any damage that needs to be repaired, your landlord will use your deposit (at least in part).

Einbauküche (EBK)

Built-in kitchen

Erdgeschoss (EG) / Obergeschoss (OG)

ground floor / upper floor

Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS)

A certificate you require to rent a state-subsidized apartment. This certificate is issued to low-income persons. Check with the *Wohnungsbehörde* of Idstein whether you would qualify for this.

GOOD LUCK FINDING ACCOMMODATION!

If there is anything we can assist you with

international@hs-fresenius.de