

# Survival Guide

for international students



# Inhalt

<b>Introduction to your Survival Guide.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Choosing your course of study, application.....</b>	<b>6</b>
What is a German University Entrance Qualification?.....	6
<b>German student visa .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Preparing your stay in Germany .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Housing Department .....	8
BeBuddy Programm.....	8
Blocked bank account .....	8
Don't forget your important documents .....	8
<b>Practical Advice .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Weather conditions in Aachen .....	9
Suitable clothes to pack .....	9
Power sockets and electricity.....	9
<b>Travelling to Aachen .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Taking a train from the airport to Aachen .....	10
Taking a long-distance bus from the airport.....	10
<b>Arriving to Aachen .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Public Transport.....	11
Taxi.....	11
<b>Health Insurance, register in the city of Aachen.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Enrolment .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Welcome Week.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Open a bank account, manage your finances .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Healthcare .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Pharmacies .....	14
Emergency medical service.....	14
English speaking doctors.....	14
<b>Insurances in Germany .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Private Liability Insurance (private Haftpflichtversicherung).....	14
Car Insurance .....	15
Home contents insurance (Hausratversicherung) .....	15
Legal insurance (Rechtsschutzversicherung) .....	15
Life Insurance (Lebensversicherung) .....	15
<b>Broadcast contribution (Rundfunkbeitrag): GEZ.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Internet, telephone (SIM card), postal services, media.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Internet.....	16
SIM Cards .....	16
Post.....	16
Radio and TV.....	17

<b>Sorting trash in Germany – environment. Bulky waste .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Helpful Apps.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Studies.....	18
Transport.....	18
Social .....	18
<b>Helpful advice for your daily life in Germany.....</b>	<b>19</b>
How to get furniture or clothes for good price or for free .....	19
Alcohol, Drugs, safety .....	19
Dealing with culture shock, homesickness and how to prevent/overcome it.....	19
German culture .....	20
Shopping and living costs.....	20
Eating habits in Germany .....	20
Where to meet new people?.....	21
Sporting activities.....	21
Museums.....	21
Further Education .....	21
Bars .....	22
Restaurants .....	22
Cinemas.....	22
Festivals and Events in the Region.....	22
<b>Learning German or improving your language skills .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>German courses in language schools .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Online German courses .....	23
Learning German in our international student clubs.....	23
Certificate International .....	23
<b>Travelling in/around Aachen and abroad.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Travelling with the semester ticket .....	24
Travelling by train.....	24
Travelling by bus.....	24
Taking a taxi .....	24
Sharing a car .....	25
Rent a car or a transporter .....	25
Taking an e-roller in Aachen.....	25
<b>Safety in general, road safety. Asking for help.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Mobility connects! .....	25
German Road Safety App .....	26
<b>University life and grading system in Germany.....</b>	<b>26</b>
University Culture.....	26
Grading system in Germany and German University Entrance Qualification.....	26
<b>Preparing your course plan and planning your studies throughout your semester .....</b>	<b>27</b>
RWTHonline .....	27
The AStA Student Union .....	27

Mentoring System within the faculties .....	28
Departmental student committees .....	28
Departmental Advisors at the faculties .....	28
The RWTH Aachen Student Advice Centre.....	28
Psychological Counseling – Confidential, Autonomous, Free of Charge.....	28
What to do if I fail an exam? .....	29
<b>Job offers (at RWTH and outside), career center, how to write an application, workshops .....</b>	<b>29</b>
The Career Center .....	29
Job Openings at RWTH .....	29
Job openings in companies for RWTH students .....	30
<b>Fun facts about RWTH, Aachen and Germany .....</b>	<b>30</b>
RWTH .....	30
Aachen.....	30
Germany .....	30
<b>Who to call? List of important numbers in and outside RWTH .....</b>	<b>30</b>
International Office Info Service Center.....	30
Immigration Office of the Aachen City Region .....	30
Psychological Counseling.....	31
Central Student Advice Center .....	31
Equal Opportunities Office at RWTH.....	31
AStA.....	31
RWTH Aachen University Hospital – Uniklinik.....	31
Emergency Hotlines .....	31

## 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 some of you might experience a culture shock in Germany. And this is a necessary step into understanding Germany and its people. 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

- [Courses of study](#)
- [Application and deadlines](#)
- [Relevant information for internationals](#)

## What is a 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 recognized in Germany. The [DAAD entrance qualification database](#) can help you with this. Simply enter the country where you attained your secondary school-leaving certificate.

You will then learn whether your certificate is:

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

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 recognized in Germany, as well. This also applies if you received the so-called “Abitur” from one of more than 140 German Schools abroad.

Source: [https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/plan-your-studies/requirements/university-entrance-qualification\\_27788.php](https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/plan-your-studies/requirements/university-entrance-qualification_27788.php)



## Who is the right contact person for your application process?



**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](mailto: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: [int-zugang@rwth-aachen.de](mailto:int-zugang@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](mailto:welcome@rwth-aachen.de), +492418090679
- **Registrar’s Office:** If you have a German citizenship or you are married to a person with a German citizenship, the registrar’s office is in charge of your application process.  
Contact: [StudSek@zhv.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:StudSek@zhv.rwth-aachen.de), +492418094214

- **Immigration Office:** Questions about entry visa and residence permit are answered by the Immigration Office or “Ausländeramt”. Contact: [info.auslaendische.studenten@staedteregion-aachen.de](mailto:info.auslaendische.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 so that you can find your contact person quickly. You will find the list [here](#).



## German student visa

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.

[Here](#) you will find a FAQ website with the most important questions regarding visa requirements (available in German language only).

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. Citizens of Australia, Israel, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea, United States of America, Andorra, Brasil, El Salvador, Honduras, Monaco and San Marino can pick up their visa after their arrival in Germany (so called visa-free travel to Germany for study purposes). For this you will have to register in the local Immigration Office (“Ausländeramt”) directly after your arrival.

What is the difference between a Student Visa and a Residence Permit?

The student visa has to be applied for in your home country (embassy). When you arrive to Germany, it will be changed into residence permit, in your case for student purposes – the responsible office for this the Immigration Office (“Ausländeramt”).

How to get a German Student Visa or / and Residence Permit:

Student Visa	Residence Permit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed application form</li> <li>• Valid passport</li> <li>• Two photographs</li> <li>• Letter showing you have been accepted by a German university</li> <li>• Transcript of academic record</li> <li>• Certificate of German language proficiency or proof that you intend on attending a language course in Germany (if studying in German)</li> <li>• Proof that you have sufficient funds to support yourself while living in Germany (€8,700 per year, which is roughly ~US\$10,250)</li> <li>• Certificate showing you’ve purchased health insurance</li> <li>• Declaration of authenticity of documents submitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of valid private or public health insurance</li> <li>• Certificate of enrolment from your university</li> <li>• Proof of sufficient finances</li> <li>• Valid passport</li> <li>• Current visa, if you have one</li> <li>• Certificate of health (if applicable)</li> <li>• Your tenancy agreement (if applicable)</li> <li>• Biometric passport photos (if applicable)</li> <li>• Residence permit fee (check the current rate beforehand to make sure you bring enough money)</li> <li>• Perhaps also: Proof of Language Proficiency</li> </ul> <p>This residence permit is normally valid for two years (not always), 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.</p>

Source: <https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/studying-abroad/how-get-german-student-visa>  
[https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/schengen\\_visa\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/schengen_visa_en)



## 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](mailto:housing@rwth-aachen.de)

### BeBuddy Program

"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. Thus the International Office is intent on matching up each international student with an experienced RWTH student – if possible from the same faculty – who is to provide support and general information.

**Contact:** [dominika.dudzik@zhv.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:dominika.dudzik@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.
- 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 10.236,00 euros. This applies for all visa applications submitted from 1 September 2019. This means that you can withdraw an amount of 853 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
- 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.



## 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. 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 22.

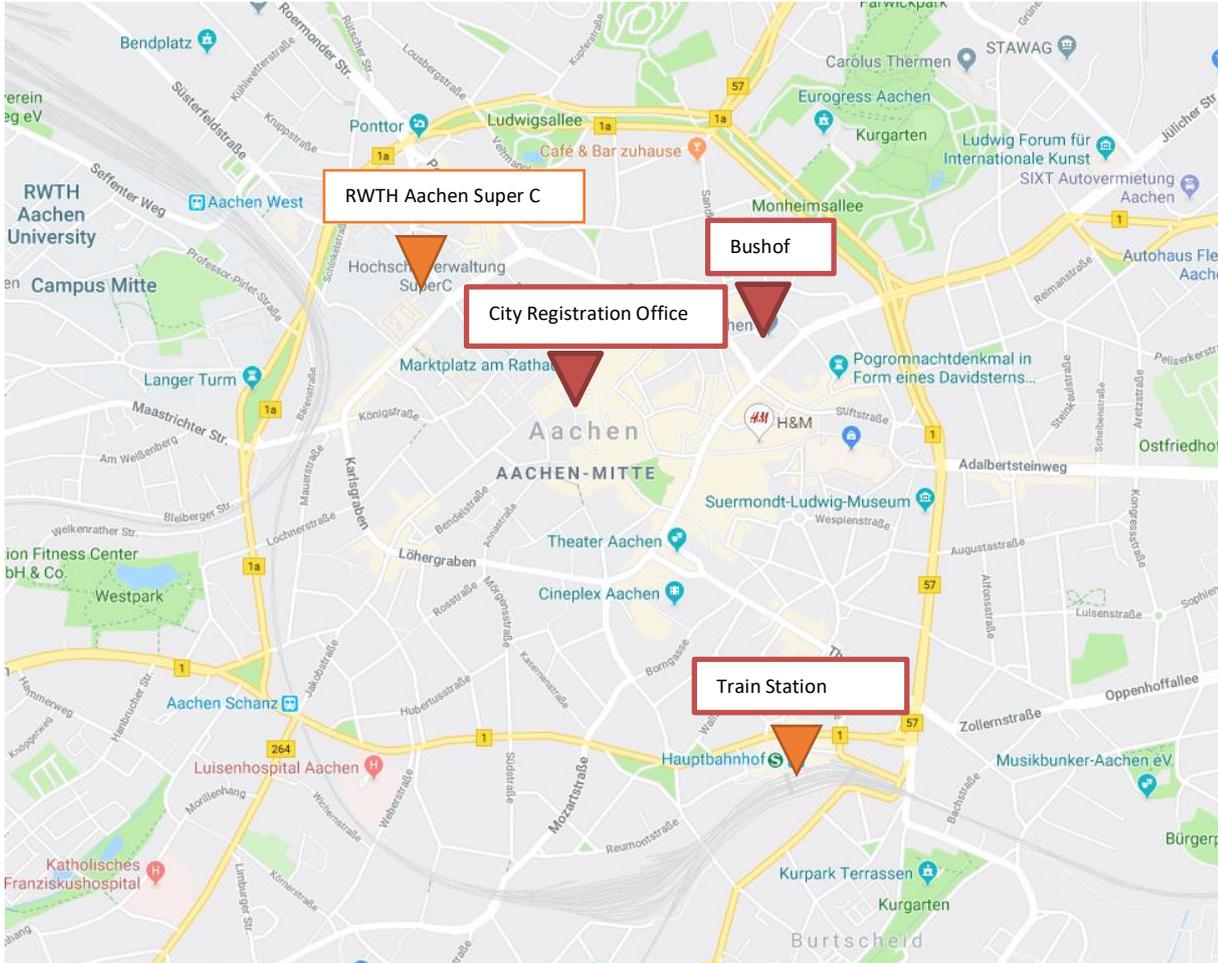
## Taking a long-distance bus from the airport

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 to Aachen



### 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 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)
- Öchen 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.

The company Uber and its app are not available in most places in Germany, including Aachen.



## Health Insurance, register 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.

The documents, which you need, are:

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

**Contact:** [buergeramt@mail.aachen.de](mailto:buergeramt@mail.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 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 Week

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 Online Welcome Weeks!

## Online 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 Online Welcome Weeks.

Stay tuned the entire time by liking our [Facebook Page](#) and 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 unable to attend the Welcome Weeks events, please take a look at our [Latecomer subpage](#). All recorded online sessions and presentations will be posted on this page.

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.

## 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 [int-zugang@rwth-aachen.de](mailto:int-zugang@rwth-aachen.de).

In both cases, we highly recommend you plan your trip in order to be able to 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!). It usually takes place the last week of September.



## Open a bank account, manage your finances

Depending of your citizenship (if you are European or not), you might have to open 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 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.



## Healthcare

In Germany it is necessary to have a health insurance. (See page 11).

### 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 find a list of English speaking doctors [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>



## Broadcast contribution (Rundfunkbeitrag): GEZ

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 17,50 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, telephone (SIM card), postal services, media

### 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, 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 you. 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 that you use 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.

## 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](#), [Kármán Hochschulzeitung](#)



## Sorting trash in Germany – environment. Bulky waste

When sorting trash in Germany, there are 5 main waste categories that you will encounter often in your daily life. These are organic waste (green bin), paper waste (blue bin), yellow sack, residual waste (grey bin) and bottle bank.

In Germany there is a waste calendar in order to check when your waste is going to be collected. [Here](#) you can find the Waste Calendar (Abfallkalender) for Aachen.

### 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 bin / Paper waste

Blue bins can also be 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.

If you are not sure where a certain trash belongs, take a look at this [list](#) from Stadt Aachen. 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, canteens, 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** (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**



## Helpful advice for your daily life in Germany

### 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 [Kleiderkreisel](#) 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](#), [Kleinanzeigen Aachen](#), 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. In the following, you can find more information and tips about safety: [Safety Information Sheet](#). More Information about what to do in the event of loss or theft of important documents can be found in the following page: [Theft/Loss of Important Documents Information Sheet](#).

Public toilets in Aachen: There is no big amount of public toilets in Aachen, if you need to go to the toilet while being outside you would have to look for places like big 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!

### 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. This is not to make you feel silly, but to help you. 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 many diverse eating habits. When you go to a restaurant or a café, you can order anything at any time without hesitating – unless it is late in the evening. Most kitchens in restaurants close around 10 pm.



## Spare time activities

### Where to meet new people?

Aachen offers a lot of opportunities to meet new people.

- You should first visit the [Humboldt Haus of RWTH Aachen](#). The Humboldt Haus is the international community center of RWTH Aachen – a meeting place for international and local members of the University and a site for intercultural events. Contact: Tamara Weber (Humboldt Haus Coordinator): [tamara.weber@zhv.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:tamara.weber@zhv.rwth-aachen.de)
- 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

### 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 Hangeweier, 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, [Volkshochschule 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 level 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 in/around Aachen and abroad

### 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 [ASEAG 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 a taxi, 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. Alternatiely 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 "Fahrgemeinschaft". You can organize or find one in various social media groups for example or multiple dedicated websites/apps like [fahrgemeinschaft.de](http://fahrgemeinschaft.de), [blablacar.de](http://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 that the e-roller companies do not cover any damages caused by you (also to other parties).



## Safety in general, road safety. Asking for help.

### Mobility connects! App

Mobility connects! is a useful app you should consider downloading. 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.

Source: <https://www.germanroadsafety.de/en/index.html>



## University life and grading system in Germany

### University Culture

In Germany, you can usually obtain a Bachelor Degree at these 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 oriented 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 theoretical 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:

Grade	Text	Explanation
1	Sehr gut (excellent)	an outstanding achievement
2	Gut (good)	an achievement that exceeds the average requirements considerably
3	Befriedigend (satisfactory)	an achievement that fulfils average requirements
4	Ausreichend (sufficient)	an achievement that fulfils the requirements despite flaws
5	Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)	an achievement that does not fulfil requirements due to major flaws

The examination regulations can specify whether the grades can be increased or decrease by 0.3 to indicate varying performance.

Grade	Text	Declaration
1.0	sehr gut (very good)	pass
1.3	Sehr gut (excellent) –	pass
1.7	Gut (good) +	pass
2.0	gut (good)	pass
2.3	Gut (good) –	pass
2.7	Befriedigend (satisfactory) +	pass
3.0	Befriedigend (satisfactory)	pass
3.3	Befriedigend (satisfactory) –	pass
3.7	Ausreichend (sufficient) +	pass
4.0	Ausreichend (sufficient)	pass
4.3	Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)	Nicht bestanden (fail)
4.7	Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)	Nicht bestanden (fail)
5	Nicht ausreichend (unsatisfactory)	Nicht bestanden (fail)

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. Here you can register for your courses and exams 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:

- [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 \(de\)](#)

## 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](#).

## Departmental 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.

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, as well as events concerning first semester students.

## Departmental Advisors at the faculties

Departmental advising at the faculties provides you with specific 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. The departmental advisors are sorted on the website so that you can find your contact person quickly. You will find the list [here](#).

## 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 general questions about studies at RWTH Aachen: orientation, demands, schedule, preparation, subject changes, psychosocial questions, [info events or workshops](#).

## 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](#)

You can send an [email](#) to the team to arrange an appointment with them.

For all other enquiries, you can call us. Please let us know if you have a specific request for counseling, such as preferred gender of the advisor or counseling in a foreign language. The psychological Counseling team can offer English, Polish, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

## 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.



## Job offers (at RWTH and outside), career center, how to write an application, workshops

### 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.



## Fun facts about RWTH, Aachen and 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](#).
- [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

### 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



## 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](mailto:Psych.Beratung@rwth-aachen.de)

## Central Student Advice Center

Templergraben 83 (Corner of Pontstraße)  
Contact: [studienberatung@rwth-aachen.de](mailto:studienberatung@rwth-aachen.de)

## Equal Opportunities Office at RWTH

Contact: [gbs@rwth-aachen.de](mailto:gbs@rwth-aachen.de), +49 241 80 93576

## AStA

Contact: [asta@asta.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:asta@asta.rwth-aachen.de), +49 8093792

## RWTH Aachen University Hospital – Uniklinik

Pauwelsstr. 30, 52074 Aachen  
Contact: +241 800

## 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.
<a href="#">Medical emergency</a>	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.