

**RWTH ONLINE WELCOME WEEKS**  
**FINDING ACCOMMODATION IN AACHEN**  
**7 SEPTEMBER 2020**  
**QUESTIONS ASKED AND ANSWERED**

The following basic questions about finding accommodation in Aachen are answered in the **video prepared by the Student Union AStA** available on [Youtube](#) or to download on [Sciebo](#), as well as on our **Housing website** ([www.rwth-aachen.de/housing](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/housing)) where you will find the **Housing Guide** you absolutely need to download and read!

- What price should I pay for accommodation in Aachen?
- Where can I find and apply for accommodation?
- What kind of temporary accommodation are there?
- What are alternative options to Aachen or to student dorms?
- Whom can I contact for housing support?

General House-Hunting in Aachen

- **How difficult is it to find accommodation in Aachen after arrival?**  
This is a subjective question which depends on many things: how high is the demand for accommodation in Aachen at the time you are also searching, what kind of lodging are you looking for, how do you apply for an apartment or a room in a shared flat. It depends also on luck.
- **How early is it recommended to arrive in Aachen to start to look for accommodation?**  
As soon as you have been admitted to RWTH Aachen, you should start looking for accommodation from abroad. Arrive in Aachen at the latest two weeks before the lectures start as it takes days for formal processes, apartment visits, etc.
- **How do I access the public Wi-Fi as on the first few days?**  
Check out our Housing Guide available at [www.rwth-aachen.de/housing](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/housing) to find out!
- **What all accommodation options can we find apart from student dorms?**  
Check out our Housing Guide available at [www.rwth-aachen.de/housing](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/housing) to find out!
- **What is the reasonable rent (incl. utilities / warm)?**  
In Aachen, you should expect the rent for an apartment on the private market to be between 400 and 500€ including utilities (Nebenkosten). The rent depends of course on the location and size of the accommodation.
- **Are the offers from WG-Gesucht or Immobilienscout trusted?**  
Most offers found on the common real estate websites, such as WG-Gesucht oder Immobilienscout are real offers. However those website do not proof-check the veracity of the offers. Therefore, there is no guaranty that there won't be any scam offers on those website. In general, we urge you to never make any bank transfer until you have actually seen the accommodation and met the landlord or main tenant.
- **I am still in my home country and landlords in Aachen ask for a copy of my passport. Is that safe?**  
In the final stages of your lease contract, your landlord will need the data from your passport to issue the documents. Therefore, in that phase it is okay for you to send it. Sometimes, this acts as a confirmation for your landlord that you will actually be visiting Aachen.
- **What is the *Bonitätsauskunft*? Why is it a requirement for renting a flat ?**  
Sometimes, your landlord might require a "*SCHUFA-Auskunft*" or *Bonitätsauskunft*, which is a document you get from the SCHUFA organization and which assess your financial reliability based on your past consumer behavior on Germany. The more debts or delays you have had in payments, the less reliable you are and the other way around.

- **Can I consider that an offer is real if I have seen it and met the flat mates via Skype?**  
 In this case, the room offer is probably real. However, we recommend you ask your Buddy or AISA to still check the apartment in person before you make any payment.
- **Is it legal to share a room with a friend already staying in Aachen?**  
 If your friend is staying in a Studierendenwerk room or apartment, he/she usually has the right to have a guest for maximum duration of 10 days. However, please note that due to the pandemic, the Studierendenwerk might not allow overnight visits.  
 If your friend is staying as an accommodation on the private market, he/she is allowed to have guests. Subletting a room or sharing the apartment with a contract needs to be approved by the landlord beforehand.
- **How do the expenses differ for students living in the Netherlands (Kerkrade/Heerlen) with the project "Parkstad Limburg"?**  
 The municipality of Kerkrade managing the project is in touch with several private student dorms offering rooms and apartment in different ranges of rent. The Semesterticket is valid to travel in this region of the Netherlands up to Maastricht. In case you are interested in this housing project, please contact [housing@rwth-aachen.de](mailto:housing@rwth-aachen.de) for further information.
- **When living in the Netherlands with a Dutch residence permit, is it possible to move to Aachen later on with the same residence permit?**  
 If you have found a place to stay in Aachen later on, you will need to apply for visa at the German embassy in the Netherlands as you will need a residence permit in Germany.
- **What do you suggest to bring from abroad when moving to Germany? (e.g. cooking utensils, Wi-Fi routers, switch adapter, etc.)**  
 In general, you should be able to find everything you need once you have moved to Aachen. You can also check out Discount websites or Facebook groups of student associations such as INCAS as student often post announcement for secondhand furniture and utensils.
- **Can a group of two or three people look together for an accommodation in Aachen?**  
 Looking for a flat to share with other students is a good idea. Landlords offering WG-apartments will probably be eager to rent their place to students applying together than searching for single tenants to share a flat.
- **If we move to another apartment, do we have to register our new address at the city council again?**  
 Yes, you will have to do so within two weeks after the start of your new lease contract.
- **Could you please explain about how rent is paid in Germany? What is the difference between Kaltmiete and Warmmiete?**  
*Kaltmiete* is for the rent without the water, property tax, gas, electricity and waste disposal services and *Warmmiete* includes all of these. *Warmmiete* can but does not always include heating, water, electricity and sometimes internet. Most of the times, *Warmmiete* is the maximum and fixed rent. Remember to ask your landlord which costs are included in the *Warmmiete* and which ones you will have to pay separately (and find a provider for).
- **Is it possible to put an ad in the Aachen newspaper or in other places to find accommodation?**  
 Usually the ads are from people offering accommodation. As a housing-seeking student, you can however put an ad on WG-Gesucht or on social media to find accommodation. Sometimes it works but it is usually more effective to actively search and apply everywhere possible.
- **What are top qualities landlords are looking in students for offering a place for accommodation?**  
 Financial reliability is probably the top quality required by private landlords. Reliability in itself is also extremely important: be on time to pay your rent, keep your apartment in good state, keep appointments related to your lodging and keep the rules fixed in your lease contract (noise, disposal waste, etc.).

- **Which region apart from the city center should be considered for accommodation?**  
Check out our Housing Guide available at [www.rwth-aachen.de/housing](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/housing) to find out!
- **What's the difference between the *Kaution* and the *Ablösevereinbarung*?**  
The *Kaution* is the security deposit which is refunded at the latest six months after having moved out in case the apartment has been left without damages. The *Ablösevereinbarung* is a price fixed by the landlord and/or the previous tenant for furniture or the kitchen included in the apartment. It cannot be refunded but in case you move out, you can also make a *Ablösevereinbarung* with the next tenant to get a part of the price back, considering the state of the items bought by yourself.
- **Is it possible to leave the apartment before the contract date?**  
In case you would like to end your lease contract earlier, you will need to give notice to your landlord at least three months in advance. This is fixed by law. If you miss that deadline, you will need to pay for the rent until the three months have passed.
- **Within how many days after arriving in Aachen do I need to complete the city registration?**  
You need to register your address in Aachen at the latest two weeks after the start of your lease contract. As long as you have not found any accommodation with a lease contract and where you can get the "Wohnungsgeberbestätigung", you cannot register your address in Aachen.
- **Is it advisable to obtain some type of insurance?**  
You will sometimes be asked to take on a household or accident insurance (*Haftpflichtversicherung* oder *Haushaltsversicherung*) for your apartment. In general, it is advisable to take on one of those as they cover for example water damages or broken windows.

#### Housing Services

- **Is there any team who could help check out the apartment?**  
In general, you can ask your Buddy (from the [BeBuddy program](#)) if he or she could check out the apartment for you. Otherwise, you can contact the student association [AISA](#) to ask for someone to verify if the accommodation really exist.
- **I have heard that the lease contracts are issued in German. Who can help me understand the contract?**  
You can contact your Buddy, ask the student associations or student organizations such as [AV](#), [AStA](#) or the [Housing Advice Service](#) of the International Office to check whether everything is normal in your lease contract and help you understand the main conditions.
- **Who can support me in finding accommodation?**  
Consultation services are offered in and around the University. You can find the list of them at the end of our Housing Guide available at [www.rwth-aachen.de/housing](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/housing). The student associations can help you but will only assist you with tips and tricks.
- **How can we register for my Home is your Castle?**  
Just visit [www.rwth-aachen.de/housing](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/housing) and download the contact form available. Fill it out, sign it (digitally is okay) and send it back to [housing@rwth-aachen.de](mailto:housing@rwth-aachen.de). The Housing Advice Service of the International Office will provide you with the list of available offers.

#### Temporary Accommodation

- **What can I do if I can't get any accommodation until the date of my arrival? (Emergency situation)**  
Please try not to get in the situation that you do not have any place to stay after your arrival in Aachen. The University does not own nor manage any accommodation and therefore cannot provide you with lodging. It is absolutely crucial that you book a temporary accommodation (Hotel, Hostel, Airbnb) in time before traveling to Aachen to have a roof over your head, even though it might seem expensive at first.  
Due to the pandemic, usual emergency accommodation such as the emergency shelter of KHG or the Home-Buddy program of AISA cannot be offered.

- **Can we stay at Airbnb for longer durations? Can I do the city registration via my Airbnb?**  
In theory, you can stay at an Airbnb for a several months. However, please note that you cannot register the AirBnB address at the Citizen's office as this is a temporary accommodation and the city registration requires long term accommodation with a lease contract.
- **Is the Home Buddy program from AISA still functional for providing temporary accommodation?**  
Due to the pandemic, the Home Buddy program cannot be offered at the moment.

#### Studierendenwerk Aachen – Application, Allocation, etc.

- **Can you please help us to understand how the Studierendenwerk allocation process works?**  
For regular rooms at Studierendenwerk, there is a student committee in each dorm reviewing the students applications and forwarding them as recommendation to the Studierendenwerk dorm administration. They can approve or decline the application recommendation. Please note that the student committee has to consider many criteria while reviewing the application, not only the place on the waiting list but they also need to keep a balance between male and female residents, residents from Germany / Europe and outside Europe and more. This is why even when being on place 1 of a waiting list, you will not necessarily be the next person getting an offer.
- **How long does it normally take to get an accommodation from Studierendenwerk?**  
Usually, we say it takes at least 6 months up to one year to get a room offer from Studierendenwerk. However, it varies on many different criteria and might take longer than a year or sometimes you are lucky and get an offer sooner than six months.
- **I am really up on the waiting lists at Studierendenwerk application portal, but I didn't get any room offer yet. What do I do?**  
Wait. If you apply for example for a room from October and you have not received any offer by mid-September, you can be sure that you will be not be receiving any offer for the following month. In that case, please remember to re-register on the waiting lists of Studierendenwerk by 15 October to have a chance to get a room for the next month.  
Also look for accommodation on the private market additionally to your Studierendenwerk application and book temporary accommodation if you have not found anything about two weeks before your arrival.
- **In the Studierendenwerk application portal, does the waiting list number have to reach zero before we will be considered for that particular room?**  
No, your spot on the waiting list does not need to reach zero to get an offer. Usually, when you are below the 100, you have good chances of receiving an offer soon.
- **I forgot to re-register my Studierendenwerk application in time. Do I have to start it from scratch again?**  
You need to start from scratch, yes. If your re-registration has not been submitted due to a technical problem at the Studierendenwerk, please contact them. If they can retrace the problem back to them, then they might be able to fix it.
- **Are the student dorm rooms contract based?**  
Yes, you need to sign a lease contract and pay the first rent as well as a deposit (two month rent) in order to move in.
- **If I get an offer for another cheaper room in the same dorm, can I take it?**  
In theory, you can cancel your lease contract at Studierendenwerk with two month notice. Therefore, if you get an offer for another room, you might be able to take it. However, please note that if you miss the contract cancellation period, you will have to pay double (for your last room and your new room). This is however very unlikely as you will not be considered in priority if you have already received a room at Studierendenwerk. Logically, the student committee will prefer students who have not found any accommodation for their available room, and there are many of them.
- **Is it reasonable to apply to dormitories at the Studierendenwerk before admission?**  
Absolutely. You should apply for Studierendenwerk as soon as you have decided to apply at RWTH, as the waiting list are at least six month up to one year. You can always delete your application in case you have not been admitted to RWTH or have decided to study somewhere else.

- **As we can only apply for six dormitories, how to optimize our Studierendenwerk application?**  
Once you have applied for a dorm, you can see your position on the waiting list and usually you can see how many rooms or apartments are available there. If you notice that the difference is very big, your chance is very low to get an offer soon. You might consider cancelling your application to this specific dorm and try another one.
- **If we have applied for a double apartment via Studierendenwerk we would like to share with a friend, is it guaranteed that we will get a place together? We were provided a choice for roommates in the application form.**  
Kindly ask this question at the Studierendenwerk during Freshers' Fair on Wednesday 16 September or the person in charge of the dorm concerned (<https://www.studierendenwerk-aachen.de/de/wohnen/ansprechpartner.html>)
- **Where can I get the waiting list of dorms?**  
Right after applying at Studierendenwerk for the specific dorms, your name will be added in the waitlist which can be accessed on the portal when you login.
- **I have registered for Studierendenwerk dorms, but I don't receive monthly emails to confirm my interest. What should I do?**  
Send an email to [info@stw.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:info@stw.rwth-aachen.de).
- **Will it be easier for foreign students to get an offer at Studierendenwerk this year due to the pandemic?**  
We cannot tell if it will be easier for international students to get a room offer from Studierendenwerk this year, as it depends not only of the Corona regulations and developments in Germany but also of your home country.
- **If we are being considered for a dorm, how does the Studierendenwerk contact us?**  
You will be contacted by the student committee of the dorm (*Belegungsausschuss*) via email.
- **Do you know what documents and other stuff Studierendenwerk require upon getting the room?**  
The Studierendenwerk Aachen will need three documents from you: the confirmation of bank transfer for your first rent and for the deposit, the signed lease contract and a study certificate from RWTH as only enrolled bachelor and master students below 30 years are allowed to live in their dorms.
- **What is the structure of shared apartments? Do we share one room with say one person or we get separate single rooms in an apartment with shared bathroom?**  
It depends on what kind of room exactly you have received. If you have received an offer for a "WG-Zimmer" (room in shared flat), then you will share the bathroom and kitchen with only two or three other students. If you have received an offer for a single room with shared bathroom and/or shared kitchen, then you will share these facilities with the students living on the same floor. The number of people sharing the facilities depends on the dorm.
- **If I got a place in Studierendenwerk but I am already in another accommodation I have a contract for, do I lose my Studierendenwerk accommodation?**  
If you have an unlimited lease contract and you get an offer at Studierendenwerk Aachen for a room, you will have to cancel your lease contract with the common three month notice. It means that if the room offer you have accepted at Studierendenwerk starts before the end of these three month notice, you will have to pay for both rent in case you have both lease contract running at the same time. Therefore, if you cannot cancel your first lease contract in time for your Studierendenwerk room, expect either to pay double rent or do not accept the Studierendenwerk offer in the first place and apply for the next month.

#### Quota rooms for exchange students

- **If I applied for a quota room for October and I don't get accommodation, am I still in list for November?**  
Your application for quota rooms will not be deleted automatically as there is no "re-registration system". Instead, the International Office will inform you in case all rooms for October have been

already allocated and will ask you whether you would like to cancel your application or apply for a room from 1 November.

- **If I applied for quota rooms, how can I check where I am on the waiting list?**

There is no waiting list for the quota rooms as the rooms are allocated on a lottery basis. Still, you can check an email to [housing@rwth-aachen.de](mailto:housing@rwth-aachen.de) to check whether everything is fine with your application.

- **When will we know if we were selected or not for quota rooms reserved for international students by Studierendenwerk?**

The Studierendenwerk is allocating the quota rooms month by month. Due to the pandemic, they are starting the allocation as late as possible in order to check which countries are concerned by the quarantine regulations at that time, but still with enough advance before the next month. The allocation for October will therefore start at the beginning of September.

#### Quarantine in Germany or Aachen

- **Does the University provide special rooms for quarantine or do we have to organize quarantine on our own?**

As the University does not own nor manage accommodation, it cannot provide lodging for quarantine. In case you have reserved a room with shared facilities at the Studierendenwerk (i.e. room in shared flat, room with shared bathroom and/or kitchen), please note that you will not be able to do your quarantine in this room. Studierendenwerk Aachen might be able to offer you to stay in a single apartment during the first month. Please note that this offer is limited to the number of apartments available at the time of your arrival and that you would need to pay for the possibly higher rent of the apartment during the first month.

In case the Studierendenwerk is not able to provide you an alternative for quarantine, please note that you need to organize accommodation for quarantine on your own (refer to temporary accommodation).

- **Are we allowed to do quarantine in a shared flat (private market)?**

On the private market, you can do quarantine in your own flat (single or shared), if agreed on with your flatmate. Please note that your flatmate might have to stay into quarantine too in case you are.

- **Do we have to stay in quarantine in Aachen even after getting tested for COVID-19 at the airport?**

Yes. When arriving in Aachen, you need to go directly into quarantine and report at the public health department via email (Check out the F&A from Kick-Off). You can get out only once you have received negative results which are not older than 48 hours and the Public Health Department has lifted your quarantine.

- **Is it possible that I can travel to a relative's place in Frankfurt for the quarantine period before I come to Aachen?**

Yes, it is possible.

- **Can I arrive in another city and stay there for a week and then arrive in Aachen?**

If you need to go into quarantine and you cannot provide the public health department with negative test results that are not older than 48 hours at the end of the week you have been staying in Germany, then you would like to stay one more week at the same place as you are not allowed to go outside during quarantine.

- **Do I need to take a COVID-19 test and report at the public health department if I come from a non-high risk area?**

No you do not.

- **If we are planning to stay in Hostel for two weeks in the beginning, when do we have to pay our room at Studierendenwerk?**

The Studierendenwerk does not provide any discount for the quarantine period. It means that you will need to pay for the full rent in due time additionally to your quarantine accommodation.