

2 PREPARING YOUR STAY



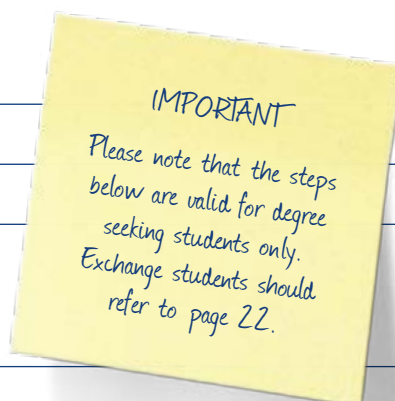
BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Before you come to Germany, there are some bureaucratic hurdles to tackle. The administrative steps and the documents which you have to bring with you may differ depending on whether you are an exchange or a degree student, and whether you come from a European Union country or not. Please consult your respective contact person in the International Office or at the faculty.

STUDYING IN GÖTTINGEN AS A DEGREE SEEKING STUDENT

CHECKLIST: PREPARING YOUR STAY

- ☐ Receive admission letter
- ☐ Apply for visa (if required)
- ☐ Clarify money-related questions
 - Secure funding for your studies
 - Get proof of financial resources (if required)
- ☐ Apply for health insurance (if required)
- ☐ Prepare the documents to take with you to Göttingen
- ☐ Apply for accommodation
- ☐ Start learning German
- ☐ Apply for study-buddy/exchange-buddy programme (if desired)



RECEIVING YOUR ADMISSION LETTER

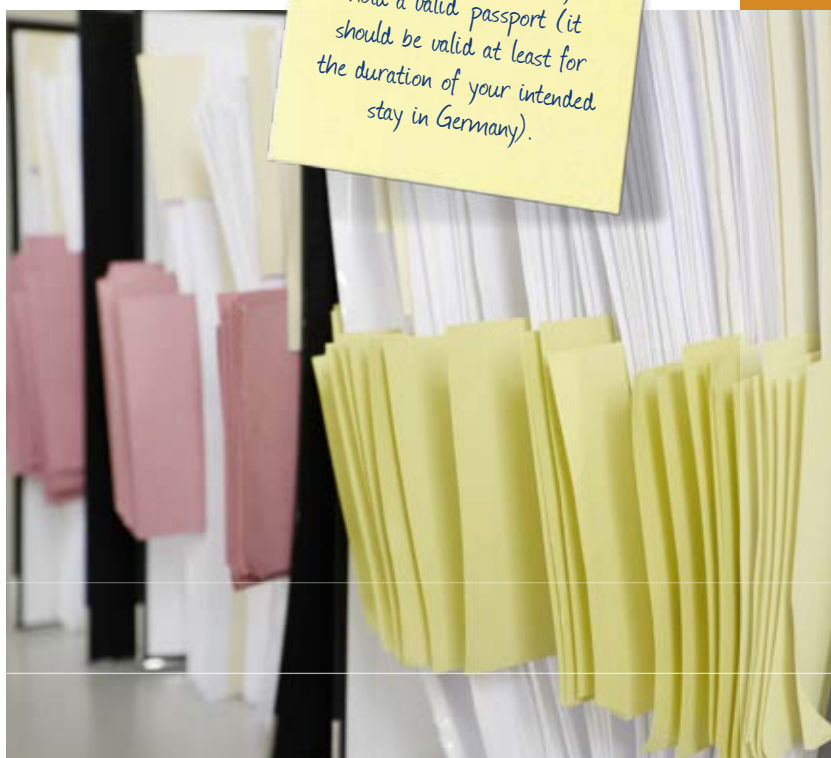
You automatically receive an admission letter (Zulassungsbescheid) from the University of Göttingen after your application has been accepted by the faculty. You will need it in order to apply for your study visa and later on to enrol at the university.

APPLYING FOR A VISA

Before travelling to Germany, please check whether you need a visa and, if so, what kind of visa. The entry requirements will depend on your nationality and the length of your stay in Göttingen.

IMPORTANT

Allow plenty of time for sorting out visa-related issues since processing the visa application can take from several weeks up to several months. Do not enter Germany with a tourist visa!



CLARIFYING MONEY-RELATED QUESTIONS

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COSTS

The cost of studying at the University of Göttingen is very low since the tuition fees have been abolished. All university students still have to pay semester (administrative) fees, which amount to 290 Euros per semester. Among other things, the fees cover your transportation in Göttingen and Lower Saxony, and allow for reduced canteen prices in Göttingen. For more information, please refer to page 28.

PROOF OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Another document that you will need for your visa application (and also later on for your residence permit application) is a proof of financial resources (Finanzierungsnachweis), which shows that you can finance your studies and daily living costs whilst in Germany.

Currently, foreign students must prove they have at least 8,000 Euros per year at their disposal (about 670 Euros per month). Proof of financial resources can be provided in various ways. The following forms are generally accepted:

1. Your parents submit documents certifying their income and financial assets.
2. A resident in Germany provides the Foreigners' Office with a guarantee to cover your expenses.
3. You submit a bank guarantee.
4. You receive a scholarship from a recognised scholarship provider.
5. A security payment is deposited into a blocked account (Sperrkonto).

Please enquire at the German Embassy/Consulate in your country to find out which forms of financial proof are required for your stay.

Make sure that you have enough money available (ca. € 1,000) during your first weeks in Göttingen to cover the start-up costs (rent, flat deposit, health insurance, utilities, buying a bike, etc.). These expenses are normally due before you receive your first scholarship payment or before you are able to open a bank account.



WHAT IS A BLOCKED BANK ACCOUNT (SPERRKONTO) AND HOW TO OPEN IT?

A blocked bank account is opened at a German bank. In this account, you will be required to deposit a minimum of €8,040 for one year of studies. You will be able to withdraw no more than €670 a month from this account. The rest of your money remains blocked during your studies to ensure that you don't have less than €670 a month. Please note that the resident permit's period of validity is calculated from the blocked amount.

Instructions on how to open a Sperrkonto are provided by the respective banks. Not all banks offer this service.

SCHOLARSHIPS

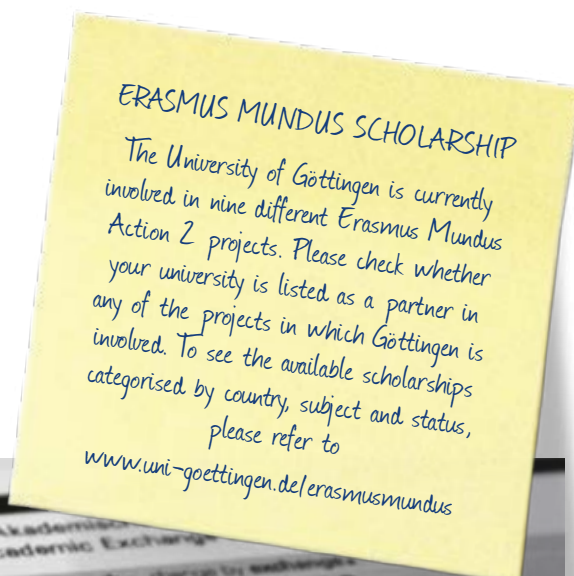
Unlike other countries, German universities normally do not offer scholarships. The most important scholarship provider for international students is the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

You can also apply for scholarships from politically-affiliated foundations, religious institutions and business organisations. The following link (www.uni-goettingen.de/financing-studies) will provide you with more information about various scholarship opportunities.

In addition, you can consult these pages, DAAD (www.funding-guide.de) and scholarship portal (www.scholarshipportal.eu), as well as individual organisation websites or those related to the promotion of young talents (such as www.stipendiumplus.de).

FINANCING YOUR STUDIES

Even if you don't have to apply for a visa, securing funding for your studies is essential! You should take into account that you will need at least 700 Euros per month in order to pay the costs of living. For more information about the prices, refer to page 56.



EARNING MONEY

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For many students in Germany it's quite normal to work part-time whilst studying. Many students work as university research assistants (known as "HiWi" – wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft), others in cafés and restaurants, at trade fairs, as delivery drivers, etc. A part-time job supplements your income, it can help you to make career decisions later on and it can make a nice change from phases of intensive academic work. As an international student, you are also allowed to work in Germany. However, the German labour law restricts how many hours foreign students are allowed to work, since studying must be your main occupation. Please keep in mind that knowing German can significantly increase your chances of finding a part-time job.

IMPORTANT

You will not be able to finance yourself entirely by working part-time while studying! And it is not always easy finding a part-time job.

HEALTH INSURANCE



Health insurance is mandatory by federal law for all students of German universities. Therefore you will need valid health insurance in order to apply for a German visa and to enrol at the University of Göttingen.

If you are a citizen of the European Union, then you are covered by state health insurance in your home country for a stay of up to 12 months in Germany. In order for this to be validated, you will need the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which your home country insurance company will issue.

If you are not a citizen of the European Union, you will have to apply for travel health insurance from your country of origin, which will cover the first weeks of your stay in Germany. Once in Göttingen, you should then organise some German health insurance, which is compulsory for non-EU citizens.

ORIGINAL AND CERTIFIED TRANSLATIONS OF CERTIFICATES/ REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION (ENGLISH OR GERMAN)

Before leaving for Germany, make sure you get certified German or English translations and legalised copies of important certificates, such as previous academic achievements and language certificates.

APART FROM THAT, HERE IS A CHECKLIST OF ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS WHICH YOU NEED TO HAVE WITH YOU:

- ☐ Admission letter (Zulassungsbescheid)
- ☐ Valid visa (non-EU citizens only)
- ☐ Valid health insurance
- ☐ Valid passport
- ☐ Sufficient funding
- ☐ Proof of financial resources
- ☐ Originals or certified copies/certified translations of the following documents:
 - Certificate of previous academic achievements (secondary school and/or university diploma)
 - Language certificates (if necessary)
 - Confirmation of health insurance coverage from your provider if your policy is recognised in Germany

ACCOMMODATION

ACCOMMODATION SERVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In contrast to some other countries, students at German universities do not automatically receive dorm rooms when accepted by the university. Students have to find accommodation by themselves.

The University's International Office supports international students in finding accommodation. All international students are advised to get in touch with the Accommodation Service of the International Office as soon as possible. They will gladly assist you in finding the right place for your needs.

www.uni-goettingen.de/accommodation-service



Göttingen offers many types of accommodation. However, it is advisable to start searching for a place to stay as early as possible, since the housing market will be inundated with a large number of new students also seeking to find accommodation at the start of the semester.

Different types of accommodation for students include: rooms in a student hall of residence, rooms in a private student hall of residence, small apartments, or rooms in a privately shared apartment.

STUDENT HALLS OF RESIDENCE

In Germany, the halls of residence are usually not owned by the universities. Most halls are run by an independent organisation called Studentenwerk (Student Union). There is a close cooperation between the university and the Studentenwerk here in Göttingen, and the Studentenwerk offers 4,500 affordable rooms, apartments and flats for students in Göttingen. The residential buildings are spread all over the town, ranging from historic sites to modern complexes. The room types also vary. Most of the rooms are single rooms which are unfurnished; they are usually arranged either in groups (in a flat-share like way) or in corridor communities, which means all rooms on one corridor share facilities such as a kitchen, bathrooms and other communal areas. Moreover, the Studentenwerk also provides single and double apartments and family flats.



INFORMATION

You can apply online on the following website:

www.studentenwerk-goettingen.de/onlinebewerbung.html



APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATION

Due to the very high demand, we highly recommend **filling in an application as soon as possible after receiving the admission letter**. You can add your name to the waiting list of students seeking to obtain accommodation in one of the halls of residence at any moment, without any obligation to then take up this offer. It is not necessary to be enrolled at the University of Göttingen at this stage.

PRIVATE HOUSING MARKET

There are also rooms and apartments offered for rent on the private market.

Shared apartments (Wohngemeinschaft, or WG) are especially popular among students. A WG is a living arrangement in which several people share the costs of living in one flat. Each person has his/her own bedroom, whereas the kitchen and bathroom are shared. Most of the rooms are not furnished, so please always double check if any furniture is included. The exception to this rule would be sublet rooms (Zwischenmiete).

ZWISCHENMIETE

Zwischenmiete is a good option when you arrive in Germany. It is a short-term accommodation possibility, with fixed start and end dates. The most important advantage is that these rooms are usually furnished. Since the person who offers the room plans to come back, he/she leaves their furniture in the room. And, although subletting is for a limited period only, it will give you enough time to have a look around for more permanent accommodation once you have arrived in Göttingen.

LOOKING FOR A ROOM ON THE PRIVATE MARKET

If you decided to search for a room in a WG (shared apartment), the following websites will be useful for finding offers of accommodation:

www.wg-gesucht.de/en/ (in English)

www.studenten-wg.de (in German)

www.zwischenmiete.de (in German)

www.uni-goettingen.de/flat-market
(mostly in German)

www.goettinger-tageblatt.de/Anzeigen/Immo
(in German)

www.facebook.com/wohnungsmarktgoettingen
(in German)

If you are already in Göttingen, then you can find further offers in the weekend issue of the local newspaper (Göttinger Tageblatt) and on notice boards in the university buildings.

It might also be a good idea to check if your department or study programme runs a Facebook group. Facebook groups are a good opportunity to get in touch with people who are already in Göttingen or who have been there. They may be able to give you some hints regarding accommodation, or may even have heard about a room which is available.

INFORMATION

In general, please do not underestimate the time and effort it takes to find accommodation in Göttingen – especially at the beginning of the semester (in September/October and March/April)!



You can also consult a local real estate agent (Immobilienmakler). However, it is important to know that they will charge a commission fee (Provision) of up to 2.38 times the monthly rent (excluding utilities; Kaltmiete), for their services.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS BEING OFFERED

To help you read and understand the advertisements, please refer to the list below:

GERMAN	ENGLISH
2 ZKB	a two-room (Z. or Zi. =Zimmer) apartment, with a kitchen (K =Küche) and bathroom (B =Bad)
Abstellraum	storage room
Blk. (=Balkon)	balcony
DG (=Dachgeschoss)	attic floor (most likely directly under the roof)
WC	toilet
Du (=Dusche)	shower
EG (=Erdgeschoss)	ground floor
Kaltmiete (KM)	rent without utilities and heating
Kaut. (=Kaution)	security deposit (to be reimbursed when you move out)
Möbliert (mbl.or möbl.)	furnished
NK (=Nebenkosten)	additional costs (electricity, heating, staircase cleaning, garbage fee etc.)
OG (=Obergeschoss)	upper floor
Ruhige Lage	quiet area
Sout. (=Souterrain)	basement
Warmmiete (WM)	rent including heating and water
Zwischenmiete	sublet



GETTING A ROOM

Most WGs want to get to know their future flatmate. For most flatmates it is very important that the people sharing the flat get along well.

Therefore, if you are searching for accommodation from abroad, you can contact the WG via email, introduce yourself and tell them a little bit about yourself (for example, your hobbies or why you are coming to Göttingen). A great means of communication is Skype because in this way you could “meet” the possible flatmates and also see the room. Likewise, Skype offers the WG a chance to get to know you.

If you are already in Göttingen, please try to arrange viewings of the rooms once you have found an offer you like. Since the housing market is very competitive, it is important to look for the most recent offers and react quickly.

TRANSFERRING YOUR DEPOSIT - WATCH OUT!

Be cautious when it comes to transferring deposits.

Please be extremely cautious if:

- You are asked to arrange a payment through Western Union or make another international transfer. This usually means that it is not possible to find those who receive the money.
- The landlord offers to send the keys via mail. This is not a common practice in Germany.
- The landlord does not agree to arrange a viewing of the accommodation.

Only pay the deposit when:

- You have seen the accommodation;
- You have signed the rental contract;
- You have received the keys.

In case you cannot go to a viewing of the accommodation yourself, you could ask a friend or acquaintance to check the offered place for you.



HAVING FOUND A PLACE

Before moving in, please take the following into consideration:

Contract (Mietvertrag)

Contractual obligations are taken very seriously in Germany. Once you have signed a contract, your landlord expects you to fully comply with the duties. Make sure that you understand all the points of the contract, e.g. are you liable for cleaning the staircase or do you have to renovate the rooms when you move in or out? In case of doubt, it is advisable to have someone to help you understand the contract before you sign it.

Deposits

All apartments require a security deposit of two to three monthly rents (Kaltmiete). This amount is to be refunded at the end of the leasing period, if you leave the place in a good condition.

Furniture

Most of the rooms offered for rent in shared apartments will be unfurnished. Kitchen and common areas will normally be furnished. Furnished rooms are marked as “möbliert”.

If you decide to rent an apartment for yourself, please note that most apartments available for rent will be unfurnished as well. Even the kitchen will often not be equipped with appliances like a fridge, etc. unless specifically indicated. Therefore, please always double check what furniture is included.

Moving in

When you move into your new apartment or room, take a good look around and write down all small damages, if there are any. Have your landlord sign this list. It will be added as an addendum to your rental contract. In this way, when you move out, you will not be held responsible for damages you did not cause. Your landlord can deduct money from your deposit to fix any damages that occurred during your stay.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

If you did not have any luck in finding suitable accommodation before you arrive, you can find temporary accommodation in one of the youth hostels in and around Göttingen, bed and breakfasts, or hotels. Please refer to this list of temporary accommodation offered by the Accommodation Service: www.uni-goettingen.de/Accommodation-General-Information

ACCOMMODATION CHECKLIST: STEPS WHICH YOU CAN TAKE FROM HOME

- ☐ Contact the Accommodation Service for international students
- ☐ Apply for a room in a student hall of residence
- ☐ Check online flat advertisements and arrange Skype interviews with your potential flatmates
- ☐ Organise accommodation for your first nights in Göttingen



DID YOU KNOW?

The general rule in Germany is that you should keep the noise to a minimum between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. If you have a party, it could be a good idea to let your neighbours know in advance that it may be a little bit noisy on a particular evening.

START LEARNING GERMAN

Even if your programme is taught in English, it is still recommended that you learn the basics of the German language before arriving in Germany. This will help you greatly in your day to day life and will make your transition to the new cultural and social environment easier.

REGISTER FOR GERMAN PREPARATORY COURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY (OPTIONAL)

It is advisable to take an intensive language course at the beginning or right before the start of your study programme. The Institute for Intercultural Communication (IIK) offers preparatory courses in German in March, August, September and October. For more information, please refer to:

www.uni-goettingen.de/iik

For more information about learning languages in Göttingen, please refer to:

www.uni-goettingen.de/learn-german

APPLY FOR THE EXCHANGE BUDDY PROGRAMME

Students who would like to be picked up from the train station upon their arrival in Göttingen may take advantage of our exchange buddy service. Just fill out the application form and send it to us 4 weeks before your arrival. Please apply via www.uni-goettingen.de/exchange-buddy.

APPLY FOR THE STUDY BUDDY PROGRAMME

Students who would like to receive help and support during the orientation period and their stay in Göttingen can apply for the study buddy programme. German and international students from the same subject area work together as study buddies to support each other with daily life at the university and beyond. Please apply via www.uni-goettingen.de/studybuddy.

PACKING YOUR LUGGAGE

Clothing and climate

Göttingen has a moderate climate. However, the weather has become more changeable during the past few years. Depending on the year, summers can either be very hot and sunny or cool and rainy. In the summer the average temperature is about 20°C, although sometimes it reaches as high as 30°C. Winters can be snowy and cold or mild and rainy. In general, in winter we often have temperatures below zero. Bringing a warm coat and boots is imperative in order to feel comfortable during the winter season. You can, of course, buy these items here; just make sure that you plan this in your budget.



STUDYING IN GÖTTINGEN AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

EXCHANGE STUDENTS

If your home university has an established co-operation with the University of Göttingen, you can study in Göttingen as an Erasmus or partnership student. For that, first of all you have to apply for the exchange programme at your home university. If you are accepted, you will be then officially nominated by your home university and your data will be sent to Göttingen. In order to be accepted in Göttingen, you have to prepare a learning agreement, where your prospective study programme is agreed upon. Please get in contact with the international coordinator of the respective faculty/programme in Göttingen.

NOTIFICATION OF ADMISSION

After you have been nominated as an exchange student by your home university, and accepted by the respective faculty/programme in Göttingen, you will receive a welcome package with a detailed description of all further steps and procedures, including a data sheet with important dates and the exchange buddy service application form. Students from non-EU countries will also get a letter of admission and an invitation, which are necessary for your visa application.

DEADLINES

The registration deadline for the summer term is December, 1st; for the winter term it is June, 1st. You should register and send us all the required application forms by then.

For more detailed information about all the steps, please refer to www.uni-goettingen.de/exchange-students.

ACCOMMODATION

If you would like to apply for the rooms allocated by the Accommodation Service of the International Office in Göttingen, you will have to fill in an extra form providing us with details of your stay. This application form has to be returned to the Accommodation Service via email or post within the stated deadline. www.uni-goettingen.de/accommodation-service



DOCUMENTS TO BRING ALONG TO GÖTTINGEN:

- Student identification card or a confirmation from your home university that you are participating in the ERASMUS/partnership programme
- Proof of valid health insurance (non-EU citizens only)
- Valid visa (non-EU citizens only)
- Valid passport
- Sufficient funding



HOW TO GET TO GÖTTINGEN

BY PLANE AND TRAIN

There are two airports close to Göttingen.

The nearest is Hannover Airport (www.hannover-airport.de). From there you take a 'S-Bahn' train to Hannover main station (Hauptbahnhof), where you can transfer either to express trains (ICEs) or to regional trains (Metronom) to Göttingen. If you travel by express train then the whole trip takes just over an hour and costs 38 Euros. If you travel by regional train then the journey time to Göttingen is around two hours and the price is 25 Euros.

The most frequently used airport when travelling to Göttingen is Frankfurt International (www.frankfurt-airport.de). There are either direct express trains to Göttingen from Frankfurt airport, or you can transfer at Frankfurt main station (Hauptbahnhof). The journey to Göttingen takes approximately two hours and the ticket price is 66 Euros. Regional trains are also an option. If you travel by regional train then it takes about 4 hours and the price is 42 Euros.

BY TRAIN

Most express trains on the north-south route stop in Göttingen. Please contact your local travel agent or check and book directly via www.bahn.de/international/view/en

BY BUS

All long distance buses going via Göttingen stop at Göttingen main station (ZOB). Check and book directly via www.checkmybus.de

BY CAR

Göttingen is located directly off the Autobahn A7, a major north-south motorway in Germany. Since there are two exits for Göttingen, please check a route planner.

HOW TO REACH YOUR ACCOMMODATION

When you arrive at Göttingen main station (Hauptbahnhof) you have different options available if your accommodation is not in walking distance:

- Take a bus. Please check www.fahrplaner.de
- Take a cab (Taxi)
- Use the exchange buddy pick-up service (see page 21).

