



Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin
University of Applied Sciences



Master of Arts

Intercultural Conflict Management

(MA-ICM)

Starter's Guide

Attachment for Application Process
"Letter Of Acceptance & Starter's Guide"

ash-berlin.eu/icm

Dear student,

We are looking forward to having you here as Master student at Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences (ASH) and hope you will enjoy your stay!

Adapting to life in a foreign country, in a different culture and in a different university system is not always easy – and settling down will take time. The following pages intended to help facilitate your transition to Germany. You can contact the MA-ICM team by sending an email to icm@ash-berlin.eu. We are usually available Monday till Friday between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. CET at the Program Management Office, so please don't hesitate to contact us to ask your questions about issues like visa applications, student housing, etc. Please read the **bold** marked chapters carefully as they contain the most essential facts.

This info handbook is for “starters“, thus it cannot contain all of the information that may be of importance to you but only the most important – have fun reading it!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Martin Vollenbroek
Program Manager MA-ICM

1. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO STUDY IN GERMANY	3
1.1. Student Visa	3
1.2. Important papers and documents	3
2. ARRIVAL IN BERLIN	5
2.1. Getting there	5
2.2. The first few days in Germany: Introduction	5
2.3. Cash	5
2.4. Currency	6
2.5. Overnight stay	6
2.6. Necessary formalities: Introduction	6
2.6.1. Bank affairs	7
2.6.2. Health Insurance	7
2.6.3. Liability Insurance	8
3. ACCOMODATION	8
3.1. Student Residence Halls of the Association for Student Affairs	8
3.2. Ways of finding accommodation by yourself	9
3.3. Criteria for choosing accommodation	10
3.3.1. Deposits	10
3.3.2. Lease	10
3.3.3. Moving in and out	11
4. EVERYDAY STUDENT LIFE IN BERLIN	12
4.1. Weather & Climate	12
4.2. Religion	12
4.3. Living Costs	12
4.4. University Computer Lab, Internet Access	12
4.5. Child care at the ASH	12
4.6. Public transport	13
4.6.1. Local transport in Berlin	13
4.6.2. Semester Ticket	13
4.6.3. German Rail	13
4.7. Libraries	14
4.8. Language Training	15
4.9. Work Permit	15
4.10. Doctors	16
4.11. Mail and Post Services	16
4.12. Telephone	17
4.13. Fun & Pleasure: Introduction	17
4.13.1. Public holidays	17
4.13.2. Culture and leisure	18
4.14. Security	19
4.15. Shopping in Berlin	19
4.15.1. Groceries	19
4.15.2. Opening and closing hours	19
4.16. Recycling	19
5. Emergency Numbers	20
6. FURTHER information	21
6.1. On the web	21
6.2. Books about Berlin	21

1. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO STUDY IN GERMANY

1.1. Student Visa

Contact a German embassy or consulate in your home country regarding any current entry and residence requirements as soon as possible!

As a rule of thumb it takes several weeks for a visa to be issued, and therefore should be applied for in a **timely** manner. Prospective international students require a **student visa for the Federal Republic of Germany**.

Exceptions are citizens from EU countries, the EEC countries Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, from Switzerland, the USA, Canada, Japan, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand. They **do not** require a visa to enter Germany, but non-EU citizens must apply for a student residence permit at the Foreigner Registration Office after arriving in Berlin.

The visa must allow you to study in the Federal Republic of Germany. Other visas (e.g., a tourist visa) **cannot** be used to obtain a student residence permit in Germany. As a result the applicant would be unable to enroll and would be required to return to his or her home country.

You will receive all necessary documents required from our University to apply for the student visa at your local German embassy once the administration fee (or total tuition) has been transferred to the designated ASH bank account. Furthermore, MA-ICM Management supports you by getting in contact with the embassy or consulate concerned in your home country.

Please take care of any important formalities before traveling. Also, arrive early enough (at least 1-2 weeks before the beginning of the semester) in order to allow yourself enough time to look for a place to live and to prepare for your studies.

1.2. Important papers and documents

You need the following documents before entering Germany:

- A passport or equivalent identity document valid for the whole duration of your stay in Germany;
- A visa for you and family members accompanying you. You should apply for visas as soon as possible;
- Several biometric photographs for the various documents you will require during your stay;
- Birth certificate(s), marriage certificate, if applicable, with German translation if possible;
- Originals of your BA (or other academic degrees) certificates/ records which are needed for your enrolment;

- if applicable, confirmation from your health insurance that you are also covered in Germany. Please remember that, in order to get a residence permit, you have to have valid health insurance cover for yourself and your family from the first day you arrive in Germany. If your health insurance at home is not valid abroad you will have to obtain a health insurance policy for the first days in Germany; MA-ICM Program Management will assist you to find the right health insurance policy right after your arrival in Berlin;
- if applicable, a statement detailing particular or previous diseases (possibly recent X-ray photographs) and medication currently needed;
- your vaccination certificate, if possible, an international one.

To avoid difficulties communicating with German physicians and problems involving health insurance, you should undergo any necessary prophylactic check-ups and have special medication prescribed in your home country prior to your departure.

If you intend to drive a car during your stay in Germany, you should bring the following documents with you:

- An international driving license or foreign national driving license;
- An international "green" insurance card confirming third-party insurance coverage in Germany (if you plan to bring your car to Germany);
- A no-claims certificate from your automobile insurance company. (This will qualify you for a rebate if you intend to take out third-party car insurance in Germany.)

2. ARRIVAL IN BERLIN

2.1. Getting there

Berlin has one airport, Schönefeld (BER). Berlin's airport can be reached by train or bus, which will save you taxi fares. Schönefeld airport is served by the Airport Express train via Alexanderplatz, or the slower S9 from Alexanderplatz.

The German train system is known as reliable and connects Berlin with the rest of Germany and other European countries. Almost all trains go through the Hauptbahnhof (main train station) in the northern center of the city, which is well connected to other public transport hubs and only a few walking minutes away from where the German government is situated. Some trains go through the Ostbahnhof in the eastern center.

Berlin is well-connected to the rest of Europe by long-distance bus. Most buses arrive at and depart from Zentraler Omnibusbahnhof Berlin (ZOB) meaning main bus and coach station at Funkturm in Charlottenburg district.

2.2. The first few days in Germany: Introduction

In any foreign country, the language and usually also the environment, the mentality, and perhaps also the climate are different from what you are used to.

The weather in Germany changes often. You have to expect cold and rain even in summer. It is advisable to bring warm clothing with you.

As a welcoming gesture MA-ICM Program Assistants will hand out a Welcome Package with necessary information about Berlin. Moreover, we recommend you to bring a German dictionary and perhaps a phrasebook in your own language. It is probably also a good idea to include a travel or cultural guide (e.g., “Lonely Planet Traveller’s Guide Berlin“, “Marco Polo Travel Guide Berlin” etc.) as they often contain a lot of practical advice on the weather, everyday life, regulations, and other topics of interest for your stay.

2.3. Cash

You will need money the moment you arrive. You can bring any amount of German or foreign currency into Germany - but remember to check on your own country's foreign exchange regulations. Currency exchange offices are open at airports and main railway stations in the evenings and on weekends. Once you are here, you can change large-denomination Euro notes acquired in your home country into coinage or you can cash traveler’s checks. You need cash to make telephone calls, deposit luggage, pay taxis, or buy bus tickets. Be aware that **cash is still the most prominent way of paying** and that not all supermarkets and/or restaurants will accept credit cards. Banks are open from Monday to Friday from approx. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Afternoon opening

hours differ but, in most cases, banks remain open shorter on Fridays until approx. 3 p.m. You can also change money at many larger post offices.

2.4. Currency

The Euro is the only valid currency in Germany; a EUR is made up of 100 Cents. The banknotes in circulation are in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 EUR, the coins comprise 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 Cents as well as 1, and 2 EUR.

2.5. Overnight stay

If you need a hotel room for the first night(s). We can recommend the “Sunflower Hostel” – <https://www.sunflower-hostel.de/de/start.html> which is located at Helsingforser Str. 17 in Friedrichshain next to the S-station Warschauer Straße. Beds start from 13.00 Euro (dorm), a single room starts at 35.00 Euro. From there you can easily reach the ASH (by subway S5 and U5) or the Student Resident Hall Victor Jara at Oberfeldstrasse.

Other hostels we can recommend are the Circus Hostel in Berlin-Mitte - <https://circus-berlin.de/hostel/> and the Christopher’s Inn located at Alexander Platz - <http://st-christophers-inn-berlin.hotel-in-berlin.org/de/#main>

You can also look for yourself at www.hrs.de, www.booking.com, <https://www.hostelworld.com/>, www.trivago.com and other websites.

Here you can find economical apartments for a few nights: <https://www.airbnb.com/>

2.6. Necessary formalities: Introduction

In the first few days, plenty of unavoidable formalities will command your attention. You will make the acquaintance of public servants, long questionnaires, the various opening times of public offices etc., and you might ask yourself - actually many Germans do as well - why things are so complicated and must be done so thoroughly.

To assist you with all this MA-ICM Management will conduct introduction days prior to the official start of the classes. As you are **obliged** to register with public authorities during the first week after your arrival, we **strongly recommend to attend** these days and take part in our ‘registration-package’ we will provide support and information on the following administrative steps during the intro weeks:

- Registration at the Residents' Registration Office;
- Reporting to the Immigration Registration Office to obtain a residence permit;
- Opening a current bank account;

- Obtaining health insurance at one of the German health insurance companies (AOK, TK);
- Obtaining liability insurance (if required);
- Matriculation at ASH;

Please note: **these are necessary formalities. Without fulfilling them you are not able to take up your studies at the MA-ICM Program.** If you cannot take part in the introduction week you will have to register by yourself at the authorities referred to as soon as possible.

2.6.1. Bank affairs

With a current account you can

- Withdraw money from your bank using an EC/ Maestro-card. Some days after opening an account, you will receive an EC/ Maestro-card enabling you to withdraw money at ATMs, too, using a personal identification number;
- Transfer money to other bank accounts for payment of bills, using transfer forms;
- Have payments which recur regularly and are for a fixed amount (e.g. your rent) paid by banker's order ("Dauerauftrag");
- Have regular payments (even of variable amounts, e.g., telephone bills and health insurance contributions) effected by direct debit ("Einzugsermächtigung"). The respective direct debit forms ("Lastschrifteneinzug") are often attached to the first bill.

2.6.2. Health Insurance

A medical insurance for the entire duration of your stay is required for matriculation at a German university! MA-ICM Program will send you detailed information about health insurance and how to obtain it after the payment of your first installment.

a) International students who have proof of insurance from a country with social security agreements with Germany (EU countries, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Turkey, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Tunisia etc.), and who are therefore in possession of a valid certificate from their foreign insurance company, may register at a German health insurance company of their choice, in order to have their existing insurance recognized.

b) International students who have private medical insurance in their home country may obtain compulsory insurance at the health insurance company of their choice or apply for a proof of exemption.

c) International students who do not have private medical insurance in their home country, which has no social security agreement with Germany, must obtain insurance at one of the German health insurance companies.

Currently the monthly fee adds up to around 110.00 EUR for students. These fees which apply to all German governmental health insurance companies are less expensive than private health insurance.

The MA-ICM is cooperating with the largest German health insurance company – AOK / TK – in order to offer best service for you. In the introduction week you will have the possibility to obtain a health insurance with the AOK /TK at the above mentioned price (for students below the age of 30). For students older than 30 we invite Klemmer (<https://www.klemmer-versicherungsmakler.de/de/>), the private health insurance firm.

2.6.3. Liability Insurance

In Germany everyone is liable for any damage done to a third party. It is, therefore, more than advisable to take out a (family) third-party insurance for the entire duration of the stay (parents are liable for their children); this protects you against claims resulting from damage caused unintentionally. Standard third-party insurance policies are not very expensive (around 10 EUR per month) and the conditions are usually similar. You will have the possibility to obtain liability insurance in the introduction week. MA-ICM Management will assist you.

3. ACCOMODATION

In Germany, campus universities are very uncommon, and the ASH is no exception to this. Thus, unfortunately we cannot offer you any accommodation via the University. As an enrolled student you can however apply for a place in various student residence halls all over Berlin or you can look for a private accommodation (see point 3.2).

3.1. Student Residence Halls of the Student Union

The student residence halls (dorms) are controlled by the Studentenwerk (Student Union). Only registered students can apply for a place in a student residence hall. If you get in touch with the Student Union early, your chances for a placement increase. Please note that you need to be enrolled in order to be able to sign up for accommodation.



We have made very good experiences with the house 'Victor Jara' near our University at Oberfeldstraße 131, which was renovated recently. It is located in a quiet green area and is pretty affordable in comparison to other properties in Berlin.

Have a look at <http://www.studentenwerk-berlin.de>, click on 'International Students' and check out the housing section. There is a variety of housing possibilities in student

residences. However, the waiting lists for the more central ones can be pretty long.

3.2. Ways of finding accommodation by yourself

We strongly recommend you to start looking for accommodation as soon as possible and definitely before the beginning of your stay in Germany. If applicable, we also recommend sending your family to Berlin after finding a suitable apartment. If alone, you can easily live for a short time in a hostel or perhaps with friends or acquaintances.

Supply and demand, particularly in cities with a large population of students, varies considerably in the course of the year. At the beginning of a semester, i.e. in March/ April or September/ October, there is always a big demand for accommodation.

Costs for housing in Berlin may range from Euro 300 (shared apartment) to Euro 800 for a single flat. This – of course – depends, in particular, on the type of accommodation required by MA-ICM students: furnished or at least partly-furnished apartments rented at short notice and for relatively short periods.

How do you find accommodation?

- It may be useful to establish contact with other colleagues in the host town who may be able to help you find accommodation. After your arrival in Germany, MA-ICM Management will give you a list of the names and addresses of fellow students in Berlin.
- Easiest and best are internet databases:
 - www.wg-gesucht.de/en/ - easy to use
 - www.wg-company.de – non-commercial database
 - www.studenten-wg.de – easy to use
 - www.wg-welt.de – only in German

- There are notice boards ("Schwarze Bretter") in universities, usually to be found in cafeterias and other busy locations. They are accessible to all students and employees and cover a wide variety of needs. However, most advertisements are for single rooms in shared accommodation.
- Estate agencies are the most expensive method as agents' fees can be as high as two months' rent – hardly a worthwhile investment for a short stay. Only use agents affiliated to a professional association ("Ring Deutscher Makler", RDM).

3.3. Criteria for choosing accommodation

MA-ICM students coming to Germany alone may be able to live in a "Wohngemeinschaft" or "WG" (an apartment or house shared with other people) or take lodgings ("Untermiete"), i.e., one or two furnished rooms. This means sharing kitchen and bathroom. This may be an attractive solution, but is certainly not to everyone's liking. For offers (and your own advertisements) it is best to use notice boards ("Schwarze Bretter"), free newspapers for "WGs", or advertisement sections of newspapers ("Untermiete" and "WGs").

"House-swapping" is not a common method of finding accommodation in Germany. When leaving on foreign assignments, however, academic research assistants and university lecturers in particular often vacate their accommodation and offer it furnished for limited periods. You would have to be really lucky to get one but it doesn't cost anything to ask at the Foreign Students' Advisory Office.

If you have difficulty communicating during your search and do not know anyone on the spot - not all landlords or agents speak English - ask a colleague at MA-ICM Program Office to help you deciphering or possibly formulating advertisements, interpreting, going through the tenancy agreement with you, and possibly accompanying you to view or take or hand over accommodation to be sure you avoid misunderstandings.

Housing in Germany is either let unfurnished, partly furnished, or fully furnished. Unfurnished accommodation really is "unfurnished", i.e., without lamps, curtains, or any kitchen equipment. A furnished kitchen, for example, is usually mentioned separately in advertisements. We would recommend partly or fully furnished apartments, although they unfortunately are rare. Missing furniture can be bought easily second-hand.

3.3.1. Deposits

Landlords will often ask for a deposit equivalent to between one and three months' rent (basic rent) plus 19% VAT. This is to cover any damage the tenant may cause to property. The deposit will be repaid, together with interest, after deduction of any amount needed for repair or renovation on termination of the lease. Specific provisions on this should be contained in the lease (cf. below). The deposit should not be paid to the landlord directly but into a joint savings book. In this way, you can prevent the landlord from keeping the money without your agreement and you will earn the interest. Your bank will give you detailed information.

3.3.2. Lease

An apartment is held to be rented by you as soon as both you and the landlord have signed the lease agreement. Your signature legally binds you to the terms of lease. Before signing, it is therefore

essential to read the document through very carefully, even though it is usually rather long and difficult to read. In particular, the lease covers the amount of rent and utility costs payable, the period of notice to be given for terminating the lease, payment for any necessary repairs, responsibility for redecoration costs when moving out, the length of the lease and the terms for rent increase.

Furthermore, the lease may contain additional agreements (e.g., use of the garden, car parking facilities etc.). Check with the landlord before moving in whether you are allowed to keep pets.

The lease also contains general rules for residents which, among other things, stipulate that before 7 a.m. and after 10 p.m. all unnecessary noise must be avoided.

If you do not understand parts of the lease or if you feel that unusual conditions are being imposed, please ask your German colleagues for assistance and advice.

Normally, the period of notice is three months. Any different conditions must be stipulated in the lease or separately in writing.

3.3.3. Moving in and out

Before you move into rented accommodation, you should make an appointment with the landlord to go over the apartment with him or her and inspect it for any defects (scratches, stains, wear and tear, damage etc.). All this should be put down in writing, even if damage appears very slight. Otherwise you may find you will be charged for the repairs or your deposit will not be repaid to you in full when you move out, assuming that the damage was caused by you. The list of defects and damage must be signed by the landlord and kept by you.

When you move out the same kind of appointment should be made with the landlord or manager of the property to check on defects and damage once again. The tenancy agreement stipulates whether, and to what extent, redecoration work (so-called "Schönheitsarbeiten") has to be done by the tenant when he or she moves out. If the accommodation is in a noticeably worse condition than at the start of the tenancy the landlord may retain the deposit paid by the tenant in part or in full. Otherwise, you should prepare a written document of the transfer stating that the apartment has been transferred without defects or damage and that the deposit should be repaid in full.

On principle, it is advisable to have a German colleague or acquaintance with you during the transfer who knows the procedure and can check that there are no linguistic misunderstandings.

All electrical connections in Germany cater for 220-240-Volt/ 50-Hz a/c mains and European standard plugs. You may require adapters and transformers for electrical equipment you bring with you.

4. EVERYDAY STUDENT LIFE IN BERLIN

4.1. Weather & Climate

Berlin has a continental climate typical of North-Eastern Europe. The weather in summer (June - August) is relatively stable and warm. During periods of high-pressure it is not unusual to have weeks of uninterrupted sunshine with daily highs in the range of 25-30 degrees Celsius. The Berlin winter (December-February), on the other hand is notoriously grey, cold and windy. Daytime temperatures tend to hover just above or below freezing. Therefore it will be cold enough in winter to enjoy some snow and warm enough in summer to go swimming in one of the lakes in and around Berlin.

4.2. Religion

You won't have any problem finding a community and a place in Berlin where you can practice your religion - no matter which religion you belong to.

4.3. Living Costs

Living costs depend on your personal requirements and habits - the living standard in Germany is generally high, but Berlin is in comparison to other big cities in Germany and Europe still a quite affordable place to live. Altogether, you should count on spending 800 to 1000 Euros per month, including rent. Rent varies from 300 up to 800 Euro, depending whether you are sharing a flat and in which area of Berlin you want to stay. There might be an extra charge for gas and electricity which is about 40-50 Euro a month. You also have to pay about 110 EUR for the health insurance as well as approximately 10 EUR for liability insurance. About 250 EUR should be calculated for groceries, 100 to 150 EUR – depending on your lifestyle of course - for spending money for books, sports, going out etc. If you have a telephone you might easily spend 20 EUR just actually to be able to have access.

4.4. University Computer Lab, Internet Access

There are computer facilities in the ASH and a lab with free internet access. You will get your personal login and email account once you get here. ASH also provides a free WiFi system.

The computer rooms (“Computerzentrum”) at the ASH are open from 8:30 AM and are equipped with printers and scanners which are free of charge. You find the rooms on the 2nd floor.

4.5. Child care at the ASH

If you bring a child with you to the ASH, there is also the possibility to leave your child in the university's child care during class time (max. 4 hours). The service is for free and can be arranged, once you get here. For detailed information:

<https://www.ash-berlin.eu/studium/beratung-unterstuetzung/familie-an-der-hochschule/#c2132>

4.6. Public transport

Germany has a well-developed public transport network. Over greater distances, it is most common to travel on the German Railways ("Deutsche Bahn"). But there is also a bus service FlixBus that offer transport from Berlin to several cities in Germany and neighboring countries. In towns and cities, suburban trains, buses, trams, the underground, and taxis are the usual means of transportation.

4.6.1. Local transport in Berlin

Berlin has an excellent network of public transport that reaches every corner of the city and the surrounding areas. U-Bahn (underground) and S-Bahn (suburban and interurban trains) are the best ways of getting around; there are also regional trains, buses, comfortable new trams in the east of the city and ferries. One type of ticket is valid on all forms of transport. The system is efficient but, given continued construction around the city, delays and schedule changes may occur. You might want to download a public transport app to your smartphone (or use its website www.bvg.de) in order to search for transport connections quickly and get informed about schedule changes.

Berlin is very cycle friendly, and it is a good way to get to know the city - there are specially marked bike lanes everywhere. There are also plenty of bike rental shops. Walking is another good way to get around - the historic center of Berlin is surprisingly compact and is best explored on foot.

4.6.2. Semester Ticket

When you are registered student at the ASH University you can get the Semester Ticket for public transport Berlin for a fee of 193,80 EUR. This ticket is valid for the whole semester (6 months) in the fare zones Berlin ABC (all Berlin and some parts of Brandenburg) and entitles to as many trips as you like on all transportation (Bus, Tram, U- and S-Bahn). It also entitles to free of charge transport of children under the age of 6, luggage/ baggage, a dog, a pram and a bicycle.

4.6.3. German Rail

You can reach all main cities and almost all medium-sized towns by train. On long-distance travel, the Intercity Express (ICE) is the fastest and most comfortable. Intercity (IC) and Eurocity (EC) trains link about 100 towns and cities in Germany, most of them running every hour. All trains have first and second-class facilities, and smoking is prohibited in trains. Locally, there is the Regional Express (RE) and some privately operated trains. The railway schedules are to find on the website: www.bahn.de.

There are numerous possibilities for traveling by train at reduced fares. There are railcards („BahnCard“) for about EUR 55,70 (25% discount) and EUR 229 (50% discount). The „Sparpreise“ (general discount without railcard) can be obtained up till three days before the day you wish to travel, tickets are subject to availability, and only a certain quota of the total seats is reserved for „Sparpreise“.

Should you get on a train without a ticket, please contact the ticket collector immediately; otherwise you could be taken for a "fare dodger". If you purchase a ticket on the train you may not be able to use discount prices. On top of this, the surcharges for fast trains (IR, IC/ EC, ICE etc.) are usually more expensive than at ticket offices.

4.7. Libraries

Berlin offers a variety of different libraries, since it is the capital of Germany. You will get a detailed manual for the library usage in the welcome package and there will be a day trip arranged and conducted by the Program Assistants in order to introduce the most important libraries to you in the introduction week. There is a library at ASH which you can use of course. Each university (FU and HU) has their library which you can use as well.

Other main libraries of Berlin are:

Jakob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum (main library of Humboldt University)

Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 1-3, 10177 Berlin

<https://www.ub.hu-berlin.de/de/standorte/jacob-und-wilhelm-grimm-zentrum>

Opening hours:

Mo - Fri 8 a.m. - 12 a.m.

Sat/ Sun: 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Staatsbibliothek (called the „StaBi“) House 1

Unter den Linden 8, 10117 Berlin

266-0 (main office)

<http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>

Opening hours:

Mo - Fri 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Sa. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Staatsbibliothek (called the „StaBi“) House 2

Potsdamer Str. 33, 10785 Berlin

(U/S Potsdamer Platz)

266-0 (main office)

<http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>

Opening hours:

Mo - Fri 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Sa. 10 a.m - 7 p.m.

Amerika Gedenk Bibliothek („AGB“)

Blücherplatz 1

10961 Berlin

(U-Hallesches Tor)

90226-105 (information)

www.zlb.de

Opening hours:

Mo - Fri 10 p.m. - 20 p.m.

Sa 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Ibero- Amerikanisches Institut

Potsdamer Straße 37

10785 Berlin

(S- Bahn Potsdamer Platz)

<http://www.iai.spk-berlin.de/startseite.html>

Opening Hours:

Mo-Fri 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Sa. 9 a.m. – 13 p.m.

4.8. Language Training

Even if communication in English is no problem at German universities, the stay in Germany is not all work but also everyday life and leisure.

We will offer a cost-free German language course throughout the semester and recommend you to take part in it in case you have no or only a basic knowledge of the German language. If you are interested, please let us know via e-mail.

We will also provide you with information about language schools in our welcome package and we will assist you by finding and booking courses. There are also language courses in English, Spanish, and Turkish every semester at ASH, but the supply varies.

4.9. Work Permit

As a rule international students have the opportunity to work 90 days or 180 half days (á 4 hours) a year without a work permit. Students from EU countries and the EEC countries Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland are excluded from these rules. They do not need a work permit; however they do require a valid residence permit.

Please consider that the MA-ICM is a full-time study program and that it might be difficult to work beside your studies. Also be aware that it might be difficult to get jobs when you don't have good command of German language.

Almost all student jobs require an income tax card (Lohnsteuerkarte). These may be obtained from the Income Tax Card office (Lohnsteuerkartenstelle) or at the Citizen Consultation (Bürgeramt) of the District Office where you live (or look in the yellow pages under „Bezirksämter“).

There are different agencies in Berlin who negotiate jobs between students and employers. The majority of these jobs are temporary jobs in store rooms, as drivers, construction help and other related jobs, also catering and administrative jobs are offered. Sometimes jobs are offered for skilled workers like computer sciences majors or those who have been trained as craftsmen. The average salary for these temporary jobs is between 8.5-15 EUR an hour.

With all job agencies, you have to register first.

Here are the addresses of student agencies in Berlin:

Stellenwerk Berlin

Tel.: 0 800 21005 62

E-mail: info@stellenwerk.de

Website: <https://www.stellenwerk-berlin.de/jobboerse>

Student Job

Tel.: 0221 65088462

E-mail: info@studentjob.de

Website: <https://www.studentjob.de/>

Stellenticket: Humboldt Universität

Website: <https://hu-berlin.stellenticket.de/de/offers/>

4.10. Doctors

If you have to consult a doctor during your stay in Germany you can ask us for a recommendation. If you need to see a doctor, it is often advisable to go to a general practitioner first so that after a general examination, you can be referred to a specialist.

Doctors prefer you to phone and make an appointment. In urgent cases or emergencies the doctor will see you immediately or make an appointment for the same day. Otherwise you may have to wait several days or even weeks, especially if you want to consult a dentist or specialist. Even if you do have an appointment, you will find you probably have to spend quite some time in the doctor's waiting room. In order to make an emergency appointment it is recommended to go to the doctor personally, early in the morning. To find the right specialist, his/her visiting hours and all the details check out the biggest address database: <http://www.gelbseiten.de/>.

If you urgently need medication, the pharmacy emergency service "Apotheken-Notdienst" gives the addresses of the pharmacies open outside normal hours. Or you simply go to the nearest pharmacy ("Apotheke") where you will find a notice at the door or in the window indicating pharmacies on call. Extra fees are charged for night and weekend service.

4.11. Mail and Post Services

Letters to destinations within Germany generally reach recipients within one to two workdays. Airmail is advisable for overseas. Letters sent as registered mail are only handed over to recipients against a signature. You can obtain information on current rates at the counters or from a small brochure obtainable at any post office.

4.12. Telephone

In Germany the telephone network is currently operated by "Deutsche Telekom". You can dial connections within Germany from any call box, post office, or private line. Almost all foreign countries can be direct-dialed.

Mobile phones are usually referred to as "Handys" in Germany. There are huge differences in prices and services with regard to the mobile network, purchase price, pre-paid or monthly charges, and, possibly, minimum charges, free-call, special tariffs etc. Go into shops and get advice on your own personal "telephone-profile".

Private subscribers can use telephone companies offering less expensive services than Telekom via certain dialing codes (Call by Call). You can obtain up-to-date information on this on the Internet under www.teltarif.de.

If you do not have a telephone directory, you will have to call Directory Enquiries to find out about telephone numbers in Germany (118-33, 118-37, English-language service) and abroad (118-34). You will find most of the persons listed in the telephone book on the Internet under www.teleauskunft.de, where you can also obtain a list of all registered E-mail addresses.

4.13. Fun & Pleasure: Introduction

There is always something to do in the Berlin area, whether one wants to spend a refreshing morning in one of Berlin's parks, a stimulating afternoon in one of Berlin's many museums, or an exciting evening in one of the city's night clubs. Berlin is the centre of Germany's culture and arts scene - it has plenty of theatre houses, operas, musicals, drama and dance performances, cinemas can be found all over Berlin, including more artistic and independent film houses, and an array of night clubs and bars offer great evening entertainment. One can escape the city feeling in one of Berlin's beautiful parks, such as Tiergarten, Treptower Park, or the immense Grunewald with the Wannsee.

Berlin's calendar is loaded with annual fairs, festivals, concerts and parties. The Berlin Film Festival, the second largest in the world, is held in February. The "multikulti" Carnival of Cultures takes place in early June, Christopher Street Day is the city's big gay and lesbian parade, which hits the streets in July. Jazz Fest Berlin doo-bops in November and Christmas Markets are held throughout the city in December.

4.13.1. Public holidays

The following public holidays are observed throughout the whole of the Federal Republic of Germany:

- New Year's Day - January 1
- Womensday 8 March
- Good Friday - Friday before Easter (end of March/beginning of April)

- Easter Sunday and Monday (end of March/beginning of April)
- Labor Day - May 1
- Ascension Day - Thursday ten days before Whitsun
- Whit Sunday and Monday in June
- Day of German Unity - October 3
- Christmas Eve - December 24 (from noon onward)
- Christmas Day - December 25
- Boxing Day - December 26
- New Year's Eve - December 31 (from noon onward)

4.13.2. Culture and leisure

You will soon find out about interesting leisure activities, but here is some general advice:

- In the Berlin magazines "Zitty" and "TIP" you can find everything about what is culturally going on in Berlin: cinema programs, concerts, exhibitions, stage plays, fairs, readings, performances, parties, dance clubs, festivities, flea markets and so on. Unfortunately they are in German.
- You can enroll for courses in almost all fields at adult education centers ("Volkshochschulen", VHS): e.g., you can take additional German language courses. Fees are relatively low. You can obtain a schedule either at these centers or at bookshops.
- Berlin also offers a variety of guided tours; trips to neighboring towns or nearby places of interest are organized by travel companies.
- You can read or borrow many daily newspapers and magazines and a wide variety of books at public lending libraries ("Stadtbibliotheken").
- News and information programs are broadcast on television and radio. Unfortunately, almost all foreign films shown on German television are "dubbed" in German. There is, though, a wide range of cinemas offering original films („OV“/“OmU“), watch out for the discount days: Cinemaxx, Cinestar and UFA: Tuesdays, most of the others: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday.

Typical for Germany are the many "Kneipen" (pubs) of different styles and atmospheres. Big pubs sometimes run exhibitions, theatrical and musical performances, and cabaret. Many activities are arranged there by the "non-established" cultural scene, well out of the way of the big art and cultural institutions. Insiders among your German friends will tell you the best addresses for this. In

summer, beer gardens and wine taverns, where you can sit outside long into the evening, are extremely popular.

Berlin and surrounding areas have plenty of facilities for hiking and walks. Exploring the environment by bicycle or on inline-skates has also become popular.

4.14. Security

Generally Berlin is a safe place, but as in other big cities you should obey some rules to avoid critical situations.

Prefer to form groups when you are going out at night and better avoid parks and dark streets. You should take care for your bag especially when you are in a crowded place. Don not hesitate to ask other people for assistance or call the police when you need help.

4.15. Shopping in Berlin

4.15.1. Groceries

You will soon find the shops you need for everyday purchases such as groceries, household articles, stationery, newspapers etc. in your neighborhood. Discount chains are cheaper - "Aldi", "Lidl", "Netto", "Penny", "Real"- while supermarkets like "Rewe" and "Edeka" are more expensive, but better equipped and sorted.

Turkish, Italian, Greek and Asian specialties have long been on offer in Germany. In many towns shops have gradually established themselves offering special groceries and ingredients from distant countries and cultures. Asia-markets from China, Korea, and Thailand are particularly common but Indian and African groceries, for example, can also be found. These shops are mostly located in Kreuzberg, Neukölln and Wedding.

4.15.2. Opening and closing hours

Businesses in Germany must strictly observe the regulations of the Shop Closing Hours Act. Shops close at 10 p.m. at the latest, some already at 6.30 p.m. (Mo-Sat). Some supermarkets in the inner city areas are opened until midnight. On Sunday everything is closed.

4.16. Recycling

Germany is famous for its waste recycling system.

Some beverages come in reusable cans or glass bottles sold with repayable deposits. These are marked accordingly. Non-returnable glass bottles should be disposed of in municipal bottle-banks. Wastepaper is collected in a bin (mostly blue) outside your home.

Packaging not consisting of paper, glass, or tin is collected almost everywhere in yellow bins. They are intended for the disposal of caps, cans, peelings, aluminum foil; foil, bottles, plastic beakers,

foam rubber cardboard drinks containers, and vacuum packs made of composite materials. These packaging materials are marked with the so-called "green dot" symbol.

In many areas, organic (bio-degradable) waste can be collected in a special bin (mostly the green "bio bin") placed outside your home and emptied regularly. What remains after sorting domestic refuse and cannot be recycled is "residual waste" for which your landlord provides a (usually black) bin.

5. EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police	110
Emergency Medical Care and Fire Department	112
General Doctors 24-hour Emergency Hotline („ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst“)	31 00 31
Dental emergency („Zahnärztlicher Notfalldienst“)	030/ 23 88 35 78
	030/ 390 63 00
If you are suffering from any kind of crisis, conflicts or personal difficulties call <i>Berlin Crisis Center</i> („Berlin Krisendienst“)	
If you are suffering from harassment and violence against you or others:	030/ 611 03 00
<i>BIG-Center for women against domestic violence, Berlin</i> („BIG-Berliner Initiative gegen Gewalt and Frauen“)	
Emergency number for drug abuse („Notdienst Berlin e. V.“)	030/ 233 240 100
If you have a lost / stolen mobile phone:	
T-mobile	01803/ 30 22 02
Vodafone	0172/ 12 12
E-Plus	0177/ 10 00
O2	080055 222 55
If you have a lost/ stolen Creditcard:	
Visa (International)	0800 811 8440
Mastercard (International)	0800 819 1040
American Express	069/ 97 97 10 00
EC-cards	116 116
Eurocard (International)	0800 819 1040
Diners Club	0049 75313633111

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

6.1. On the web

- More information about working and everyday life in Berlin:
<https://veranstaltungen.meinestadt.de/berlin> Official Berlin website:
<https://www.berlin.de/>
- International Club of FU: everyone can become a member!
https://www.fu-berlin.de/studium/international/internationaler_club/index.html
- Websites of the two city-magazines “Zitty” and “Tip”: www.zitty.de ; <https://www.tip-berlin.de/> (German only)

6.2. Books about Berlin

* **Berlin, Then and Now** by Tony Le Tissier: A fascinating record of the modern history of Berlin, told mainly in black and white photographs, with text by a former guard of Spandau prison (Hess committed suicide on his watch).

* **The Biography of a City** by Anthony Read & David Fisher: An excellent social history tracing the life of the city from its beginnings to post-Wall times.

* **Berlin and its Culture** by Ronald Taylor: A lavishly illustrated cultural history of Berlin from medieval times through to the 1990s.

* **Before the Deluge** by Otto Friedrich: A novel set in decadent 1920s Berlin.

* **A Dance Between Flames** by Anton Gill: An engaging read that examines the artistic brilliance and moral freedom of Berlin's Weimar years.

* **The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich** by William Shirer: A powerful piece of reportage about the city that Shirer loved, feared and fled.

* **Jews in Germany After the Holocaust: Memory, Identity, and Jewish-German Relations** by Lynn Rapaport: A book based on interviews with nearly 100 Jews who continue to live in Germany after the Holocaust, concentrating on how the memory affects their lives.

* **Goodbye to Berlin** by Christopher Isherwood: This semi-autobiographical novel was the basis for the musical Cabaret

* **Bauwelt Berlin** Annual by Martina Duttman, et al: Architecture students and professionals will love this book, which chronicles the new face of Berlin as it has emerged since 1996.

* **Berlin and the Wall** by Ann Tusa: A saga about the Cold War, the building of the Wall, and its effects on Berlin.