Survival Guide
for international students
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Introduction to your Survival Guide

Dear international applicants and (future) international students of RWTH Aachen University,

We have created this Guide for you to provide you with a list of chronological steps towards integrating in Aachen at RWTH Aachen University.

We are very happy you have chosen RWTH Aachen University! We are pleased to be along your side whenever you have any questions or need help. We try to improve our services every single day by learning from our international students so we can get better in helping them organize their stay, make the best out of it and feel home.

We are aware of the fact that a lot of you will experience a culture shock in Germany. Nevertheless, we are here to help you on your way of turning that culture shock into the most enriching and exciting experience you have ever had!

This guide provides you with some useful information on the process of applying at RWTH Aachen, useful tips and information for and after your arrival, and finally some tips from us, International Office workers as well as our international student assistants.

This way we, the Info Service Center of the International Office, would like to express our special thank you to the whole International Office Team for their support and helpful advice throughout this project.

Welcome to RWTH Aachen!

Team Info Service Center of the International Office
Choosing your course of study, application

What is German University Entrance Qualification

If you want to study at a German university, you will need a “Hochschulzugangsberechtigung” – or “university entrance qualification”. This is a school-leaving certificate which qualifies you for university study. If your secondary-school certificate is deemed insufficient for study in Germany, you will have to attend a foundation course (“Studienkolleg”) before you are allowed to enroll.

The first thing to do is to find out whether your university entrance qualification is recognised in Germany. The DAAD entrance qualification database can help you with this. Simply enter the country where you attained your secondary school-leaving certificate.

If you come from an EU country or Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, and your school-leaving certificate is recognised in that country, it is often recognised in Germany, as well. This also applies if you received an “Abitur” from one of more than 140 German schools abroad.

You will then learn whether your certificate is:

- recognised as qualification for general university admission
- recognised only for subject-restricted university admission (i.e. for study in a limited subject area)
- recognised only in combination with one or two years of successful university study in your home country
- not recognised as university entrance qualification

Source: https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/plan-your-studies/requirements/entrance-qualification/

Who is the right contact person for your application process?

Courses of study

Application and deadlines

Relevant information for internationals

Insider Tip: Never send original documents per post or hand them in.

- **Info Service Center**: If you are not sure where to ask or you have general questions about the university or life in Aachen, the Info Service Center can help you and point you in the right direction.
  Contact: international@rwth-aachen.de, +492418090660
- **International Admissions Office**: Questions about application requirements and changes, language certificates and equivalences of high school degrees, grades and other university degrees.
  Contact: admission@rwth-aachen.de, +492418090674
- **Welcome Center**: If you are a PhD student or an international researcher, the Welcome Center is your department.
  Contact: welcome@rwth-aachen.de, +492418090679
- **Registrar’s Office**: If you have a German citizenship, are married to a person with a German citizenship or have a German bachelor, the registrar’s office is in charge of your application process. Also, if you would like to apply for auditing, the Registrar’s Office is in charge.
  Contact: StudSek@zhv.rwth-aachen.de, +492418094214
- **Immigration Office**: Questions about applying and extending the residence permit.
  Contact: info.aulaendische.studenten@staedteregion-aachen.de
- **Departmental Advisors**: Departmental advising provides you with information about study program content, individual adjustments to the course of study layout, examination regulations, and partially about recognition of exam performance from other subjects and placement in higher core semesters.
  Contact: the departmental advisors are sorted according to subjects so that you can find your contact person quickly.

European Union citizens (including citizens of Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein) do not need a visa.

Here you will find an overview of visa requirements/ exemptions for entry into Germany.

If you have to apply for a student visa for Germany, you should apply for it via the local German embassy or consulate in your home country. The costs may vary but generally a visa costs about 80 EUR.

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<td>Valid passport</td>
<td>Certificate of enrolment from your university</td>
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<td>Two photographs</td>
<td>Proof of sufficient finances</td>
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<td>Letter showing you have been accepted by a German</td>
<td>Valid passport</td>
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<td>university</td>
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<td>Transcript of academic record</td>
<td>Certificate of health (if applicable)</td>
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<td>Certificate of German language proficiency or proof</td>
<td>Your tenancy agreement (if applicable)</td>
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<td>you intend on attending a language course in Germany (if studying in German)</td>
<td>Biometric passport photos (if applicable)</td>
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<td>Proof that you have sufficient funds to support</td>
<td>Residence permit fee (check the current rate beforehand to make sure you bring enough money)</td>
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<td>yourself while living in Germany (€10,332 per year, which is roughly ~US$11,041) or a</td>
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<td>Declaration of commitment &quot;Verpflichtungserklärung&quot;</td>
<td>Perhaps also: Proof of Language Proficiency</td>
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<td>Certificate showing you’ve purchased health</td>
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What is the difference between a Student Applicant Visa or a Schengen Visa and a Student Visa?

The first two visas will allow you to stay only 3 months on German soil (Student Applicant Visa) or the European Schengen zone soil (Schengen Visa). Your Student Applicant Visa can be converted to a Student Visa, if you enroll at the university. The Student Visa or National Visa allows you together with a residence permit to be in Germany more than 90 days.

Source:

Important

On these webpages of the RWTH Aachen University you can find general information (FAQ) on the subject of the right of residence. For individual information and further questions, please contact the responsible German mission abroad (embassy or consulate general) or the Immigration Office.

This residence permit is valid for two years, and, if needed, should be renewed before it expires. Residence permits initially cost €100 (~US$120) with a fee of up to €96 (~US$115) for each extension.
Preparing your stay in Germany

Housing Department

Our housing department recommends you start searching for a place to live two to three months prior to starting your classes, as Aachen welcomes nearly 8000 new students every year.

Contact: housing@rwth-aachen.de

BeBuddy Programm

"BeBuddy" is an informal mentoring program initiated by the International Office of RWTH Aachen University which aims to enable newly enrolled international students to adjust to university life and living in a new city, and to meet, mix with, and learn from other RWTH students.

Contact: chiara.weber@zhv.rwth-aachen.de

Blocked bank account

- The blocked bank account is a special type of bank account that helps you provide proof of your financial resources when applying for a German student visa. In addition to the blocked account, you also have the option of submitting a Declaration of Commitment “Verpflichtungserklärung”.
- You can choose the bank.
- It has to fulfill this requirement: there should be enough credit to cover all your expenses during your stay in Germany.
- The rates are based in the rates for German students and they were increased to an annual credit of 10,332 euros. This applies for all visa applications submitted from 1 Januar 2021. This means that you can withdraw an amount of 861 euros per month from your bank account each month. For larger sums, you will have to contact the Federal Foreign Office and your bank.

Don’t forget your important documents

In Germany, certain documents are very important to keep safe, since it is often times hard to acquire them new and identical ones in order to verify certain information from you. These documents include:

- Certificates
- Birth certificate, Marriage certificate
- Citizenship proof
- Passport, Personal-ID
- Driver’s license
- Contracts, Power of Attorney
- Insurance
- Savings account number
- Bank details (account number etc.)
- Important phone numbers
- Contact details of doctors
- Drug prescriptions (important: it may be that foreign prescriptions are not accepted in Germany, so make sure you take important medications in sufficient quantity beforehand!)
- Allergies, vaccinations

Especially doctors’ orders and prescriptions should be in the kept safe, so in an emergency relatives, friends or ambulance service have the information about your condition. Please note that it is required to get the copies of your documents authorized in order for them to be valid. The International Office does not provide translation services, therefore, in case you need some of these documents, you will have to either translate them in your home country prior to arrival or in any language center in Germany which also offers translation services.
Practical Advice

Weather conditions in Aachen

Overall, Aachen is a year-round destination with warm summers and relatively mild winters. Rain falls irregularly throughout the whole year and the weather could be very changeable. Aachen has four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter – you should consider that when you pack your clothes. It is possible that you wake up to bright sunshine, but it suddenly starts raining and gets colder during the day, or vice versa. The average temperature in summer is around 23 degrees Celsius and in winter around 0-5 degrees Celsius. However, in summer the temperature often rises to over 30 degrees and in winter it can drop to -10 degrees.

Suitable clothes to pack

In case you come in summer, you should pack your summer clothes but be sure to bring a sweater or two and a jacket because of the changeable weather.

In case you are arriving in winter, make sure to bring warm clothes including water-proof shoes, gloves, and a scarf. The trains are air-conditioned, but it can always happen that you must wait outside for a longer time (at the train or bus station). Generally, you can buy clothes very easily in Germany – there are all kinds of shops – cheaper ones and very expensive ones - in the city center, as well as online. See page 17.

Power sockets and electricity

For Germany there are two associated plug types, types C and F. Plug type C is the plug which has two round pins and plug type F is the plug which has two round pins with two earth clips on the side. Germany operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz.

In order to be on the safe side and be able to charge your phone or laptop when you arrive, it might be a good idea to take a universal plug adapter with you.

Scam alert

Sadly, in the past few years, we have noticed that more and more international students were victims of housing and job scammers when looking for a place to stay or a job in Aachen. It is not only frustrating because it slows down your search for a new home or a job but it can be very expensive and get you in trouble. Here are some tips to help you recognize scammers and avoid getting scammed in Germany:
HOUSING SCAM

5 ways to recognize scams when house-hunting

1. If it looks too good to be true, it probably is!

2. Don’t sign any contract before you’ve seen the place in real life

3. Don’t pay a deposit to “secure” the room/flat

4. Don’t trust a copy of a passport and don’t send yours

5. If they can’t prove they are the owner, they probably aren’t

Those tips are provided by an international student and are fully available with further details on iamexpat.de.

One further tip from us for housing ads on social media: if the person posting the ad has a rather empty / impersonal profile and posts the same ad or different ads regularly, it is very likely to be a scam. If you happen to be in contact with this person and she pressures you into transferring money, please inform us about it right away.

JOB SEARCH SCAM

5 ways to recognize scams when looking for a job

1. If it looks too good to be true, it probably is!

2. Don’t sign any contract if you are not sure if it’s a real company. If you are not sure, contact us (the International Office) directly! Example: job scammers won’t schedule a job interview with you.

3. Do not send a copy of your documents! Do not trust a copy of a passport either.

4. If they say their company is in another city / another country and you have to “sign online”, make sure it is really true.

5. Make sure that your potential tasks in the job would be legal tasks. Example: receiving packages at your home and forwarding them is illegal!

One further tip from us for job scams on the internet: Job scammers would often contact you themselves without you having applied for such a job.

Remember:
If you are not sure whether it is a scam, contact us at housing@rwth-aachen.de and don’t let anyone pressure you into signing anything and transferring any money before you are certain of its legitimacy.

Remember:
If you are not sure whether it is a scam, contact us at international@rwth-aachen.de and don’t let anyone pressure you into signing anything and transferring any money before you are certain of its legitimacy.
OTHER TYPES OF FRAUD

Calls from Interpol, Europol, etc.: Recently, calls from alleged Europol or Interpol employees have been increasing. In some cases, the scammers call themselves "police officers". As in the case of the "fake police officers" phenomenon, they put the victims under pressure with made-up stories. This can include information about crimes in which you or your family/friends are allegedly involved. The criminals pretend, for example, that there is a major investigation and that your bank account is also affected. Anyone who does not provide information is threatened with imprisonment. In some cases, these conversations last for hours, which increases the pressure on those affected.

The goal, as always, is money

The caller asks to be transferred to
• a specially set up account for cryptocurrency, as well as
• to an overseas account to transfer large amounts of money.

If you are called - Do not let yourself be pressured.
• Instead, get the name, hang up, call your local police department by dialing 110 and describe the facts.
• Do not give unknown persons information about your financial circumstances or other sensitive data.
• Do not transfer funds as a result of such calls without first informing yourself and securing yourself.

If you have already been the victim of such a call: File a report with the police and contact your bank.

It also happens that the scammers call supposedly from Microsoft, the German Pension Insurance, the Consumer Center or even the police. Attention: the police would never call you from 110, as well as Microsoft, Interpol, etc.

Never give out your sensitive data (personal data, bank account, etc.) if you suspect a scam!

Travelling to Aachen

Aachen is in the center of Europe so there are a lot of airports available to flight to from your home country. You can find more information on our website Getting to Germany by plane.

When you arrive at the airport the two best options you have to get to Aachen are:

• Take a train
• Take a long-distance bus

Travelling by taxi is also an option. However, we would not recommend taking a taxi from the airport to Aachen as it might be very expensive.

Taking a train from the airport to Aachen

Probably the best option to travel to Aachen from the airport is taking a train, as you will not have to pay additional tickets for your luggage. On this website you can find more useful information.

Aachen has three train stations:

• Aachen Rothe Erde
• Aachen Hauptbahnhof (Central Station)
• Aachen West

You can check where your accommodation is and see which train station is the nearest to your future home.

On the day of your arrival you will most probably not have your semesterticket yet, as the bus company ASEAG sends the tickets per post to your new German address. In this case, you will have to purchase the whole price of your ticket.
On the website of the Deutsche Bahn (German railways) or on their app you can see the train connections and follow the train schedule live – the website and the app will tell you whether the train is late. When you reach the airport (in case it is a German airport) usually there is also a train station in it. Follow the train signs (DB) until you reach the rails. Ticket Machines: On the way you should find big red machines with the DB sign, where you can get your ticket – at these machines you can pay either by card or cash.

Insider Tip: You can directly buy a flight ticket which includes a train ticket, so you do not have to stress yourself looking for a machine or buying the ticket online.

Insider Tip: You can buy your ticket easily online as well. There are offers on the website of Deutsche Bahn: click on the Sparpreis-Finder on the homepage. This way you can find your tickets at a much cheaper price – here it is similar to purchasing flight tickets – the sooner you look, the cheaper the tickets.

There is also a company called Flixbus which provides long-distance bus lines, as well as trains called Flixtrain. You can check them as well and compare the prices and the availability.

For more information on travelling options see page 24.

Taking a long-distance bus from the airport

Long-distance buses can be an option if you want to travel in the cheapest possible way. However, they might be somewhat uncomfortable as you will have to pay extra tickets for your luggage and the journey usually takes more time than by train. Here are some examples of long-distance bus companies: Flixbus, Eurolines.
Arriving in Aachen

Map of Aachen city center

Public Transport

You can go to your destination by public transport – in Aachen these are buses of the ASEAG company. More information is available on the web pages of ASEAG. To keep track of buses, you can use the ASEAG mova App, as it shows you the accurate times for each bus.

Taxi

You can travel by taxi – usually at the train station there are taxis waiting. You can also call a taxi, some of the taxi companies are for example:
Minicar AC (+49 241 900700)
Taxe City Falke (+49 241 33311)
Öcher Wagen (+49 241 91993399)

You can also download an app where you can order a taxi online, e.g. Free Now (mytaxi). This way you can pay directly online, e.g. with PayPal.
Registration in the city of Aachen

City council

As an international student you have to register your new address at the city council. This has to be done as soon as possible, at the latest 4 weeks after arrival. You can make an appointment online without having to wait in the queue. You can find more information about registering in the city of Aachen here. On this website (on the right side) you can find all the forms which you need for the registration. About the current situation of the online booking system you can find more information here.

The documents, which you need, are:

- Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung (confirmation of renting an apartment: needs to be filled out by your landlord)
- Passport or ID

After the registration you should’t forget to put your name on the mailbox. Your personal tax identification number and a letter about the radio bill will be sent to you via post. These documents are important during your stay in Germany.

Deregistration of residence (City of Aachen): A deregistration is required (filled in and signed, with a copy of the passport) as soon as you plan to return to your home country or move to a different country. Deregistration is possible no sooner than 1 week before you move out. In addition deregistration can be completed by a person authorized to represent you. Deregistration is also possible via email. For this purpose the corresponding deregistration form must be used.

Contact:
+49 241 4320
stadt.aachen@mail.aachen.de

The form can be found here: http://www.aachen.de/

Enrolment

If you are an incoming Erasmus or exchange student, you can complete the enrollment online.

If you are a Degree student here (you are doing your whole Bachelor or Master Degree here) please check our current requirements to find out whether you have to be physically present at the university to complete the enrollment process or you can complete it online only. You will also have to bring or upload all the original documents that you uploaded, the Language Certificate and proof of your identity such as a passport or ID as well as your health insurance proof.

Welcome Weeks

Since attending the online Welcome Weeks events is compulsory, please make sure to register for the respective online offers and be on time for the different events. Participating in the online meetings with many advisors from the University and related institutions will guide you through your first steps in Aachen and help you manage your academic, personal and social transition to the University. Quick integration is the key to both your well-being and the future success in your studies. For this reason, we specifically offer a program adapted to your needs.

We hope you’ll enjoy unforgettable Welcome Weeks!
Welcome Weeks Highlights

- Official welcome event with the International Office
- Presentations and advice sessions offered by the Admissions Office, the Immigrations Office, the IT ServiceDesk and many more!
- Meet the Career Center, University Sports Center, RWTH Language Center, Student Advice Center and many more central services at the virtual Freshers’ Fair.
- Meet many international student associations at the Global Village and get in touch with your faculty advisor and faculty student council during the Faculty Fair.
- Take part in an online or on-site Campus or Library Tour.
- Get prepared for life in Germany thanks to our online intercultural modules and the Talk Show: How to survive in Germany
- Participate in various workouts from the comfort of your home during our Sports Event
- Make friends during our virtual social events such as Movie Night, Quiz Night, Karaoke, living room concerts and much more!

Get impressions from past Welcome Weeks and do not forget to check out the detailed online program for our upcoming Welcome Weeks.

Stay tuned the entire time by following us on Instagram. You will have a chance to win surprise gift bags and RWTH Merchandise. Remember to share your Welcome Weeks experience using #RWTHWelcomeWeek!

If you are a Degree student here you may also be interested in the First-Year Orientation Week (Erstiwoche), the introduction week for all the regular students at the RWTH Aachen University, which takes place a week after the Welcome Week.

Open a bank account, manage your finances

Depending of your citizenship (if you are European or not), you will have opened a blocked bank account (to provide financial proof to the immigration’s office, in case of a visum or student permit) or a normal bank account. German banks often offer special accounts for students, usually free or at a reduced price. After you open your bank account you will receive your PIN code and a bank card per post which you will have to sign on the back.

Insider Tip: in case you want to pay somewhere by a credit card or a debit card, first look at the door of the shop / restaurant. Usually (but not always) there are stickers of the card types which are accepted. Therefore, you should ask if your card type is accepted. It is not always possible to pay by (credit) card everywhere due to high taxes, so check this before you buy something.
Health insurance proof

Health insurance in Germany is obligatory, hence, a proof of valid health insurance is mandatory in order to enrol at RWTH Aachen. You can either get German health insurance or, if you are completely insured in your home country, you can have a German health insurance company confirm that you are exempt from German health insurance. In both cases you must contact a public health insurance company before the enrolment. You can find additional detailed information on our webpages (Question: Do I need a German health insurance?)

For further questions about enrollment, please contact our Admissions Office:
+49 241 80 90674 or admission@rwth-aachen.de.

In both cases, you will have to plan your trip so you can attend the Welcome Week. The Welcome Week is an essential part of your experience in Germany at the RWTH, as it shows you not only how does the university functions, but also how to have fun like a German student (and yes, German people actually have fun!). The Welcome Week usually takes place the last week of September.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies around Aachen have different opening hours. Each weekend there are different pharmacies which are open for urgent cases. You can find the opening hours of pharmacies in Aachen here.

Emergency medical service

If you are feeling very sick and it’s late or at the weekend, you can go to the emergency at any hospital, e.g. Luisenhospital, Marienhospital, or RWTH Uniklinik. There is also dental emergency medical service. You can find more information about this here (available in German only)

English speaking doctors

You can search for English speaking doctors or doctors speaking other preferred languages here.
Insurances in Germany

Private Liability Insurance (private Haftpflichtversicherung)

In Germany you are legally responsible for any damages caused by you to another person, another person’s body or their property. For example, if you forget to remove the snow in front of your house (this won’t apply to most student dorms) and someone slips, they can sue you for damages. The value of some damages can be extremely high.

Therefore, it is almost necessary (but not mandatory) to have a personal liability insurance. This type of insurance covers you in cases of accidental damage to a third party or their property. The private liability insurance could cost between 45 and 65 EUR a year, depending on your marital status, student status etc.

Online you can find different websites where you can compare the prices. Before you make a contract, check multiple companies and their offers. If you have difficulties, you can always ask us for help: Info Service Center.

Car Insurance

If you drive a vehicle in Germany, it must be insured. There are two types of insurance: Vollkasko and Teilkasko.

Vollkasko insurance covers the damage to your car and to other cars, even if the accident is your fault. If you destroy your car in an accident, the insurance company will replace it. Vollkasko insurance is usually several times more expensive than Teilkasko.

Teilkasko insurance only covers the damage to other people and vehicles. If you cause an accident, your Teilkasko will pay to fix other people’s cars, but it will not pay you to on your own car. If the accident is someone else’s fault, their insurance will pay for the repairs on your car.

You should always read your policy carefully, and make sure it covers the right things for you.

Source: https://allaboutberlin.com/guides/insurance#liability-insurance
Home contents insurance  
(Hausratversicherung)

Hausratversicherung insures the contents of your house, up to a certain value. This includes your furniture and all the other movable things in your house. It can also cover things like computers and bicycles. In case you live in a private accommodation, it might be useful to have this kind of insurance. If you don’t own expensive furniture, it’s cheaper to insure items individually. For example, you can get bicycle insurance instead of a home insurance that covers bicycles.

Hausratversicherung is not very expensive, it can differ depending on the company and on the size of your apartment.

Source:  
https://allaboutberlin.com/guides/insurance#liability-insurance

Legal insurance  
(Rechtsschutzversicherung)

Legal insurance covers your legal costs if you sue someone, or if you get sued. It will pay for a lawyer to defend you in court, and for other legal costs. It will not cover damages that you have to pay if you lose a case. Don’t forget that liability insurance (Haftpflichtversicherung) already covers the legal cost if someone sues you for damages.

Source:  
https://allaboutberlin.com/guides/insurance#liability-insurance

Life insurance  
(Lebensversicherung)

Life insurance pays money to your family when you die. It’s not useful for you, but it’s useful for the people who depend on you. If you have people who depend on you financially, then life insurance is really important. Life insurance is cheap when you are young, but more expensive when you get older.

Source:  
https://allaboutberlin.com/guides/insurance#liability-insurance
Each household in Germany is obliged to pay the so called “Rundfunkbeitrag” or broadcast contribution to ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice - „Rundfunkbeitrag“. This contribution is paid for the consumption of public service broadcasting (TV, internet, radio etc.) and must be paid regardless of how much you actually watch public broadcasting TV, listen to the radio etc. Even if you do not have a TV, radio or a computer, you are still obliged to pay the fee. You don’t have to register for it actively. Once you register your address at the city service, your information will directly be forwarded to ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice, who will send you a letter afterwards. However, we recommend registering proactively (this can be done online here).

Each household has to pay the charge of 18.36 Euros every month. A household can be a single person flat, people living in a relationship or a shared accommodation (WG) will still have to pay once per household, so only one person has to pay and can split up the costs afterwards. Just let the service provider know who is going to pay – all of you should register in the same household. Just keep in mind that if you live in a dormitory it does not count as a shared accommodation - if there is a public corridor between rooms to which everyone has access, even if you have a shared bathroom etc.

If you receive BAFöG you are waived from paying. If you are living with someone together as a married couple and one of them receives BAFöG, both will be free from paying. You can find more information about the Rundfunkbeitrag on the Website of ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice.

Internet

The University provides free WiFi all around the campus and as the campus is huge, you will have internet almost everywhere. Regardless of this we would advise you to buy a SIM card with mobile internet and install WiFi at home. This way you cannot only call your family, whenever you feel a little blue, but also study from everywhere. There are a few internet providers in Aachen. It is better to get information from more of them so you can choose the right provider for yourself. You should do that well in advance as it might take up to a few weeks until the whole process is completed.

SIM Cards

There are prepaid SIM cards and SIM cards with a contract. You can get a prepaid SIM card online and get it sent to you. Since 2017 all prepaid SIM cards have to be registered with your name and personal data. You can do that either online (in this case you will have to verify your identity either in an app via a webcam or in the post office) or in the place where you buy the SIM card (shops, supermarkets).
Post

The postal service in Germany is called the “Deutsche Post”. Here you can see where different branches and locations of Deutsche post are.

Insider Tip: Letters: You can buy the so-called “internet stamp” for letters (national and international) which can be purchased online and printed out. The letters can be put into any yellow postbox of Deutsche Post. Packages: You can send and receive packages in package stations 24/7, some of which are also close to the University central campus. For more information have a look at the website of Deutsche Post.

Here you can find useful information as well as the prices for international letters and packages.
There are also other private postal services such as DPD, Hermes, UPS etc.

Radio and TV

If you want to improve your German skills, it is advised to listen to the radio, watch TV or read the news in German. Here is a list of some of the regional media:

Radios: Hochschulradio 99,1 (this is our University radio), WDR Radio 1 106,4, WDR Radio 2 100,8, WDR Radio 3 95,9, WDR Radio 4 93,9, WDR Radio 5 101,9, 1LIVE 106,4, Antenne AC 107,8, 100,5 das Hitradio.

TV: WDR, Lokalzeit aus Aachen (there you can find out more about current news in Aachen and the surroundings. You can find out more about some other TV providers and what you can watch there for example on this website.

Journals: Aachener Zeitung, Aachener Nachrichten
Organic waste

Organic containers are green and can be found on every property in the city of Aachen. They are emptied every 14 days and include raw and cooked kitchen waste, fruit and vegetable waste, garden waste and other waste like potted plants (without pot), sawdust, hair, wood wool, cellulose kitchen towels.

You should either wrap kitchen waste (e.g. salad leaves, potato peels etc.) in newspaper to absorb the liquid, or put them in special degradable bags for organic waste (you can get them in the supermarket). This allows the container to be emptied cleanly and avoids unpleasant odors. Make sure not to put plastic bags in organic containers. Otherwise the organic container will not be emptied from the composting facility and must be disposed as residual waste that increases the fees on all house residents.

Blue binned/ Paper waste

Blue bins can also found on every property and are emptied every 4 weeks. Only paper, cardboard and paperboard (PPK), i.e. writing paper, newspapers, magazines, cartons and PPK packaging, belong in the blue bin. Before putting big cartons in the blue bin make sure to tear them into small pieces, otherwise they might not be taken away by the facilities.

Yellow sack

Packages made of lightweight materials, mainly food and goods packages from supermarkets and shops are collected every 14 days. Please always place the Yellow Sacks next to the other waste bins since they are collected from a private company and are not carried out by the City of Aachen. You can get Yellow Sacks for free in many bakeries and kiosks nearby. Here you can check your nearest distribution point. The Yellow Sack can be used for the following packaging examples: Plastics, Composite packaging, Vacuum packaging of coffee etc., canned food and beverage cans, Aluminum foils or lids (lids for yoghurt pots, tea lights, etc.), Bottle closures.

Residual waste/ Grey bin

Household waste that can no longer be recycled belongs in the grey bin. These are for example rubbish, hygiene articles, vacuum cleaner bag, light bulbs or cigarette butts. Energy-saving lamps and fluorescent tubes do not belong in the residual waste; however they can be disposed of at pollutant collection points.
Bottle bank

Waste glass containers are located at approx. 215 locations throughout the city. They are used for the collection of glass packaging (bottles, hollow glass) and have different coloured openings: White for transparent glass, green for blue and green glass, and brown for brown and white glass. For more information about all trash categories, please check the website of Stadt Aachen.

Helpful Apps

There are several useful Apps for your studies and daily life in Aachen. Here’s a list of some helpful Apps.

Studies

- RWTHApp (grade, courses, timetable, cantines, etc.)
- Studydrive (learning platform for students)
- Sciebo (often used in institutes while working on a thesis)
- OneDrive (similar to Dropbox with extra-large storing capacity for RWTH students)
- SKMeister (Mechanics learning App)
- BRAINYOO, Card2brain (Flashcards learning App)

Transport

- ASEAG mova app (only for public buses in Aachen and AVV)
- AVV.mobil (public buses and trains in AVV region)
- DB - Deutsche Bahn (public buses and trains in Germany and sometimes Europe)
- Google Maps (Routes by car, public transport and footpaths)
- FlixBus (reasonably priced private buses in Germany and Europe)

Social

- Jodel (anonymous local and on-campus communication App)
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Studydrive
How to get furniture or clothes for good price or for free

You can mainly get clothes for less money at second hand shops, flea markets and through the Vinted App. Germans also love organizing so called "flea markets" (Flohmarkt) where people sell their old things for little money. Flea markets are organized in the city center of Aachen as well as other parts of Aachen. There is a website where you can see a list of all flea market events. You should also check the events by our student clubs, who also like organizing flea markets from time to time. You can find further flea market events on Facebook.

In addition, every now and then there is an event where you can exchange clothes in very good condition at Chico Mendes. Instead shopping in shopping malls and along the pedestrian street, you can buy new clothes at factory outlets or wait for seasonal sales.

For furniture, always check several Facebook groups (INCAS Aachen, Aachener Kleinanzeigen, etc.) and ebay-Kleinanzeigen.de beforehand. You can almost always find what you are looking for at less prices and sometimes for free.

Alcohol, Drugs, safety

Purchase and consumption of beer, wine and sparkling wine in Germany is allowed from the age of 16 while spirits are allowed from the age of 18. However, please note that cannabis and other drugs are illegal in Germany. Drinking alcohol in Germany in public is common as well as legal. Many people consume alcohol mainly in parties and social events. We want to stress out that you do not have to drink alcohol in such events and that it is not considered impolite in any way. Other people should be accepting and understanding of your choice.

Aachen is considered a safe city. However, we advise you not to walk alone in the evening in unfamiliar places. Moreover, avoid leaving your drink glass unattended in parties.

Public toilets in Aachen: There is no huge public toilet in Aachen, if you need to go to the toilet while outside you would have to places like some bigger shops or public library, or the University, of course. Be careful, in Germany you can pay a big fine for urinating in the public, as it is punishable!

Security and theft

Germany and Aachen are considered very safe. Normally, you do not need to be afraid when moving around the city alone. Nevertheless, we have the following recommendations for you:
• Please go home in groups at night
• Drink alcohol only in moderation and do not take drugs
• Do not let strangers give you a ride, take you home or drive you by car
• Do not give home addresses to strangers
• Do not give confidential data (passwords, bank PIN, etc.) to third parties and do not keep such passwords in an obvious place accessible to others
• Always enter your bank PIN number in a concealed location (e.g. bank, supermarket, gas station)
• If your credit card or debit card is stolen, have it blocked and be sure to report the theft to the police.
• Always take your ID with you so that you can identify yourself in the event of a check.
• Avoid parks and secluded and unlit places at night
• Do not leave your luggage unattended and it is best to carry valuables directly on your body
• Cash should only be carried as much as is needed at the time
• If someone comes too close to you in conversation and physically, reject the person kindly but firmly in conversation. It is okay to say no and express discomfort. Non-response, silence and smiling often leads to persons not realizing your discomfort and non-acceptance
• There are night buses or cabs that will take you home even at night
• Lock your home and lock all windows before leaving
• Watch your glass in discos so no one can slip drugs or knockout drops into your drinks unnoticed
• If you feel you are being followed, change sides of the street and try to make contact with people or verbally ask others directly for help
• If you feel sexually harassed or otherwise discriminated against, contact the RWTH Equal Opportunity Office for counseling. They offer office hours for counseling and will maintain your privacy.
• If you feel threatened, have a traffic accident on your bike or on foot, please call the police. In Germany it is said: “The police, your friend and helper.”

In case of emergency, please contact the following emergency contacts:

• Advice and help at RWTH-Aachen
• Emergency call police 110
• EU-wide emergency number (police/fire department/rescue service/emergency doctor) 112
• Blocking emergency call (cards & electronic authorizations) 116 116

Further information material can also be found on the following pages on the Internet:

• http://www.polizei-beratung.de/medienangebot.
• http://www.zuhause-sicher.de/service/links-und-downloads/

Theft/loss of important documents (e.g. wallet)

If important documents (e.g. wallet) are lost or stolen, students should proceed as follows:

Report the theft/loss to the police.

The police will issue a certificate in the event of theft. In case of loss, the certificate is only available after a few days, since it is
then assumed that a potential finder has not brought the found objects to the lost property office and is thus liable to prosecution; via this detour, a criminal complaint is possible, which is usually required at embassies to apply for a new passport) => certificate to be presented to the authorities, notification if found, blocking of bank card

In the bank: blocking of the bank card

Withdraw money at the counter (with identity card and signature) and only then apply for a new card and block the lost or stolen card.

Immigration Office:

You should report the loss because of residence permit and apply for a new electronic residence permit. If necessary, the Foreigners’ Office can issue a “certificate for presentation to authorities” about the validity and period of the residence permit. Required documents: if possible copy of passport, if not possible, then certificate of the police about theft or loss, certificate of study.

Bluecard RWTH:

SuperC, IT Service in the foyer: Apply for a temporary Bluecard: You will need your matriculation number, Tim ID and certificate of study (alternatively, if no certificate of study is possible, your identity card). Costs: approx. 10 Euro

ASEAG (public transport) bus ticket:

Get a new semester ticket printed at the customer service of ASEAG, Schumacherstr. 14, Aachen, and present Bluecard and certificate of study. Costs: approx. 15 Euro.

Consulate/Embassy:

International students must apply for a new passport at the appropriate consulate or embassy. Costs: vary depending on the country. Please inquire in advance which documents are required for the application.
Dealing with culture shock, homesickness and how to prevent/overcome it

Exploring new places and a new culture and meeting new people all while gaining a valuable degree can be a great adventure. However, it is common for many international students to experience culture shock and homesickness at the beginning of their studies since they struggle to adjust to being surrounded by unfamiliar languages, food, and social norms. Here is how to deal with culture shock and how to prevent or overcome it.

One of the best ways to deal with culture shock is to explore your new city, Aachen, and its culture with other fellow international students. Being together as a group, you can support each other in learning the German language and Germany’s customs. Moreover, it is a great support when facing any unexpected challenges. In the beginning of each semester, the International Office organizes a Welcome Week for all new international students. The Welcome Week is apart from being informative and fun, it is your opportunity to meet new fellow international students and make new friends. Information about the date of the upcoming Welcome Week and its program can be found in the following page: Welcome Week for International Students.

While your fellow international students are a great support, locals and RWTH students are very happy to welcome you as well. Try to integrate yourself in the local community by taking part in events organised by many different student organisations. In the following page, you can check all of the different student organisations that exist at RWTH Aachen University: Extracurricular and Leisure Activities.

German culture

The German culture is rich in diversity and its population is characterized by a high level of education and an above-average standard of living. It is also described as “individual society”. Hence, everyone is responsible for themselves and should ask for help if needed. It may seem unfriendly at first, but there is a keen sense of community and social conscience and a desire to belong. Therefore, if you are having an issue and need advice or help always reach out to people and communicate it. Moreover, Germans like to lecture you and point out, if you are doing something wrong or if you are breaking a specific rule. In contrast to other cultures, punctuality is very important for Germans. So, do not be late, if you want to keep the German people happy.
Shopping and living costs

You can find an estimate of the minimum living costs for accommodation and living expenses for students at RWTH Aachen University here.

While it’s exciting to try the different cuisines in Germany, eating out all of the time is expensive. Eating in the cafeterias of Studierendenwerk Aachen or cooking at home, will save you a lot of money on food.

Discounters such as Aldi, LIDL, Penny, and Netto are one of the cheapest sources when buying food. Moreover, search for seasonal food offers at local markets and happy hours in bakeries.

Other regular supermarkets that have a large variety of food are for example Kaufland, REWE, Edeka and Real. Almost every supermarket has several store brands. These store brands are usually the cheapest version you can find in the supermarket with almost no difference in quality.

Apart from the mentioned supermarkets there are plenty of different international supermarkets (Arabic, Asian, Indian, Russian, etc.) that can be found in Aachen if you are longing for something from your home country or want to try out other cuisines.

When buying beverages, always make sure to return the bottles back that you paid deposits for. In Germany, there is a deposit system on beverage bottles. There are bottles / cans which can be returned and recycled (“Mehrweg”) or such which cannot be returned and have to be thrown away into the yellow bag (“Einweg”). Mehrweg bottles which can be returned are marked with symbols. You can find more information about deposit on beverage bottles and cans here.

Eating habits in Germany

In Germany people eat three full meals with snacks in between. The day starts with a breakfast. Typically, you have fresh bread from one of many bakeries around the corner and eat it together with butter, cheese, eggs, meat, honey and so on. Generally this is a cold meal. Germans are famous for their bread and it is worth it – check where the closest bakery to your place is! You can find a huge variety and prices differ from approx. 1-5€. During a break at school, during your lectures or at work, many people tend to eat something called Pausenbrot. It’s a smaller version of a breakfast: typically a small sandwich, fruit or maybe a snack bar.

This also falls into the category of in-between meal. To keep their energy up, people in Germany tend to eat these types of snacks after a big meal.

Of course, between 12 and 2 pm most Germans like to go for lunch as their second big meal. This one is usually warm. The main dish is usually accompanied with potatoes, rice, noodles, salad and more. International cuisine is also immensely popular here and of course you can go for a classic pizza.

Typically, in the evening, Germans tend to have a so called “Abendbrot”. For some cultures this might seem like breakfast. Here you typically eat some bread with toppings like cheese, salami, vegetables and so on, making it a somewhat lighter meal.

This applies to a lot of Germans, but not everyone. Aachen is a mixture of multiple cultures with very many eating habits. When you go to a restaurant or a café, you can order anything at any time without hesitating.
Where to meet new people

Aachen offers a lot of opportunities to meet new people.

- You can visit events organized by the International Office. Our [event calendar](#) can be found on our website.
- You can visit a course at our [Sports Center](#), where you can join over 100 free or paid sports courses.
- You can join a [student organization](#) or visit their Events. Some of them like [INCAS](#) offer Events for internationals to make new friends and more every week.
- You can visit Events organized by [InterNations](#), which help you to connect with other expats. In these events lots of internationals meet, not only students, but also working or retired people interested in intercultural exchange.

Spare time activities

Sporting activities

The [University Sports Center](#), HSZ for short, is a central institution at RWTH Aachen and organizes qualified sports and movements offers based on the needs of the Aachen universities. The HSZ is supported by the student Sports Department at the Aachen universities, SR for short. The SR is the elected representative body for university sports of the RWTH and FH Aachen students. The offer is huge but the demand as well, so be ready an on time to book your sport class or otherwise you will land on the waiting list…

If you want to go for a swim between May and September, there are open swimming baths in Aachen Hangeweiher, where they also offer reduced rates for students. If you rather prefer to swim in a hall, there is also Osthalle, Westhalle, Südhalle and Elisabethhalle. For everyone who rather looks for wellness, we can recommend the [thermal spas](#) and mineral springs for which Aachen is famous for. People that prefer ice sports can go to the [Tivoli ice sports center](#) to do some ice skating instead. This sports center opens around September until the end of the winter season.

Museums

There are many museums in Aachen with various topics around culture, history, art, newspapers, sculptures, about life in Aachen in the past, Charles the Great, and more. You can find more information on [Aachen.de](#). Every year, there is also long night of the museums, where 8 museums are free to visit and open in the evening from 7pm till midnight with buses regularly driving around to easily bring you to each museum.

Further Education

If you are looking for some further education in languages, cooking, science, fitness, lifestyle, wellness, IT, job applications, mathematics and many more, [Volkshochschule Aachen](#) might be the right place for you, as it offers a large amount of paid courses for everyone interesting in learning even more. However, if you just want to learn languages and are a regular student at RWTH University (non-exchange), you can visit our [language center](#) which offers many different language courses for free.
Bars

Aachen is a good place if you want to join the pub / bar life as the city has the most pubs per person compared to other German cities. Especially around Pontstraße (Pont Street), which you could call the student mile of the city and around central areas like the cathedral and town hall have much to offer.

Insider Tip: In some places it is not possible to pay by card. In case you do not have cash ask whether you can pay by card or not. In Germany it is usual to give some tip, for example if you spend 30 EUR it is usual to leave something between 1 and 3 EUR tip. Of course, this is voluntary.

Restaurants

Aachen offers a wide variety of international cuisine around Pontstraße and the city center around the market and the cathedral, so you can taste food from around the world, without leaving Aachen. Of course good alternatives are the dining halls, cafeterias and coffee bars of the university, which are spread throughout the multiple campuses offering you a wide range of healthy and wholesome international meals and save a buck, since the menus are quite inexpensive.

Insider Tip: In some places it is not possible to pay by card. In case you do not have cash ask whether you can pay by card or not. In Germany it is usual to give some tip, for example if you spend 30 EUR it is usual to leave something between 1 and 3 EUR tip. Of course, this is voluntary.

Cinemas

If you want to watch the latest Hollywood movies in German or English, 2D or 3D, the Cinekaree complex should be the right place for you. With your student ID you can purchase a student ticket. However, if you can wait a little while, our RWTH Filmstudio show fairly recent movies on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for students. This can also help you save money, since the rates are much lower compared to a normal cinema.

If you want to see more cultural movies and European productions, you can go to the private cinema Apollo, where you can watch movies you can’t find in most cinemas.

Festivals and Events in the Region

In Aachen, there are a lot of Events and Festivals happening every year. You can find out details about these in through the website of the Aachen tourist service. Some of the bigger ones are the international horse show CHIO Aachen or the Charlemagne Prize of Aachen, where big personalities of Europe receive an award for their achievements for Europe.

For cultural events, you can check the cultural calendar of Aachen.

If you want to look for other types of Events in Aachen or nearby like concerts, drama, exhibitions, dancing and more, you can check the calendar of Klenkes, which shows you the events on the day.
Learning German or improving your language skills

German courses in language schools

You can learn German at multiple places in Aachen. There is the Language Center of RWTH Aachen University, Volks-
hochschule Aachen or Sprachenakademie Aachen. All of these institutions offer paid German courses, which can quickly get you from one level to another.

Online German courses

VHS Lernportal
- Levels A1, A2 and B1, as well as B2 for vocational/professional language courses
- In 19 languages
- With a „literacy component,” as a so-called ABC German course
- Free-of-charge online tutoring
- Available via web browser and , for levels A1, cell phone app (Android and iOS)
- Approved as a full language/integration course

Deutsche Welle (Nicos Weg)
- Language levels A1, A2, B1
- Telenovela-based learning
- Available in six languages: English, Arabic, Russian, Persian, Spanish, and Portuguese
- Available as cell phone app for Android and via web browser

Deutschtrainer of the Goethe Institut
- Language level A1
- Available as cell phone app for Android and iOS

Learning German in our international student clubs

Another way to improve your language skills, meet friends and for a cultural exchange is organized by the student organization INCAS Aachen. Their Café Lingua event is organized every month, where German and international students sit at different tables for different languages like English, French, Italian, Spanish and Chinese talking about various topics or playing Games. And the best part: It’s free.

If you like it more private or don’t feel comfortable in a group, INCAS Aachen offers an easy way to find a language partner. You can just fill out the Form and what languages you want to practice, and they will match you with another person, who wants to get better with a language you are good at. It’s a nice way of exchange, where in the best case, you can make great friends as well.
**Certificate International**

If you take part in our „Certificate International“ program, we issue you a document which provides evidence of your extracurricular activities and volunteer work, listing all of your skill-building activities at a glance, including your mentorship of international students. This way you don’t need to collect a pile of social skills certificates for all of your activities – this document communicates your intercultural skills to your future employer.

**Travelling with the semester ticket**

Every enrolled student at RWTH Aachen University gets a semester ticket. More information around the semester ticket can be found also at the website of AStA. This way traveling is easy, as with the semester ticket you can travel for free within the area of North Rhine-Westphalia. You can pretty much use any public bus, train, subway, tram etc., except IC, ICE, Thalys (and other high-speed trains) as you must pay for these. First class is not included in the semester ticket. The semester ticket also allows you to go to certain parts of Netherlands and Belgium. It is not possible to take other people with you except up to three children under the age of 15. To keep track of buses, you can use the movA App, as it shows you the accurate times for each bus.

If you want to take your bike with you on the train or bus, you need an additional bicycle ticket. More information about taking your bike on a bus is available on the web pages of ASEAG. More information about taking your bike on the train can be found on the website of Deutsche Bahn.

**Travelling by train**

If you plan a trip outside of North Rhine-Westphalia or you don’t have a semester ticket, you can buy tickets directly from a Deutsche Bahn office, at ticket machines found at the train station or online through the app or the website. Keep in mind, that you can’t buy a ticket inside the train. More information about prices and services as well as the trip planner, you can find on the Deutsche Bahn website. If you want a cheaper option, you can take a look at Flixbus. Taking these busses for long distance trips is super cheap, but will also take much longer depending on where you need to go. You can find their routes and prices at their Website.

If you are under 26 years old and want to go to Belgium, you can get the Go Pass 1 Aachen from the Deutsche Bahn Office at Aachen Hauptbahnhof and take a ride to almost any station in Belgium for a very cheap price. Alternatively, if you travel there more often or want to take friends with you, the Go Pass 10 is the best value since it’s even cheaper and allows you or you and your friends take up to 10 rides between Aachen and Belgium, which is valid for a full year. Everyone who doesn’t fulfill the requirements can use the Rail Pass instead.
Travelling by bus

Everyone who doesn’t have a semester ticket can buy bus tickets directly through ASEAG, inside a bus directly from the bus driver or at ticket machines, which you can find at certain bus or train stations. Keep in mind that bus drivers only accept cash and you should always have change with you since they sometimes can’t change banknotes. Prices vary depending on the ticket you choose.

In case you would like to take your friends or family to Maastricht, you can take a direct bus from Aachen. There you can (or even should) pay by card. You can directly buy a two-way ticket from the bus driver.

If you would like to visit a nearby city or even go abroad, you can take a long-distance bus. There are companies like Flixbus or Eurolines which travel to different European destinations or inside Germany.

Taking a taxi

Looking for a taxi? Usually you can find them at certain hotspots like the main station, at party locations and more, but if you are on the search for one, it may be hard to find on the street compared to other cities or countries. The best option is to always call one of multiple taxi companies and order one. Alternatively apps like FREE NOW (known before as MyTaxi) also work in Aachen.

Sharing a car

An alternative way to travel is to take a lift, so called “Fahrge- meinschaft”. You can organize or find one in various social media groups for example or multiple dedicated websites/apps like fahrgemeinschaft.de, blablacar.de or others, where you can book a journey and pay for it. But keep in mind, that this might not be the safest option to travel.

Rent a car or a transporter

There is also an option to rent a car in case you have a driving license. In case you would like to move heavy and big things you can also rent a transporter. There are various companies in Aachen offering this option.

Taking an e-roller in Aachen

Nowadays e-rollers are quite popular in Aachen. You just need to download an app depending on which company’s rollers you want to use and you can directly pay via the app. However, please keep in mind
Mobility connects!

Anyone who has just arrived in a new country gathers lots of impressions. Some things are unfamiliar, others very familiar indeed; using public transport may be a challenge. German Road Safety would like to help – with free print media and an app. The goal is mobile coexistence that is as safe as possible – for everyone who wants to participate in public life in Germany. Safety can be improved in various simple ways to reduce the chance of an accident occurring. Avoiding rushing or standing in unsafe places on the bus or coach and following the rules on the bus or coach itself will greatly increase the safety of a person travelling by bus or coach. Various safety features can also be implemented into buses and coaches to improve safety including safety bars for people to hold onto.

The main ways to stay safe when travelling by bus or coach are as follows:

- Leave your location early so that you do not have to run to catch the bus or coach.
- At the bus stop, always follow the queue.
- Do not board or alight at a bus stop other than an official one.
- Never board or alight at a red light crossing or unauthorized bus stop.
- Board the bus only after it has come to a halt without rushing in or pushing others.
- Do not sit, stand or travel on the footboard of the bus.
- Do not put any part of your body outside a moving or a stationary bus.
- While in the bus, refrain from shouting or making noise as it can distract the driver.
- Always hold onto the handrail if standing in a moving bus, especially on sharp turns.
- Always adhere to the bus safety rules.

German Road Safety App

How does local transport work? Where am I allowed to ride my bike? And who actually has the right of way? German Road Safety is the free app for everyone who wants to reach their destination safely. Either on foot, with the bus or train, by bike or car. German Road Safety is an animated Compact Guide that provides a good overview of the most important rules of the road in Germany – and can help you find your way and how to do so appropriately. The app and online version are available in 9 languages: German, English, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Spanish, French, Russian, Mandarin, Polish and Turkish.

University Culture

In Germany, you can usually obtain a Bachelor Degree at this institutions: FH (Fachhochschule), Universität or BA (Berufsakademie or Duale Hochschule).

The difference between them is the way of teaching and the distribution of the practical and theoretical content. At a University you will receive theoretical classes (called Vorlesungen - lectures) with hundreds of students, and practical classes (called Übungen). At a Fachhochschule you will receive rather practical orientated classes (in the technological field) and there are one or more semesters dedicated to internships at a company.

At a Berufsakademie you will receive the theorical classes in a FH and the practical classes at a company of your choice (usually, you close a contract with the company, where you have to attend the BA for classes and then work at the company for the practical part).

Specific questions about the German Teaching Institutions can be found on this website.

Grading system in Germany and German University Entrance Qualification

There is a website of the Ministry of Culture (anabin) which provides a lot of information about institutions such as secondary schools and universities, as well as grades. There you can check whether you have a so called German University Entrance Qualification (see page 1).

Grading System:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Text</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Sehr gut (excellent)</td>
<td>an outstanding achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Gut (good)</td>
<td>an achievement that exceeds the average requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Befriedigend (satisfactory)</td>
<td>an achievement that fulfils average requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ausreichend (sufficient)</td>
<td>an achievement that fulfils the requirements despite flaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)</td>
<td>an achievement that does not fulfil requirements due to major flaws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The examination regulations can specify whether the grades can be increased or decrease by 0.3 to indicate varying performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Declaration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Sehr gut (very good)</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Sehr gut (excellent) -</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Gut (good) +</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Gut (good)</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Gut (good) -</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Befriedigend (satisfactory) +</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Befriedigend (satisfactory)</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Befriedigend (satisfactory) -</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Ausreichend (sufficient) +</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Ausreichend (sufficient)</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)</td>
<td>Nicht bestanden (fail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)</td>
<td>Nicht bestanden (fail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)</td>
<td>Nicht bestanden (fail)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some modules only require regular attendance rather than an examination. These are awarded the grade ‘TN = Teilnahme’ which means the student has participated in the module and passed. If you do not complete an examination required by a module, credits cannot be awarded, despite regular attendance. Source.

Preparing your course plan and planning your studies throughout your semester

**RWTHonline**

RWTHonline is the digital database where you will organize everything in your semester – lectures, exercises, exams etc. There you can register for those and download some certificates like for example the Immatriculation certificate or transcript of records, which are documents valid without a signature, directly generated in RWTHonline. You can find more detailed information about how RWTHonline works here.

**The AStA Student Union**

AStA is the representative body of all RWTH students. It is annually elected by the Student Parliament. The AStA represents the students’ interests towards the University, the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia, and the general public. Furthermore, its responsibilities include the administration of the budget of the student body, advising services on social and student-relevant topics, organization of cultural events, and political education. They also offer several services:
Mentoring System within the faculties

Mentoring system offers students the option to get systematic advising in one-to-one consultations throughout their degree. This way your problems, as well as potential can be established early on at no charge. The mentors receive special training to prepare them working with students e.g. in conflict management, degree specifications and intercultural competence. You can book an appointment in our appointment tool.

Department student committees

The Departmental (or Faculty) Student Representative Committees are representatives of student interests in the individual faculties and institutes. They are elected to represent and manage the Student Representative Committees (which represent all of the students in an institute or in a department). They support projects by students and instructors, promote the interests of students in various administrative bodies, organize festivities, and provide for cultural events. Students can turn to the Representative Committees if they have problems or questions about the organization of studies.

You can find a list with all the information of the Fachschaten here.

Everyone can be active in student councils. This way the faculty offers help from students to students, like for example information about oral and written exams, preparation of curricula, course catalogs, as well as events concerning first semester students.

Department Advisors at the faculties

The subject study advisors at the faculties will inform you about study contents, individual adaptations of the course of studies, examination regulations and, in some cases, about the recognition of examination achievements from other subjects and placement in higher subject semesters. The subject advisors are sorted on the website so that you can quickly find your contact person.

The RWTH Aachen Student Advice Centre

Our Student Advice Center is a neutral and free advising office and the first point of contact for conceivable questions about studies at RWTH Aachen: orientation, demands, schedule, preparation, subject changes, psychosocial questions, info events.

- BAFöG (de)
- Accommodation (de)
- Student Finance, Student Jobs, Health Insurance (de)
- Students with Children or Care Obligations (de)
- Students with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses (de)
- Social Loans and Benefits (de)
- Equal Opportunities (de)
- Legal Advising (de)
- Advising for Student Initiatives and Associations (de)
- Advising for Student Assistants (de)
Central Student Advisory Service

The Central Student Advisory Service advises students in case of doubts or questions regarding the choice of their field of study. It also offers help with study organization, time management and general orientation in the university world. Its services also include a psychological counseling service (stress management), workshops and information about the entire range of studies offered at RWTH Aachen University.

Psychological Counseling – Confidential, Autonomous, Free of Charge

The Student Advice Centre offer RWTH Aachen students psychological counseling in times of crisis, when encountering personal problems, and for all questions and problems that can compromise one’s studies:

- Disruptions to working or learning ability
- Motivation problems
- Exam and assessment anxiety
- Other anxieties
- Mood swings
- Orientation or decision difficulties
- Contact problems
- Crises and conflict situations

Academic Trainings: Study Skills Workshops

To make an appointment, please feel free to contact our consulting team via the appointment request formula. For all other questions or concerns, you can also reach them by phone. Please let us know if you have a specific request regarding counseling, for example, you would like to be counseled only by a woman or a man or in a foreign language. Possible languages are English, Dutch or Vietnamese.

The Center for Mental Health also counsels students at Kullenhofstraße 52, opposite the University Hospital Aachen or at the Psychological-Psychotherapeutic Counseling Center for Students, Lothringerstr. 83, 52070 Aachen, Fax: 0241 - 537360

Foreigners’ Representation (AusländerInnenvertretung AV)

The Foreigners’ Representative Council is made up of elected representatives of the foreign students at the RWTH. They advise and support foreign students in all problems and offer them legal advice in questions concerning the right of residence. They also offer cultural events.

Family Services Center

Advice regarding maternity rights, maternity/paternity leave, studying abroad with a child, childcare, school holidays, combining career/university studies with family, family and equal rights
What to do if I fail an exam?

First, relax. You have more chances. Depending on your faculty you have 2 or 3 more chances and they could be oral or writing exams. We recommend that you go to the exam revision (usually after each exam the faculty schedules exam revisions where you can have a look at the mistakes you made) and ask there about your possibilities.

Insider Tip: You should also know something very important about Germany: once you use all your chances to pass an exam and still fail, you are not allowed to continue your studies or study another degree that includes your failed course in the course syllabus.

Registrar’s Office

The registrar is responsible for your university matriculation, rematriculation, exmatriculation and applying for leave of absence. Further information at:

Student Advice Centre

The Student Advice Centre can help you decide which course of studies you wish to follow. They also offer support in organising your studies, time management and general university life. They also offer psychological advice such as stress management, workshops and general information about course offers by RWTH Aachen University. For more information please see:

Financing your studies

SCHOLARSHIPS

DAAD SCHOLARSHIPS

Student Councils within Faculties

Two DAAD Scholarships are offered by the International Office:

- Scholarship for particularly involved students (400€ per month, duration 6 months)
  - For RWTH international degree students from the 3rd semester who have earned their university entrance qualification at a non-German school abroad (“Bildungsaußländer”)
  - Selection based on achievements during studies: particular involvement in an international context, e.g. mentoring international students as a buddy or involvement with initiatives and associations with an international focus
  - Application period: May 1 to 31

Insider Tip: You should also know something very important about Germany: once you use all your chances to pass an exam and still fail, you are not allowed to continue your studies or study another degree that includes your failed course in the course syllabus.
Scholarship for completing studies (500€ per month, duration 5 months)
- funds the academic success of qualified international students, who are in the final phase of their studies
- eligible students can provide proof of a good average grade (at least 2.5) and will complete their degree in the next twelve months (from start of funding)
- Application period: November 1 to November 30 and May 1 to May 31

Contact:
Tamara Weber
tamara.weber@zhv.rwth-aachen.de

Source:

Deutschland Stipendium
- Students of all nationalities with outstanding achievements and social commitment
- Students have to be in their standard study period
- Up to 300 EUR per month for at least two semesters

Konrad A denauer Stiftung Scholarship
- The scholarship program of the Foreign Students' Support Office is aimed at international students and doctoral candidates who have already successfully completed their studies and would like to take up further studies (postgraduate or master's degree), a doctorate or a research stay of at least four semesters at a German university.
- Up to 752 EUR monthly plus 300 EUR monthly for books, materials etc.
- Completed undergraduate, have above-average academic performance.
- Good knowledge of German (B2 level), be committed to voluntary work
- Stay in Germany for at least four semesters to study
- Broad general education and a strong interest in political issues, have a positive attitude towards democracy and human rights

Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes
Requirements:
study at a state or state-recognised higher education institution (university, university of applied sciences, college of art and music) in Germany or complete part or all of your studies at a higher education institution in a member state of the European Union (EU) or in Switzerland.
Other foundations and programmes

- Heinrich-Böll Stiftung
- Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom
- The Huawei Scholarship

EMERGENCY FUNDS

Project by DAAD Stiftung

Generally, all students can apply for support in an exceptional unexpected emergency situation such as an unexpected stroke of fate or a sudden damaging event that threatens the ability to continue one's studies/research

Examples:
- Costs related to loss of essential study equipment due to fire, theft or natural disaster
- Travel expenses associated with death or fatal illness of a family member
- Emergency medical care proven to not be covered by the insurance
- Other financial needs arising from special individual circumstances
- Etc.

Selection is based on:
- Serious acute case of emergency
- Unpredictability
- Difficulties arising through no fault of one's own
- General inability to procure financing through DAAD funding programmes, public funding or other third-party financing (e.g. emergency funds offered by the respective university or city).

All other resources must be exhausted.
- Objective verifiability

No funding possible for the following cases:
- Corona Crisis (you can apply for bridging assistance, see 4.)
- Continuous funding (no long-term support or scholarship)
- BAföG-alternative
- Settling of debt
- Court costs, penalties, fines

Funding consists of a one-time payment of generally minimum € 1,000 and maximum € 10,000.

All documents required for the selection process must be submitted no later than the date of application.

Contact DAAD-Stiftung per Email for questions: info@daad-stiftung.de
ESG Counseling for International Students

- ESG provides international students support in the areas of study and life, especially during the exams
- In case of emergencies or examination times you can apply for financial support, especially for engaged students with an international background
- Contact ESG for counselling and questions: Kornelia von Kaisenberg

KHG Counseling for International Students

- International students studying in Aachen and are in an acute (financial) emergency can get consultation and, if necessary, financial support from the KHG
- The support is provided regardless of religion, denomination or nationality with funds from the emergency fund of the KHG (depending on demand, the possible funding amount can be small)
- Students of the RWTH Business School can not be funded
- Contact KHG for counselling and questions: Markus Reissen (send Email from RWTH domain) or +49(0)241 47000

Social Loan by ASTA

- ASTA provides short-term and long-term social loans that are interest-free which are granted to both national and international students
- It can be granted in cases where students unexpectedly and through no fault of their own find themselves in a financial emergency, this also applies to financial crises triggered by the pandemic
- Example: Laptop is missing or broken so the student cannot participate in online courses
- The maximum amount for short-term loan is € 350 and should be repaid within 4 months at least.
- The maximum amount for long-term loan is € 1200 per year but can vary due to private circumstances and can be applied to up to a grant amount of € 3600 in total.
- There are no deadlines for submitting an application for a long-term or short-term social loan
- Contact the following Email for questions about social loans: soziales@asta.rwth-aachen.de
Sick without Health Insurance

If you have financial problems and are therefore unable to pay your health insurance, there are some advisory centres that provide contact information for doctors and further advisory services. In emergencies doctors are required by law to provide medical aid.

Caritas Special Service for Integration/Migration

Scheibenstr. 16, 52070 Aachen
Tel.: 0241 949270, Fax: 0241 94927 289
k.duepper@caritas-aachen.de
i.radocaj@caritas-aachen.de

Café Zuflucht

Zollernstr. 5, 52070 Aachen
Tel.: 0241 511811, Fax: 0241 4465211
info@cafe-zuflucht.de

Pedagogical Center PÄZ

Mariahilfstr. 16, 52062 Aachen
Tel.: 0241 49000, Fax: 0241 49004
paez.ac@t-online.de

Amnesty International

Adalbertsteinweg 123 a/b, 52070 Aachen
Tel. /Fax: 0241 513653
info@amnesty-aachen.de

Working as a student and after your studies

During the semester period, international students are allowed to work up to 3 months without a work permission. Students are not allowed to work more than 19 hours per week during the semester.

Obligatory work experience placements or internships which are compulsory for the studies are regarded as part of the students’ education and are not restricted.

The Career Center

has taken it upon itself to prepare you for the job market and to actively support you with your first steps in the professional world. They offer:

- Seminars & Career Training
- Finding Companies
- Femtec Career Building Program
- Job Banks & Bulletin Boards
- Personal Advising on Application Processes and Application Portfolio Checks
- Walk-In Application Support for International Students
- Walk-In Office Hours

Do you have questions but no appointment? The Career Center will be happy to help you during our walk-in office hours.
Job Openings at RWTH

Students from the second semester onwards often have the possibility to work as student assistants in research or as tutors. Students are allowed to work up to 20 hours a week.

Job openings in companies for RWTH students are posted by the Career Center

The Federal Employment Agency is the largest provider of labor market services in Germany. The online job board helps you find part-time and temporary work (Minijob / Nebenjob): http://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de
The Job Board of ASTA and the Career Center help you as well in finding a job: http://www.asta.rwth-aachen.de/de/jobboerse

Fun facts about RWTH, Aachen Germany

RWTH

- The name of the lecture hall C.A.R.L. stands for Central Auditorium for Research and Learning. It can offer space for over 4,000 students. With approximately 14,000 square meters, it offers room for eleven lecture halls, 16 seminar rooms, a break room with a café, as well as workspaces and is one of the largest lecture hall complexes in Europe.
- The University Hospital Aachen is one of Europe's largest hospital buildings.
- There used to be Faculty 9, which was the Philosophical Faculty. Now at RWTH Aachen there is no Faculty 9.
- More interesting facts can be found here.
- You can find some facts and figures about the RWTH here.
- You can check some facts and figures about the RWTH.

Aachen

- Aachen Cathedral is the oldest church in northern Europe.
- Aachen is often also called “Bad Aachen” because of its many thermal springs.
Who to call? List of important numbers in and outside RWTH

International Office Info Service Center
SuperC, Room 329, Templergraben 57, 52062 Aachen
Contact +49 241 80 90660

Immigration Office of the Aachen City Region
SuperC, Rooms 421 and 422, Templergraben 57, 52062 Aachen
Contact +49 241 5198-3367 / -3368 / -3369

Psychological Counseling
Appointments arranged via email (all advisors):
Psych.Beratung@rwth-aachen.de

Central Student Advice Center
Templergraben 83 (Corner of Pontstraße)
Contact: studienberatung@rwth-aachen.de

Equal Opportunities Office at RWTH
Contact: gsb@rwth-aachen.de, +49 241 80 93576

AStA (for more details see page 27)
Contact: asta@asta.rwth-aachen.de, +49 8093792

RWTH Aachen University Hospital
Pauwelsstr. 30, 52074 Aachen
Contact: +241 800

Germany
- Germany has a population of 81 million people.
- One-third of Germany is still covered in forests and woodlands.
- There are over 2100 castles in Germany.
- There are over 1,500 different beers in Germany.
- Germany has 3000 different bread types

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City Advisory Services

**Dept Counselling**
Schuldnerberatung Aachen e.V.
Dennewartstraße 17, 52068 Aachen
Tel.: 0241 9039404,
kontakt@schuldnerberatung-ac.de
Mon-Fri.: 09:00am - 12:00pm;
Tues. & Thurs. 02:00pm – 16:00pm

**Parenting Advice Center in Aachen**
Reumontstrasse 7a, 52064 Aachen
Tel: 0241 33953/33954
eb-ac@mercur.caritas-ac.de
Mon-Fri.: 09:00am - 12:00pm;
Mon-Thurs.: 02:00pm - 05:00pm
For personal counselling please make an appointment

**Telephone Helplines**
The Telephone Helplines service is available by telephone, chat, mail and personal contact.

**Telefonseelsorge Deutschland** (German crisis helpline):
Tel.: 0800 111 0 111 or 0800 111 0 222
24 hours a day, anonymous, confidential, trustworthy and free of charge.

**Telephone Doweria – Russian Speaking Helpline**
Tel.: 030 440308 454; 24-hour-service

**German Consortium for Youth and Marriage Advice (DAJEB):**
Tel.: 089 4361091

**Helpline for Gay Victims of Violence**
Tel.: 0241 19228; Tues. 07:00pm - 09:00pm

**Addiction Helpline Aachen:**
Tel.: 0800 7824800

**Psychological Centre for Refugees ‘PÄZ’ e.V.**
Mariahilfstraße 16, 52062 Aachen
Tel.: 0241 406500, psz.ac@gmx.de

**AIDS Counselling at the Public Health Department:**
Open office hours (testing possible without an appointment)
Mon.: 10:00am - 12:00pm and 03:00pm - 05:00pm,
Thurs: 03:00pm - 04:00pm
Personal appointments can be made by phone
## Emergency Hotlines

| **Police** | 110 | Non-medical emergency, criminal acts, automobile accidents. |
| **Fire brigade rescue service, medical emergency help** | 112 | Accidents (fire or e.g. car accidents), heart attack, collapse, shortness of breath, unconsciousness, paralysis, stroke, poisoning and burns, acute pain etc. |
| **Medical emergency** | 116 117 | Emergency at the weekend or at night |
| **Pharmacy emergency service** | 0800 0022833 | Helps you find the closest open pharmacy. |
| **Blocking emergency number** | 116 116 | Blocking of EC- and credit cards, as well as identity cards. |
| **Help line „Violence against women“** | 08000 116016 | Nationwide counselling services for women affected by violence or their social environment. Free of charge, anonymous, available around the clock, 365 days a year. |
| **Crisis helpline** | 0800 1110111 | Helps with dealing with suicide thoughts or urgent depression |
| **Addiction and drugs helpline** | 01805 313031 | Provides help and information by experienced staff regarding drugs and addiction. The line is 24/7 available and can be called by people dealing with addiction as well as their family or friends. |