

# FAQ for international Students & Applicants

In the FAQ for international students and applicants, you can find information on several topics regarding living, studying and working in Darmstadt resp. Germany.

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# Application

## 1. Study Application

How do I apply with a foreign first university degree?

For admission to one of our MBA programmes we require:

- An above average university degree
- A minimum of three years of professional experience after graduation
- Application Form
- Comprehensive knowledge of the English language\*

\*Applicants, who have sufficient english language skills, but no corresponding test certificate can take an English language test offered by the Darmstadt Business School language center.

Would you like to apply?

Then please send us an email with all the necessary documents, including the application form, to the following email adress: <mailto:mba@h-da.de>

- [Application Form](#)
- [Application Form \(India\)](#)

Application Deadline:

German degree: **15th September** each year

Foreign university degree: **15th August** each year

If you apply early for the MBA program at Darmstadt Business School and send us your signed study agreement by April 15, you will receive an early bird discount of € 2,500.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us: <mailto:mba@h-da.de>.

### How do I apply with a German first university degree?

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us: <mailto:mba@h-da.de>.

### Who do I contact, if I need help?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the MBA team. We will be happy to help you!

Once you have successfully applied and got admission to one of the MBA programs, our buddy service will be there to help you with the preparations of your transition and getting started in Germany.

## 2. Visa Application

### Do I need a visa?

As a student from abroad you may need a visa to study in Germany depending on how long you plan to stay and where you come from. In general, citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area, Switzerland, or foreigners who already hold a temporary residence permit as a student issued by another EU-country are exempted from the procedure of applying for a visa.

Furthermore, there is a [list](#) of Countries outside the EU and EEA whose citizens are not required to apply for a visa either.

These include: Andorra, Australia, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Monaco, San Marino, South Korea and the USA (last updated May 2019).

For more information on whether or not you need a visa, please have a look at the respective guideline by the [German Academic Exchange Service](#).

#### **Note for applicants with degrees from China, Vietnam and India:**

Since November 2022, all applicants with a degree from China, Vietnam or India must present an APS certificate when applying to a German university and for obtaining a German visa.

You can receive the APS certificate by applying for it at the German embassy in your home country. Please note that this may take some time, so you should start the process as soon as possible.

For more information on the APS certificate, you can visit the uni-assist website (<https://www.uni-assist.de/en/tools/glossary-of-terms/description/details/akademische-pruefstelle-aps/>).

## What is the difference between visa and residence permit?

### a) Visa

A visa is your permission to enter Germany. You need to apply for it at the responsible embassy/consulate in your country of origin. It is normally valid for 90 days. Some countries have special agreements with Germany to waive the visa requirement.

Please find more information about visa types and the application process in the next sections.

### b) Residence permit

If you would like to stay in Germany for longer than 90 days to study at a German university, you either need to register yourself or apply for a German residence permit (Aufenthaltstitel) after arrival, depending on whether you need a visa to enter Germany or not.

Please find more information about visa types and the application process in the section Registration & Residence Permit.

## Which type of visa do I need?

There are two types of visa that allow you to start your studies in Germany. First of all, you can apply for a student visa as soon as you received a letter of admission from the university. A student visa allows you to study at the university of which you bring the admission letter to the visa appointment. It is valid for three months after the start of your studies and will be converted into a student residence permit after your arrival in Germany.

Secondly, some countries offer the possibility to apply for a **student application visa**. This might be helpful if you are still waiting for acceptance at the university, but you need to apply for a visa soon to make sure you get everything ready before the start of studies. This visa is initially valid for three months to give you time and the opportunity to meet the requirements needed for admission to a German university. If you need more time, it is possible to extend the prospective student visa by up to six months. After being admitted to a University or another higher education institution in this timespan, you can apply for a student residence permit. Please note that an application to a university is necessary to apply for this type of visa and that student application visa aren't offered in all countries.

A tourist visa, business visa, etc. is not sufficient and it's not possible to convert them into a student visa after arriving in Germany!

## How do I apply for a visa?

In general, you have to submit your visa application together with all necessary documents in person at the German embassy or consulate responsible for your place of residence. You can find the addresses of all German diplomatic missions on the website of the German Federal Foreign Office.

[Visa information - Federal Foreign Office](https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de) (auswaertiges-amt.de)

For detailed information, applicants should consult the website of the respective embassy well in advance of their departure date in order to find out about the visa procedure and the documents needed for your application. Please make sure to inform yourself as early as possible, as visa processes can take several months.

Visa application forms can be obtained from your respective embassy free of charge or can be found as PDF on the German foreign office's [website](#). Please keep in mind that the submitted documents must be original versions in the native language of your respective embassy.

When applying for a [student visa](#), you will have to present your letter of admission, as well as proof of sufficient funds to pay for your studies and your living expenses in Germany. If you have not received your confirmation or notification of admission to a university yet, you should apply for a [student application visa](#) ("Visum zur Studienbewerbung").

As a rule, there is a number of steps you have to follow to apply for your visa, regardless of which type of visa you may apply for. These steps include:

- Ask your respective German consulate for a checklist of the required documents for the type of visa you want to apply for
- Fill in the application form and obtain all the required (verified) documents
- Make an appointment at the respective German diplomatic mission in your country of residence.
- Pay the visa fee and keep your receipt for your appointment
- Be on time for your appointment and bring all the required documents.

If you have further questions regarding your visa application, please contact the German diplomatic representation (embassy, consulate) in your country of origin. In addition, you may check the [German Foreign Offices' Homepage](#).

## When do I need to apply for a visa?

If you need a visa, you have to apply for it at the German diplomatic representation (embassy or consulate) in your home country before coming to Germany. Visa processes [can take several months](#), so please make sure that you apply for an appointment in your respective diplomatic mission well in advance.

If you apply for a student visa, you need to wait for the admission letter of the university before you can apply for the visa appointment.

If you apply for a student application visa, you can apply as soon as you applied for a program of study in Germany. You will only need a document showing for which program and which university you applied.

Please note, that not all countries offer a student application visa for Germany.

**Please note:** A tourist visa, business visa, etc. is not sufficient and it's not possible to convert them into a student residence permit after arriving in Germany.

Commencing your studies without a student residence permit is not allowed.

## Which documents do I need to bring for the visa appointment?

Depending on where you come from, the extent of documents you have to include in your visa application may vary. Please make sure to check the information on the homepage of the responsible [German diplomatic mission](#) in your country of residence in advance!

In general, required documents for your application include:

- Visa application Form (in the appropriate language of the respective mission)
- Valid passport (issued within the last 10 years and with at least 12 months validity left after the scheduled return)
- 1 copy of your passport's data page (A4 size copy)
- 3 passport pictures according to biometric specifications
- Cover letter from applicant explaining the exact purpose and duration of stay
- Letter of admission from German university (electronic version) (for a student visa)
- Proof of application to a Study Program in Germany (for a student application visa)
- Proof of payment of study fees, if applicable
- Proof of language proficiency in the language of instruction
- Proof of other academic qualifications
- Proof of financial resources (e.g. confirmation of scholarship, formal obligation letter ("Verpflichtungserklärung") or blocked bank account)
- Travel health insurance covering the period from your departure to the date of enrolment at the university (mentioned in your letter of admission) (approx. 3 months)

Please prepare two identical application sets with the above-mentioned documents and bring your original certificates along. Please note that the German consulate general reserves the right to ask for additional documents or the verification of certificates.

**Tip:** Please make sure to check the visa requirements thoroughly. Visa procedures are very strict and if you happen to miss an appointment or don't have all required documents by hand, you risk to wait several weeks for the next appointment.

**Tip:** All information regarding the required documents, translation and authentication can usually be found on the web page of your local German diplomatic representation.



### Tips regarding your visa application

- **Make sure to apply for the correct visa.** You are only allowed to study with a student visa or student application visa. Short term visa cannot be changed to a student visa!
- **Apply as early as possible.** Visa procedures can take several months!
- **Check the information on the respective diplomatic mission thoroughly.** Visa procedures are strict and you risk to wait several weeks for an addition appointment if you don't have all necessary documents at hand.
- **You are a resident of China, Vietnam or Mongolia?** Make sure to inform you about the APS certificate needed to apply to a German university.

### Further information on visa processes and regulations

For more information on visa processes and regulations, please check the following websites or the homepage of the German embassy in your homecountry.

- [Study in Germany – visa information](#)
- [Federal Foreign Office Germany](#)
- [Federal Foreign Office Germany – visa regulations](#)
- [Pathway to Germany – Visa and entry procedure](#)

## Preparing Your Studies

### 3. Buddy Service

#### MBA Buddy Service

Darmstadt Business School offers a Buddy Service for our MBA applicants and students, which means that there is a contact person for all students (especially when getting started and during the first semester). Your Buddy will answer your questions and if needed, accompany you to your appointments at the residents' registration office, opening a bank account, helping you find accommodation or whatever you may come across starting your studies. Please see the list below to find out how your Buddy can help you with your questions and concerns:

- In general: help with appointments at local authorities
- Directing you to the contact person for your enquiry
- Questions regarding visa and residence permit
- Opening a bank account/blocked bank account
- Translating at appointments with authorities
- Guiding finding accommodation
- Health insurance questions
- Local guide for Darmstadt and the surrounding area
- General questions regarding the MBA program

Please feel free to send an email with your questions to: <mailto:buddy.mba@h-da.de>, or contact us to schedule a meeting.

### What support does the Buddy Program offer?

Below, you can find some examples of support, the Buddy Service can offer to you:

- **Get in contact:** As soon as you committed yourself to the MBA program at Darmstadt Business School, you can get in contact with your Buddy to clarify questions you might have regarding the university, Darmstadt or Germany in general. In addition, your Buddy can provide you with useful information about preparing your stay in Germany.
- **Stay in touch with your Buddy:** Please do not hesitate to contact your Buddy after you arrived in Germany or during your first semester in Darmstadt. Even if your Buddy cannot help you directly, he or she might know the best person to contact for your concern.
- **Accommodation:** Provide help and guidance in searching for accommodation.
- **Documents:** Helping you to understand important documents, which may only be available in German language (e.g. rental contract, health insurance documents, mobile phone contract, etc.)
- **Bureaucracy:** Accompanying you to authorities is possible if required (Foreigners Office)
- **Campus:** Help you to find your way around the campus and in Darmstadt.
- **Integration:** Show activities in order to integrate yourself in Germany and meet other students.

### How do I get in contact with the Buddy?

You are not alone, so don't hesitate and send us an email to <mailto:buddy.mba@h-da.de> at any time. If you like to schedule an online-meeting or skype call, please let us know. We'll be happy to help you!

## 4. Prepare Your Stay

### What do I need to do before moving to Germany?

Please find more information about the things to do before moving to Germany and start your studies in the following sections of the FAQ. Don't forget to use the checklist "Before Departure", which will help you a lot to cover the important steps.

- [Checklist: Before Departure](#)
- Get a visa
- Get health insurance
- Register for accomodation
- Register for German language course
- Plan your travels
- [Checklist: After Arrival](#)

### Where can I get help?

Moving to another country and getting started in a new city and country can be challenging. Moreover, you might face some challenges while living and studying in another (study) culture. To help you making this easier, we offer a Buddy Program for all our (international) MBA students.

The main goal of this service is to accompany you and support you throughout your first semester and to help make your transition to Germany as smooth as possible. We will be glad to help you with any concerns or doubts that you might have.

For more information on contact details and the support given by the Buddy Service, please see the section Buddy Program.

### How do I learn some basic German?

The first steps in learning German can easily be done online. Language apps like [duolingo](#) are a good opportunity to start with. In addition to the most known apps, there are a lot of options that go beyond the very basics. We found a good overview [here](#) (please note, that we did not check each app or the blog as such).

Besides, there are two online portals which we can highly recommend: [Deutsche Welle](#) and [Goethe Institut](#).

As you will most likely come across some unfamiliar german terms, usually not taught on beginners level, we created a [glossary](#) for the most important things you may come across in the first time in Germany. You can find terms of the categories Application & Enrolment, Accomodation, University, General Administration and Living in Germany - each one with an english translation and a short description.

In addition, you are welcome to register for a German Language Course at h\_da as soon as you got admitted to the MBA program.

## Preparing Your Stay - Checklist Before Departure

There are a lot of things to think of and to organize before you depart to your studies abroad. With our [checklist "Before Departure"](#), you have an overview over the most relevant aspects to cover to make your start as smooth as possible.

The document covers the checklist, as well as basic information on each item of the list. If you want to print the list to tick what you have completed, please download the [short version](#).

## Getting started - Checklist After Arrival

### **Welcome to Germany!**

After you arrived in Germany, there will most likely be a lot of questions about what to do first - and what next. In our [checklist "After Arrival"](#) we provide you with the most important information from "How to get to Darmstadt?" to "Meet People" - and all the steps in between.

The document covers the checklist, as well as basic information on each item of the list. If you want to print the list to tick what you have completed, please download the [short version](#).

We hope that this information will make your first days in Germany as easy as possible. If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to contact your buddy or the staff at the university. We will be happy to help you!

## 5. Accomodation

### What do I need to know about renting in Germany?

In Germany there are several different possibilities to find appropriate accommodation as a student. Unlike other countries, Germany does not automatically assign rooms to students when they enrol. Most likely you will have to find a place to live on your own.

Renting a flat, apartment or residence hall in Germany may appear a bit confusing at first glance, but knowing what you need and what to consider will help you to find an appropriate accommodation. One way to make the move to Germany easier is to look for an accommodation well in advance, ideally before moving to Germany since demand is highest at the beginning of the semester.

The first step to narrow down your search is to decide how you want to live in Germany. Are you looking for a student residence, a shared flat or do you want to live in your own apartment? Each form of living has its advantages and disadvantages and affects the renting price.

In most cases, a room or apartment in a student residence is the cheapest option. Since there is only a limited number of rooms in student residences, you may also consider other options such as private flat shares or living in a single apartment.

The following sections provide you with the information needed to make an informed decision on which form of living as a student suits you best.

For additional information please check:

<https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/plan-your-stay/accommodation/>

<https://www.simplegermany.com/renting-in-germany/>

## Which types of (student) accommodation are there?

In Germany, there are different types of student residences. Please find a short description of the four most common types below:

### Public Student Residences

Public student residences are in most cases the most affordable type of accommodation for students. Often they come fully furnished and are available in different room configurations: flats, single rooms in corridor groups and rooms in flat shares. An early application is needed because the rooms are sought after by many students. The prices range from 300-500€ depending on size and whether the room is furnished or not. The two providers in Darmstadt are Studierendenwerk Darmstadt and HEAG Wohnbau. Please find more information in our [guideline "Where to stay in Darmstadt?"](#) or on the providers homepages:

<https://studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de/en/accomodation-service/>

<https://heagwohnbau.wordpress.com/tag/studentenwohnheim/>

### Private Student Residences

In addition to the public residence halls there are many private providers of student residences in Darmstadt. Generally, they are fully furnished, well equipped and feature communal areas with communal kitchens, movie lounges or the like. However, premium features like that come at a cost. Therefore the rent is more expensive compared to the public residence halls. The rent in private student residences usually starts at around 450€ and can go up to around 800€ depending on room size and features. Some of the private providers are Smartments, Uninest, The FIZZ and StolzeHaus. Please find more information in our [guideline "Where to stay in Darmstadt?"](#) or on the providers homepages:

<https://www.smartments-student.de/en/locations/darmstadt-stephanstrasse>

<https://www.the-fizz.com/en/student-accommodation/darmstadt>

<https://unineststudents.de/en/locations/darmstadt/elementum>

<https://www.stolzehaus.de/>

## Shared flats

A shared flat (Wohngemeinschaft or WG) is the most popular form of accommodation among students in Germany. As the description suggests, several students (usually 2-5) share a privately rented flat in which each tenant has his or her own room while kitchen and bathroom are used jointly. The cost of water, heating, electricity and internet are shared as well. The shared rooms are usually furnished when you move in, but you may have to bring/buy furniture for your room. The prices for rooms generally range between 300 and 500€. In Germany it is common for flat shares to have a mix of female and male students and there is no guarantee that the configuration stays the way it is when you move in, since the flats are self-organized. The procedure usually involves to find a new tenant when someone is about to move out.

Platforms for finding rooms in shared flats are for example: <https://www.wg-gesucht.de/en/> or <https://housinganywhere.com/de/>.

## Flat/ Apartment

If you prefer to live on your own, a small apartment may be the right choice for you. Check out vacancies on the internet well in advance before your course starts. Local newspapers also publish advertisements for accommodation (often at the weekend) which are usually offered online as well. You can rent apartments either furnished or unfurnished, whereas unfurnished flats are most common. Please note, that unfurnished can mean, that there is not even a kitchen or light bulbs. You have to contact a private landlord and ensure that you are registered for electricity, gas, telephone and internet. Before landlords sign a contract, they often want to see a proof of income or demand a security. Rent prices can vary considerably depending on the city area and amenities. You are unlikely to find an apartment for less than 400€ base rent, or "cold rent".

Platforms for finding apartments are for example:

<https://www.immonet.de/>

<https://www.immobilienscout24.de/>

<https://www.immowelt.de/>



### What do I need to know about costs and pricing?

If you search for accommodation, it is advisable to find out about what the rent includes and compare rent prices. This is most easy, if you search in an online portal, where you can filter for a certain span of rent.

There are two different forms in which the rent is shown in housing adverts: **cold rent and warm rent**. A so-called "cold rent/ net rent" is without additional expenses such as water, heating and waste disposal. A "warm rent/ final rent" includes this costs, which can amount to over 50 percent of the "cold rent".

You are usually required to pay a **deposit** (one to two months' base rent) before moving in to a new flat or student residence. Please do **never** pay any fee or deposit, before you and the landlord signed the rental contract!

Also remember other **fixed expenses** that have to be paid (for example telephone, internet, electricity and insurance). They are included in some of the student residences, but have to be paid extra if you rent a flat.

For an overview of the pricing range of several types of accommodation, please see the section "Which types of (student) accommodation are there?".

If you opt to search through an estate agent, you will have to pay a **broker fee** which is usually 2-3 times the cold rent of the apartment. Please note: if the landlord hires the estate agent, he will have to pay the fee himself and is not allowed to transfer this to you.

### What do I need to know about the rental contract?

In Germany you always have to sign a rental contract to provide a certain degree of security for both the tenant and the landlord concerning the do's and don'ts of the tenancy. This also applies, if you rent a single room in a student residence. In some shared flats, each tenant has an own rental contract, but sometimes only one tenant has a contract with the landlord and you will make an addition contract with the tenant regarding your room.

The contract contains details about the duration of the agreement, amount of the deposit, amount of the monthly rent, additional cost like heating/water/electricity (depending on use), house rules (regarding repair expenses etc.), pet rules and notice length (generally three months if either you or the landlord want to cancel the agreement).

Important: Please do never pay any fee/deposit, before you and the landlord signed the rental contract!

### Which documents do I have to provide?

In order to rent a flat and to ensure your landlord you are a trustworthy tenant, you will have to present several documents. One of the most important documents is a copy of your passport or ID, which sometimes is already required to get an appointment for a viewing.

Additionally, you will have to provide bank statements or salary confirmations as proof of sufficient funds. If you have lived in Germany before, the landlord may also ask for your 'Schufa record', which resembles a document that registers your debt track.

If you cannot provide any of the afore mentioned documents, you will have to name a guarantor. The guarantor has to confirm to pay your rent if you are unable to pay for it on time for whatever reason. The guarantor should be German but it can also be either of your parents.

### Which student residences do you recommend in Darmstadt?

We do not recommend any specific residence, as it highly depends on your individual preferences which one suits you best. However, we listed the available public and private student residences in our guideline ['Where to stay in Darmstadt'](#). You can find a short description of each residence in the list, which hopefully will help you to choose the best option for you.

### What do I have to consider renting a flat/apartment?

There are several things you should have in mind, if you choose to rent a flat instead of a room in a student residence or shared flat. One thing to consider is the number of rooms, since kitchens, toilets and hallways are not included in the number of rooms. This means a 2- room-apartment contains two rooms plus bathroom, toilet, kitchen and hallway.

Another thing to consider is whether or not the apartment is furnished or not. Furnished apartments are relatively rare and also considerably more expensive compared to unfurnished flats. However, if the offering states that the flat is unfurnished, that is literally what you get: there are no cabinets, no light fixtures often not even a kitchen unless there is an individual arrangement with the landlord and the previous tenant.

### How do I search for a flat/apartment to rent?

There are several different ways to rent a flat in Germany. The most common way nowadays is to search for flats through **online property portals**. This makes searching by different filters very easy and you are enabled to look for a flat that suits your needs and your budget. However, the disadvantage with online property portals is that the most common ones like [ImmobilienScout 24](#) and [Immowelt](#) are only available in German. There are other options, such as [Housing anywhere](#) that is aimed more towards flat shares and temporary apartments but as the name suggests is available in English as well.

Another option is to search the **local newspapers**, as most of them do offer housing adverts (mostly once a week on Saturdays).

You can also find apartments via an **estate agent**. This is easier than searching through countless offerings online but if you hire the agent it can cost an equivalent of two to three times the amount of the cold rent of the apartment in question. However, you don't have to pay anything if the estate agent was hired by the landlord.

Another possibility to find a flat is by **word of mouth**. So if you tell as many of your fellow students and friends in Germany that you are looking for a flat in Germany, they will inform you. In general, it's easier for the landlord as well as for the new tenant if the previous tenant recommends friends and acquaintances.

### What to do next, once I found an interesting flat advert?

After finding an offering that suits you – regardless whether you found it in the newspaper, online or by word of mouth, the next steps are basically always the same: you have to contact the landlord to arrange an appointment for a viewing. Keep in mind that you should give the landlord information on who you are, what you do and why you want to move in. Very short and impersonal messages can seem lazy and the landlord might not even invite you for a viewing.

Make sure to be on time for the viewing since there are many other potential tenants, first impressions count. The viewing is a good opportunity to get an impression of the overall condition of the flat and the facilities as well as for asking all of your questions. After the viewing you have to wait for the response on whether or not the landlord chooses you to be the next tenant. (Note: it always makes sense to arrange several viewings to increase the likelihood of finding an accommodation on time).

If you are offered the flat, the next step is to arrange an appointment to sign the contract. For more information on the contract, please also see the section **rental contract**. In most cases you cannot move straight in after signing the rental contract since flats are rarely empty due to high demand. In general, you have a 3-month notice period when moving out in Germany so the landlord has enough time to find a new tenant. This is why you will most likely have to wait until the previous tenant has moved out before you can move in.

### Are there temporary solutions in case I don't find accommodation on time?

The below-mentioned options are aimed towards students that were either not able to find suitable accommodation before coming to Germany or simply travelled to Germany early to have more time to get to know their ways around Darmstadt or to sort out their visa. The residence halls of Studierendenwerk for example are always rented out from the 1st of September, which doesn't give you that much time to organize some of the tasks that moving to a different country brings.

#### Hostels

In the case that you were not able to find an accommodation on time and need a temporary solution, a Hostel is an inexpensive way to bridge a short time span in order to find an accommodation. Hostels are accommodations aimed towards backpackers, hikers and school classes. Prices can be as cheap as around 15-20€ per night but involve sleeping in a dormitory with several other people and a shared bathroom. The price depends on how many people are sleeping in one dormitory (the more people in one room, the cheaper it is). Single or double rooms are sometimes available as well but they are significantly more expensive.

Darmstadt has one hostel, which is located in the east, directly beside the lake "Woog". Please find more information on their [homepage](#). Another option is the [hostel in Frankfurt](#), which is only a 20 minute train ride from Darmstadt.

#### Air BNB and holiday apartments

Another option is to bridge time in order to find accommodation is Air BNB since it can be a lot cheaper than staying in a hotel for example. Often people rent out private flats or rooms on Air BNB for a certain period of time. If you choose a simple room of flat, it can be quite affordable while having more privacy compared to a hostel.

<https://www.airbnb.de/>

### Are there important terms I need to know?

Yes, there are. As most housing adverts are only available in German, you will come across some terms you may not have heard of before. We created a [glossary with the most important terms](#) in German, the English translation and a short description, which will help you getting started in Germany.

For the terms regarding accommodation, please sort the glossary regarding category from A to Z. You will then find all accommodation-related terms right in the beginning of the list.

## 6. [Checklist: Before Departure](#)

## 7. [Checklist: After Arrival](#)

## Getting Started

### 8. Get to know the University

#### Virtual Campus Tour

Darmstadt university of applied sciences is spread out over several locations. The three main parts of the campus are

- Campus Schöfferstraße
- Campus Dieburg
- Campus Mathildenhöhe

To get a first impression of the h\_da, take a [virtual campus tour](#) of all three campus parts. The MBA program is located at the main campus Schöfferstraße.

#### MBA Team

The MBA team will accompany you from your application throughout your studies and does also run the alumni program. We are responsible for the application process, the coordination and administration of the program, feedback, advisory services and much more. If you don't know whom to contact for your queries, you can always get in touch with us - either we can help or guide you to the person responsible.

The MBA team consists of the academic director, program management, account management and administration. Please find our contact data [here](#).

#### Language Centre

The h\_da language centre offers German courses as well as other languages at different levels, free of cost for students of the university. It is a great opportunity to learn German and meet new people in your courses, it will help you to integrate easier in the university and in Darmstadt.

Please find more detailed information in the FAQ section "German Language Courses" or on the website of [the language centre](#).

#### Career Centre

You want to find a job during your MBA studies? Or start your career in Germany with an MBA degree? But you don't know where to start?

The h\_da offers a job portal that will help you to find different opportunities for students, as well as guidance through the process. The career centre also offers training and advice regarding job application in Germany and starting your own business. Click [here](#) for more details and start your search.

## Services for Students

The university offers a wide range of services for students - from advisory service to semester ticket. [Here](#) you can find the most important institutions and departments with a short description of their services.

## Counselling Services

If you have queries regarding courses, lecturers or the organisation of your studies, please get in touch with the program management of the MBA program. You can find the contact details [here](#).

The university offers an advisory service where fellow students or student advisors can guide you and help you with general questions and concerns regarding your studies. You can find more information and contact details here. The service is offered by the Student Service Center (SSC) and includes advice regarding your studies, financing and funding, as well as personal advice.

In addition, there are many advisory services, which focus on specific topics - like financing your studies or counselling for international students. Please find an overview [here](#).

## Media Centre / Library

During your studies you can use the media centre with its **central library** in Darmstadt (Schöfferstrasse 8) as well as the other three libraries:

- **Design library** (building E31, room 10)
- **Social Education library** (building E10, room 10)
- **Media Campus library** (building F25)

The media centre also offers links to online services, databases, and remote access to electronic media on its website. It is possible to find sources in German and English. Please find more information on the [website of the library](#) or in our [FAQ & Help Section](#) on the program's homepage.

In addition to the services, all four libraries offer **study rooms** for individuals or group work. You have access to the rooms with your student ID (Campus Card), as soon as you have registered for a library account.

### Canteen (Mensa)

The "Studierendenwerk" runs several canteens for students in Darmstadt and Dieburg. At each campus, you can find a canteen and a bistro for snacks. You can find the location of the different canteens [here](#).

The canteen menu has a variety of meals, including vegan and vegetarian options as well as meals with chicken and fish. Also, different drinks and desserts are part of the menu. You can check the weekly menu [here](#).

The canteens in Darmstadt and Dieburg are subsidized for students; it is important to carry your student ID with you when eating at the canteen to get the student price.

### Café Glaskasten

The Café Glaskasten on the ground floor of the high-rise building is a central contact point for students, staff and lecturers alike. The bar and lounge area invite you to relax, while the study area offers students space to work.

Overall, Glaskasten is divided into three areas: learning area, lounge, and café-bar. The height of the sofas separates the learning area acoustically and visually from the lounge and café bar. In the learning area, students can learn effectively together or work on projects in groups. This area also offers sufficient seating for students who want to work alone in a concentrated manner.

Glaskasten also encourages a creative student environment through exhibitions, lectures, presentations and parties. All members of the university are welcome to contact the AStA with their own event ideas. In the Dieburg campus you can find the Café Zeitraum which is very similar to Glaskasten.

### Studierendenhaus (Students' House)

A new student house is currently being built and will be finished in summer 2021. It will revolve around the concerns of the students. Service and counselling offers are bundled under one roof.

In addition to the Student Service Centre, the Examination Office, the University Centre for Student Success and Career Start, the International Office, parts of the AStA and the Family Office will move into the new building.

There will also be seminar rooms, a learning centre and a cafeteria. With this building project, the university is also taking into account the increasing number of students.

## Public Transport

As a student of Darmstadt Business School, you will receive the Campus Card, which includes public transport with the semester ticket by train, bus or tram in the whole state of Hesse. Only if you intend to use high-speed trains like ICE or IC, they will not be covered by the semester ticket. Please find a map showing the area covered by the ticket below. More information can be found [here](#).

## University Sports

There is a wide offer of sports courses at h\_da. Most of them are free of charge for students or offered at a very low price. There are two sports centres and offices: Campus Darmstadt and Campus Dieburg. Being part of sports activities at the university is a great opportunity to meet new people and to also practice the local language.

For more information about the courses and registration click [here](#).



## Summer/Winter University

The h\_da International Office offers an international summer school and winter school each year. They are part of the [Hessen International Summer Universities](#) and provide a four-week week program including German classes as well as workshops, events and trips.

### International Summer University

All courses are taught in English, and you will take courses with German students as well as other participants from all around the world. You are invited to broaden your professional knowledge about innovative materials and technologies in planning, constructing and maintaining eco-friendly buildings in Germany. On top you will immerse yourself in the German culture and improve your German language skills. Please click [here](#) for more details.

### International Winter University Programme

The Winter Programme is focused on international marketing or mechanical engineering in power. You can choose between two modules:

1. International Marketing and Sales
2. Between Poverty and Conservation: Socio-Economics of Smallholder Farming in the Tropics

This programme is also taught in English. German students as well as other international students participate in the Winter programme, where you will broaden your professional knowledge and immerse yourself in the German culture and improve your German language skills. Usually, the programme has an excursion to Berlin. Right at the beginning of the programme, participants will celebrate New Year's Eve together in the capital of Germany. Visit the following [link](#) for more detailed information.

## 9. Registration & Residence Permit

### Do I need a residence permit?

Everybody living in Germany needs to register with the registration authority of the respective city soon after moving in.

In order to stay in Germany for the duration of your studies you may also have to obtain a residence permit. The procedure consists of two subsequent steps – registration at the local registration office and at the foreigners' registration office.

Similar to the visa policies in Germany, students from the **European Union, the European Economic Area** or Switzerland don't need a residence permit. If this applies to you, you only need to take Step One of the application process and register at the local registration office.

Please find more information on how to register in the next sections. If you have any additional questions or need help, please get in touch with your buddy.

## How do I register at the local registration office?

Once you have found a place to stay in Germany you have to register with the registration office (Einwohnermeldeamt) within one or two weeks after moving in (depending on the registration office) to avoid paying an administrative fine (Bußgeld). Usually you can arrange an appointment online. Don't worry if you don't get an appointment within one or two weeks. The date you booked the appointment serves as proof of your effort to get an appointment in time.

For your appointment at the registration office you will need the following documents:

- A personal identification card or passport (and possibly your visa)
- A signed and filled in housing confirmation from your landlord
- Possibly a registration form from the registration office

If you don't need a residence permit, you also have to bring the following documents:

- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of financial resources

**Please note:** After your registration you will get a written confirmation by the registration office. Please make sure to keep this confirmation safely. For students who do not need to apply for a residence permit, this confirmation serves as a right of residence. For students who need a residence permit, this document is important and mandatory for the appointment at the foreigners' registration office (Ausländerbehörde).

If you find accommodation in [Darmstadt](#) or [Dieburg](#), you can find further information about the respective registration offices of Darmstadt and Dieburg. If you live elsewhere, please contact your local registration office for further information.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please get in touch with the buddy service of the MBA program.

### How do I register at the foreigners' registration office?

If you need a residence permit, you have to go to the foreigners' registration office in the City where you are studying to apply for it (within the first three months of your stay). Please find the homepage of the foreigners' registration office in Darmstadt [here](#).

You have to go to the foreigners' registration office personally to apply for your residence permit! The documents you will need to bring include:

- A valid passport, possibly with visa
- Your registration confirmation from the residents' registration office
- A proof of health insurance
- The certificate of matriculation from your German university
- Money for the administrative fee (approximately 110€)
- Possibly proof of financial resources
- Possibly a health certificate
- Possibly your tenancy agreement
- Possibly (biometric) passport photos

Tip: In case of doubt you should rather take documents that might not be required than having to arrange a new appointment because a document you need is missing.

After four to six weeks you can pick up your "electronic residence title" (elektronischer Aufenthaltstitel) which resembles your residence permit in the form of a card with an integrated chip.

### Can I convert my existing residence permit for my studies?

In case you already have a German residence permit, you might be able to convert it into a student residence permit to study at the University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt. However, already having a residence permit does NOT automatically mean that you can convert it into a residence permit to study in Darmstadt. The purpose for which your current permit has been issued for is decisive regarding this matter. Please check with the responsible foreigners' registration office.

In some cases it is usually not possible to extend/convert the permit: for example if you have a residence permit issued for the purpose of visiting a (high) school or a language course which is not preparatory for your studies.

However, in some cases it is not necessary to extend or convert your residence permit, as some purposes include the possibility to study at a university. Please check with the responsible foreigners' registration office.

### How long will the residence permit be valid?

The residence permit is issued for between one and a maximum of two years but it is possible to be extended. The extension depends on your studies progressing “regularly” (meaning you should adhere to the standard period of study). You need documentation from your university to show this. It is imperative that you apply for the extension **before** your current residence permit expires.

### When do I need to extend my residence permit?

Depending on how long your residence permit (Aufenthaltstitel) was issued for you may have to apply for an extension (Verlängerung) of your residence permit during your studies. Also, you may have to extend your residence permit, if you want to stay in Germany for job search after graduation.

Please get in touch with your contact person in the foreigners’ registration office **at least one month prior to the extension** of your residence permit to apply for an extension and set an appointment.

### How do I apply for a residence permit extension?

To apply for an extension of your residence permit, you need to send an informal written application by post, fax or e-mail to:

Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt

Bürger- und Ordnungsamt

Ausländerbehörde

Postfach 11 10 61

64225 Darmstadt

E-Mail: <mailto:auslaenderbehoerde@darmstadt.de>

Fax: 06151 – 13 3589

**Important:** Please provide the foreigners’ registration office with your full name, date of birth and address in this application. Please enclose a copy of your national passport or travel document with your application.

### What happens next, if I have applied for an extension?

If you meet all the requirements, the foreigners' registration office will send you the documents necessary for further processing. You will need to send the required documents back by post or bring them with you for an appointment.

After checking your documents, the foreigners' registration office will contact you for an appointment. Usually, you should have handed in all required documents by that time. However, if you are unsure if you need to bring any additional documents – or which documents to bring to the appointment – please ask your contact person in good time before your appointment.

### Which documents do I need to submit for the extension?

You will need to present the following documents for the extension of your residence permit:

- Application for registration permit extension (filled and signed)
- Current certificate of enrolment from the university
- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of financial resources\*
- Passport
- Current residence permit (Aufenthaltstitel)
- Biometric pass photo

*\* Please verify beforehand with the foreigners' registration office what they need from you; a blocked account -which amount- or a job contract. The fact of having a job won't impede the office to ask for a blocked account.*

**Tip:** We strongly recommend you to contact the foreigners' registration office beforehand, if you have any doubts about which documents to bring. If you do not have all the required documents at hand, you will need to schedule a second appointment and risk that your residence permit expires in the meantime.

### I did not receive any response on my application for a residence permit extension. What do I do?

In this case, it is very important that you keep proof, for example, an email where you tried to contact the foreigners' office at least a month before your expiry date, notifying them of your situation and expiry date. As long as you have this, there is no reason to worry about your status in the country, just wait for the office's reply.

Nevertheless, we recommend you to keep insisting on contacting them until you get a fixed appointment. Unfortunately, this might take some weeks.

The appointment for my extension is after the expiration date of my current residence permit. What do I do?

If you already have a fixed appointment for your extension there is no need to worry about it. Always keep the emails as proof, even if you did not get a reply, since they will validate your status in the country. In case you haven't received any answer from the office we recommend you to keep insisting on contacting them via phone and via post.

My residence permit already expired. What do I do?

**NOTE:** Please do not wait until your residence permit expires, or one week before, to contact the foreigners' registration office!

If you contacted the foreigner's registration office at least a month before your residence permit expiry date there is no need to worry, your application has started. However, it is important that you **don't leave the country** until you have a new residence permit or a "Fiktionsbescheinigung".

I need a form signed by the university. Whom do I contact?

For the extension of your residence permit, you will usually be asked to get a form filled out, signed and stamped by the university. For this, please get in touch with the administration of your study program via <mailto:mba@h-da.de>.

You are welcome to visit us in the office during office hours and bring the form with you, or to send it to us via e-mail beforehand and just pick it up when everything is ready.

Whom do I contact if I have questions?

Please check the [homepage of the foreigners' registration office](#) (Ausländerbehörde) Darmstadt to find the person responsible for you. If you are not sure whom to contact, please use one of the below mentioned general contact data.

If you already have a responsible person for you in the office, we recommend contacting this person directly. If you want to apply for a residence permit extension, please get in touch with this person at least a month before -or earlier- your current residence permit expires as it will take some time to get an appointment.

Contact information foreigners' registration office (Ausländerbehörde) Darmstadt:

Phone: (06151) 13-3323

Contact Form: [online form for queries](#)

E-Mail: <mailto:auslaenderbehoerde@darmstadt.de>

#### Where do I find additional information?

The information collected in this document is not an official information! We recommend you always contact your responsible person in the foreigners' registration office first for official information. You can also check the [FAQ](#) of the foreigners' registration office Darmstadt.

For more information on visa and residence permit details, please read the brochure of the [German Academic Exchange Service](#).

You can also get in touch with the International Consulting Service team of the university. Click [here](#) to find more details and the corresponding contact.

If the information is still unclear or you need assistance, you can email us with your concerns. You can either contact the [buddy service](#) or the [MBA program management](#).

## 10. Health Insurance

#### Do I need a health insurance?

**Yes!** You will have to present a confirmation of your health insurance coverage in order to enrol at the university and to apply for a residence permit. In addition, you may need health insurance for the visa application. Please note, that the requirements for health insurance cover for visa and enrolment differ from another.

We advise you to take care of your health insurance status way in advance. At any rate, it is important to clarify the status of your health insurance before travelling to Germany.

#### Is my travel insurance sufficient to enrol at the university?

**No!** A travel insurance is never sufficient for enrolment. Please make sure, that any insurance contract you sign for your stay in Germany meets the requirements for enrolment. Please see the section "Which insurance do I need to enrol at the university?" for more information.

### Is my health insurance from home valid for enrolment at the university?

In general, if you are a citizen of a member state of the **European Union** your health insurance policy is valid in Germany.

Moreover, there is a list of **Non-EUCountries**, whose public health insurance policies are valid in Germany as well. This [list consists](#) of (status July 2020): Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, Tunisia, and Turkey. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) will cover any required medical treatment in Germany. Make sure to bring your EHIC with you to Germany!

If you are from outside the EU and your home country is not listed above, it may still be possible that your private domestic and foreign health insurance policy is recognised for enrolment in Germany. You will have to prove that your health insurance is equivalent to the Public German Health Insurance for students.

We recommend you to contact your health insurance provider for clarification before travelling to Germany. If your health insurance (public or private) is recognised as equivalent, you will need a confirmation that you are exempted from public health insurance coverage for your enrolment at the university.

**Please note** that it is most likely that your health insurance does not meet the standards needed to enrol in a German university when you are from a Non-EU Country.

### What if my health insurance is not recognised in Germany?

If your domestic health insurance policy is not recognised in Germany, you will have to sign up for coverage in Germany. You will need health insurance cover for enrolment in the university, as well as for the residence permit application.

Please make sure, that any insurance contract you sign for your stay in Germany meets the requirements for enrolment. Please see the section "Which insurance do I need to enrol at a university?" for more information.



## Which types of health insurance are there in Germany?

**Statutory health insurance** (German public health insurance) provides easy access to medical services in Germany and a European-wide coverage while covering most medical costs.

**Private health insurance** institutions offer similar coverage as statutory insurance and a special cost for students. They are usually more expensive than statutory health insurance, but you can apply for a variety of extra services covered.

Please be aware that a **travel insurance will not be sufficient** for the visa requirements as well as for enrolment and residence permit, since they do not provide the coverage needed and usually cover only costs related to traveling.

Please note, that if you do not qualify for an exempt, you will need to have a **statutory** health insurance for enrolment at the university. For more information, please check the next section.

**Tip:** We strongly recommend applying first for statutory health insurance. If you are over 30 years old, you may not meet the requirements for the student rates of the health insurance plan. In this case, private health insurance might be a better choice for you. However, you can still choose a statutory health insurance provider but will have to pay a higher fee than the student rates.

## Which insurance do I need to enrol at the university?

All students in Germany are obliged to have health insurance. For your enrolment you will need a **statutory health insurance** or a confirmation stating an **exemption from the compulsory insurance**. We strongly recommend to get a statutory health insurance while studying!

However, exemptions from the compulsory health insurance are possible, if you meet one of the following reasons:

- You are more than 30 years old.
- You have completed the 14th subject-related university semester.
- Germany has a social security agreement with your homecountry and you hold a public health insurance plan there. In the section "Is my health insurance from home valid for enrolment at the university?" you can find a list of the countries applicable. Please contact your health insurance provider, if you are unsure if your insurance is valid for enrolment in Germany.
- You hold an equivalent private health insurance plan.

**Please be aware**, that if you apply for an exemption of statutory student health insurance, this cannot be withdrawn for the whole duration of your studies!

You will need a confirmation of a statutory health insurance provider stating the exemption in order to enrol at the university. Each statutory health insurance provider in Germany is obliged to check your case and provide you with this confirmation if applicable.

If you aim for a private plan, the benefits of your health insurance need to be equivalent to a German statutory health insurance or cover at least the reimbursement of costs for ambulant and stationary medical treatment, whereby the absolute and percentage deductibles agreed for in the tariff for each person to be insured must be limited to an effect in terms of amount of 5,000 euros per calendar year.

Most health insurance providers have a special team responsible for student health insurances. Please feel free to contact them to learn more about the options you may have.

### What does health insurance (for students) cost?

Depending on the provider you choose, a statutory health insurance policy costs around 110€ a month. Private plans are usually somewhat more expensive, but vary a lot in the benefits and costs.

Please keep in mind that if you are older than 30 years or you have completed your 14th subject-related semester at a university, the monthly rate in a statutory health insurance will go up to at least 190€ per month. In this case, private plans may be an option for you.

**Tip:** Private health insurance is usually much more expensive than statutory. If you choose a private plan, please be very careful with plans that have a very low cost. Often the costs in these plans rise significantly later on.

### Do you recommend any insurance provider?

All statutory health insurance providers cover the same benefits and have the same pricing for student tariffs. However, each insurance provider offers additional services, which may be interesting for you. Therefore, please find a list of the most common providers below. In addition, there are numerous smaller providers, which may have interesting additional services.

#### Some Statutory health insurance providers

- [Techniker Krankenkasse](#)
- [AOK](#)
- [Barmer](#)

#### Some private health insurance providers

If you choose a private plan, please be very careful with plans that have a very low cost. Often the costs in these plans rise significantly later on.

- [HanseMerkur](#)
- [Allianz](#)
- [AXA](#)
- [R+V](#)
- [Mawista](#)

### Where can I find further information?

If you have any further questions on the regulations for enrolment, please check the [fact sheet on health insurance](#) of the student service center (only available in German).

For general questions, please check the information on [study-in-germany](#) or on [simple germany](#).

## 11. Bank Account

Do I need a German bank account to study in Germany?

Setting up a **bank account** during your stay in Germany can save you a lot of unnecessary effort. With a German bank account you can do transfers like the semester fee, pay your monthly rent or receive your salary from a (part-time) job. Another advantage is being able to withdraw money from cash machines free of charge. The majority of banks in Germany offer students current accounts including an EC Card free of charge.

In addition, it is very probable that you have to provide proof of financial resources to apply for a visa and residence permit. For this, you will need to set up a **blocked bank account**. You might also need to provide some proof of financial resources or regular income to rent an apartment or a shared flat.

**Please note:** we highly recommend opening a regular bank account besides of the blocked bank account, to ensure you have access to any deposit adding to the required blocked amount. Also, you will need a regular German bank account to receive your deposit of the blocked account each month.

Which types of bank accounts are there?

- **Girokonto:** standard bank account (current account). It can be used to receive pay-checks as well as bills. Usually German banks also offer these account as specialized accounts for students and youth.
- **Sperrkonto:** special blocked account (visa requirement) for international students.
- **Sparkonto:** savings account used to save money and earn interest.
- **Tagesgeldkonto:** money market deposit account where you can add and withdraw money at any time, the interest rate keeps changing constantly.
- **Kreditkartenkonto:** credit card account. This account allows users to have a continuous balance of debt subject to interest being charged.

### What type of German bank account is recommended?

With a standard German bank account (Girokonto) you can do transactions like transfers or standing orders (rent, health insurance, tuition fee) either online, at specific bank machines in your bank or directly at the counter. Additionally you will be issued a debit card (often referred to as EC-, Giro-, or Maestro Cards) you can either use for cash withdrawals or to pay at shops or restaurants. In comparison to a lot of credit card providers, paying or withdrawing cash with your EC-Card is usually free of charge.

We recommend getting a Girokonto since you will need a German account to receive the money from your blocked account. Be careful and read this document to understand the differences between accounts, so that you can choose the best option for you.

## Which institutions offer bank accounts?

We recommend choosing either an institution with an office located in Darmstadt or to opt for an online bank. Which one to choose depends on whether you like to do transactions on site and have a help desk where you can physically go to, or if you are happy with online services.

**Online banking** institutions usually do not charge any maintenance fee, but sometimes withdrawal fees if you like to withdraw money on a cash machine (withdrawal at supermarkets is usually free of charge). They provide limited services and are often available only in German.

**Local banking institutions** usually charge no fees for withdrawal, offer a wide network of cash machines and various additional services. However, they do often charge maintenance fees, if you are not applicable for a student tariff.

These are some banking institutions with a local dependence:

- [Commerzbank](#)
- [Deutsche Bank](#)
- [Sparkasse Darmstadt](#)
- [Volksbank-Darmstadt Südhessen](#)

These are some banking institutions, that operate only online:

- [N26](#)
- [Consorsbank](#) (Only in German)
- [Ing](#) (Only in German)
- [DKB](#) (Only in German)

We advise to keep the following aspects in mind when deciding for a German bank:

- Banking services
- Availability of Services in English
- Maintenance and withdrawal fees (special conditions for students)
- Online services/ App
- Credit Card options and fees
- ATMs network
- Customer support in English and/or other languages

### Which documents are required to open a German bank account?

The documents required to open a bank account in a German bank might be different depending on the provider you choose. Some documents might be:

- Passport
- Visa/Permit of residence
- Address (city registration/contract)

Some banks have the possibility to open an account online. We recommend you to contact different banks and check their requirements. Most German banks offer fee free bank accounts for students.

### What is a blocked bank account? And do I need it?

A blocked account (Sperrkonto) is a special type of bank account for international students in Germany. A blocked bank account resembles proof that you have sufficient financial resources to cover your expenses for the planned duration of your stay in Germany. Despite the fact that there are other ways to show one's financial standing the blocked account is the most required and common one to prove your financial resources.

The blocked account is required in most cases for **international (non-EU) students**. You will need a blocked account if you are **not** presenting a Verpflichtungserklärung (formal obligation). If you are receiving financial support from a **scholarship** you might not need a blocked account, but you have to present proof of the scholarship and the given amount. **Please verify this information with your local [German Federal Foreign Office](#).**

## How does a blocked bank account work?

In a blocked bank account, you deposit an amount of money, which is set by the registration office and shall cover your living costs for the duration of your residence permit. Since January 2020 the presumed **annual** requirement that must be transferred to the blocked account when applying for a visa is 11,904€ (992,-€ per month).

Since it is a blocked account you are only allowed to withdraw an amount of **992€ per month**. This matches the minimum amount of money you are expected to need for your monthly living expenses. **Important:** you are never allowed to withdraw or use more than 992€ per month from the blocked account. Not even in an emergency or special circumstances! We therefore advise you to deposit only the necessary amount (set amount + banking fee) and open a regular bank account in addition for everyday use.

Usually, you have to deposit the amount covering one year (2 semesters) and will likewise get a residence permit for one year. Once you apply for an extension of the residence permit (as the MBA is a 3 or 4 semester program), you will again need to deposit the amount set for the duration of your extension. We strongly recommend you to verify the information with the [German Federal Foreign Office](#) before applying for a visa and with the [foreigner's registration office \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) once you are in Germany.

Furthermore, the blocked account can only be closed with the consent of the blocked account beneficiary, which is either the mission abroad or the competent foreigners' authority in Germany. A blocking notice therefore only ensures that adequate funds to cover living expenses are always available. It does not entitle the blocked account beneficiary to withdraw money from the blocked account.

It is easy to apply for a blocked account since most of the banks offering this kind of account for international students allow the possibility of doing everything online. Please see the next section for institutions offering blocked bank accounts.

**Tip:** We strongly recommend to only deposit the amount indicated by the provider in your blocked account. As mentioned above, you are not allowed to withdraw more than the set amount per month - not even in a case of emergency!



### Which Institutions do offer blocked bank accounts?

Listed below you can find links to different providers of blocked accounts (in alphabetical order). Some of them also offer a package for international students that contains both a blocked account and health insurance:

- [Coracle](#)
- [Deutsche Bank](#)
- [Expatrio](#)
- [Fintiba](#)

If you are already in Germany it is possible to also open a blocked account with local banks:

- [Commerzbank](#)
- [Deutsche Bank](#)
- [HypoVereinsbank](#)
- [Sparkasse](#)
- [Volksbank](#)

### Which documents are required to open a blocked bank account?

The documents required to open a blocked account may vary depending on the provider you choose and your nationality. We recommend that you should be able to provide:

1. Your valid Passport
2. The letter of admission from your University
3. A bank statement of your income/financial resources
4. The administrative fee
5. (If required) application form
6. Keep in mind the total amount you will need for the blocked account

### Should I transfer more money than required to the blocked bank account?

**No!** You should only transfer the amount that the bank indicates. If you transfer more money, it will still not be possible to get more money than 861€ per month.

Usually you need to deposit the amount set to cover the living expenses of one year (10332,- €) + the bank fee for opening + a buffer amount that each bank will indicate (includes bank fee for managing the account and to absorb the exchange rate of different currencies to euros).

Please remember that even in case of an **emergency it will not be possible to withdraw or use a bigger amount than 861€ per month**. That is why we strongly recommend to transfer exactly the amount the bank indicates to you.

Where can I get more information?

For further information on banking options, blocked account and the like, please check

- [Study in Germany - Money and Bank Accounts](#)
- [Simple Germany - Best Bank Account for English Speakers](#)
- [I am Expat - Banking in Germany](#)

## Studying & Living

### 12. Studying and Living in Darmstadt

Video: Studying and Living in Darmstadt

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8l2lmWJrCxE&t=4s>

Video: A short trip through Darmstadt and its universities

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGSNZ8T26bU&embeds\\_referring\\_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fmba.h-da.de%2F&embeds\\_referring\\_origin=https%3A%2F%2Fmba.h-da.de&source\\_ve\\_path=Mjg2NjY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGSNZ8T26bU&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fmba.h-da.de%2F&embeds_referring_origin=https%3A%2F%2Fmba.h-da.de&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjY)

## Why Darmstadt?

There are different reasons that make [Darmstadt](#) a great choice for studying and living there. Darmstadt is a medium-sized city with an approximated population of 150,000. It is a student city with over 41,000 students of three universities and has a rich cultural and social life.

Darmstadt is located in the Rhine-Main region, which is well known as the economic hub of Europe and Germany's most cosmopolitan region. The highly developed infrastructure attracts multinational companies to the region, offering interesting job opportunities during or after your MBA studies.

The city offers a broad range of cultural and social events, shopping, nightlife, music, sports, nature, and other recreational activities. Also, you are out in the nature in no time, as Darmstadt is surrounded by landscapes such as Odenwald, Bergstraße, or the romantic Rhine region.

However, if the city feels a bit too small for you, it takes just 30 minutes by train to get to Frankfurt am Main or the international airport. The central location of Darmstadt ensures very good transportation links to nearly any place in Europe, making it easy for you to explore any place you like.

Your student ID card, which is also your ticket for public transportation and covers most of the Hesse area, makes it easy to visit cities such as Frankfurt am Main, Wiesbaden, Mainz, Gießen, Marburg, Fulda and Limburg. You can even reach other European cities such as Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Paris, Brussels or Amsterdam in about 6 hours.

If you want to learn more about Darmstadt, please check the city's homepage on the topics [experience Darmstadt](#), [Living in Darmstadt](#) and [Location](#).

## Why h\_da?

Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences (**Hochschule Darmstadt** or short "h\_da") is a university that is focused on practical knowledge. All of our professors have worked in the industry at least 5 years before they were called to h\_da. This means you will receive experts' first hand practical and technical knowledge experience.

Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences is one of the largest practice-oriented state universities in Hesse. More than 17,000 students study at several campuses in the cities of Darmstadt and Dieburg. The university's range of courses and research expertise extends from engineering, mathematics and natural sciences, information science and computer science to economics and society as well as architecture, media and design. There are 12 departments with over 70 degree programmes with diploma, bachelor's and master's degrees.

There are around 1,000 people working at the h\_da as professors/lecturers or employees. The total student population is around 17,000 students, with 18-20% international students. This makes the h\_da a great opportunity for not only getting to know Germany and its culture but also students and cultures from around the world. It also enables you to discover new perspectives and other cultures while establishing contacts for your future.

The main building of the campus in Darmstadt is a highrise also known as the "cheese grater" due to its jagged aluminium panels which have become a trademark of the h\_da. The renovation work on Darmstadt's tallest building had the goal of more light, more space and a modern interior. The north side was glazed, the east side extended by a four-metre-wide extension. This created bright offices, seminar rooms, lecture halls and laboratories inside. The President's Office, Central Administration, AStA, Student Service Centre, Examination Office and the Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences can be found inside this building. The ground floor hosts the "Glaskasten" café run by the AStA.

If you like to get an insight into Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, check out our [virtual campus tour](#) or watch the [first semester welcome event of 2020](#), which was streamed and recorded due to the Corona Pandemia (start at minute 29.52).

## City of Science

Darmstadt is „City of Science“. This designation, which was awarded to the city in 1997 with a certificate by the Hessian ministry of the Interior, is recognising the national and international meaning of the city in the areas of science and research. Darmstadt earned the title through centuries of growth and is one of four German cities to which this title was awarded. With its high proportion of employees in the sectors of research and science on the job market, the city adopts a countrywide leading position. At this point, one out of ten inhabitants works in research or development. The demand for qualified employees in the city exceeds what the region can supply.

Darmstadt has an unusually high concentration of businesses, institutions and associations of extraordinary quality. Globally operating companies such as [Merck](#), [Software AG](#), [Kao Germany](#), Evonik-Röhm or [Schenk-Process](#) have distinctive departments of research and development at their disposal. Additionally, the mission control centre (ESOC – European Space Operation Centre) of the [European Space Agency](#) (ESA) is located in Darmstadt and is ‘Europe’s gateway to space’, monitoring all of ESA’s satellite missions from here.

## Digital City

Since 2010, the city of science and culture has been one of the ten most sustainable cities in Germany. In 2017, Darmstadt won the [Bitkom competition "Digital City"](#). The goal of the competition is to create a digital model city with international appeal. By implementing digital smart city technologies, Darmstadt has since been building an urban digital ecosystem with tangible benefits for citizens with its partners from science, politics and business.

The projects realized in the scope of the digital city focus on three key topics: Mobility & Environment, digital services & society, economy & technology. As one goal is to strengthen participation, there are different options to get involved in the ongoing projects. You can find a list and description of the projects [here](#).

## Meeting People

There are lots of opportunities to meet other (international) students and to network with other students from abroad. Some opportunities are to attend a German language course, to hang out in the student café "Glaskasten", to attend [university sports courses](#) or to move into a student residence.

Besides, there are some groups, that run events addressing students of all semesters to get in contact and build a network.

[ITI](#): The international tutors team is a service offered by the "Studierendenwerk" for all universities in Darmstadt. The tutors are students themselves and offer orientation about the universities and help with formalities and the language. They also organise different [activities](#) for students: leisure activities, excursions, tours, parties, cultural events, and workshops. Please find more information on their website.

[ESN Darmstadt](#): ESN is a student-run organisation at Technical University Darmstadt and University of Applied Sciences in Darmstadt and member of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), one of the biggest interdisciplinary student associations in Europe. They support the integration of all international students, helping you to settle into life in Germany and have an unforgettable experience.

## Leisure Activities

[Darmstadt](#) offers a broad range of leisure activities in and around the city. Whether you like to meet friends in a café or bar, go shopping, join the nightlife or like to be out in the nature, you will find a variety of options. You can also join group activities to explore the city and its surroundings. For example, the [international tutors team](#) offers leisure time activities throughout the year.

Some of the cultural highlights of Darmstadt are the „Jugendstil“ or „Art Nouveau“ buildings that you can find throughout the city, such as Mathildenhöhe with its “Hochzeitsturm” (wedding tower), the buildings of the museum, the Russian chapel, and the artists’ colony. “Hessisches Landesmuseum” is the most popular Museum in Darmstadt due to its multidisciplinary exhibition ranging from fossils found in the UNESCO World Heritage site Messel Pit to modern Art.

Cultural offers range from theatres, art galleries and museums to comedy, science slam or concerts. Besides of the Staatstheater and Centralstation, there are lots of smaller event locations. You can find a list of upcoming events in the “[P Magazin](#)” or the cities [event calendar](#).

The city hosts two big yearly events - Heinerfest and Schlossgrabenfest. The [Heinerfest](#) is a folk fest, which covers the whole city centre every first July weekend. The [Schlossgrabenfest](#) is a music, culture and culinary festival taking place in and around the historical residence castle each year in May. With around 100 bands and 400,000 visitors, it is one of the biggest inner city festivals in Germany.

Almost one hundred sports clubs offer more than 1,500 different opportunities to engage in sports. There is a climbing and boulder hall, a skatepark, an ice rink and lots of other opportunities to work out indoors or outdoors. Besides, as you are out in the nature quickly, Darmstadt is a good place for hiking, biking or horse riding.

In summer, two natural lakes in the city as well as several public swimming pools offer the opportunity to swim. Lake Woog is conveniently placed in the city and lake Grube Prinz von Hessen is a bigger lake placed in the woods northeast of Darmstadt. The spa “Jugendstilbad” in the original historical ambience from the year 1909 is open throughout the year.

The area where Darmstadt is located is one of the warmest areas in Germany. During the Summer, June-September, the average temperature is between 20°C and 25°C. June and August are the months with the most rain. While July is the most sunny month and the month with more light hours since the sun will set around 23:00hrs, January is the coldest month with 3°C on average.

If you want to learn more about Darmstadt, please check the city's homepage on the topics [experience Darmstadt](#), [Living in Darmstadt](#) and [Location](#). For more information on the surroundings, please check the section “The Vicinity - enjoy the Rhine-Main-Region”.

## Living Costs

Among the most important things you have to factor in when you plan to study in Germany are your **living expenses** which are usually ranging from 750€ to 1.000€ a month. According to statistics students in Germany spend around 850 euros per month for living costs on average.

The highest expenditure will be rent for accommodation. The expenses included in the estimated monthly costs are:

- Rent: 300€-500€
- Food: 200€-300€
- Health Insurance (Mandatory): 90€-120€
- Other\*: 150€-250€
- \*Including: mobile phone, internet contracts, clothes, learning aids, free time activities (recreation/culture/sports), travelling, etc.

**Tip:** To learn more about living costs in Germany, visit [Study-in-Germany](#).

In addition to your living costs, you need to pay the **semester contribution** (mandatory at every German university) for every semester enrolled. The semester fee becomes due twice a year and amounts to around 260-270€ (which includes your [Semester Ticket](#) for public transportation in the federal state of Hesse).

As master courses like the MBA are not state funded, you will need to pay the respective **tuition fee**. Please see the [MBA homepage](#) for further information on fees and scholarships.

To cover these expenses, we recommend you to make sure that you have sufficient financial resources to support yourself before travelling to Germany. If you have a blocked account you will be receiving 861€ per month (according to the requisites in 2021), an amount which should be enough to cover your expenses if you manage your expenses properly.



## Libraries and Learning Spaces

As a student you often have to refer to books and other resources/media from the library. In addition to the **h\_da library**, you can also make use of the **University and State Library of the State of Hessen**, located in Darmstadt and the **German National Library** in Frankfurt. Please find a more detailed description of each library, links and contact information in our [library information](#).

Each of the libraries offers spaces to study on your own and for group work. In addition, there are learning spaces for students at different locations at the campus. In D19 - the building where the MBA courses take place - there are two rooms reserved as learning spaces for students, as well as a kitchenette and a lounge.

Besides there are the university cafés, which are good options to work in groups either. At the main h\_da campus, you can find the "Glaskasten" and the "Menseria". In addition there is the café "Zeitraum" at the campus in Dieburg. The Studierendenwerk also runs cafés at the campus of the technical university in Darmstadt. You can find a complete list [here](#).

## Helpful German Terms

It is indeed very helpful to know some basic terms for everyday life - even if most people do understand at least some basic English. The first steps in learning German can easily be done online. Besides of a variety of apps, there are two online portals which we can highly recommend: [Deutsche Welle](#) and [Goethe Institut](#). In addition, you are welcome to register for a German Language Course at h\_da as soon as you got admitted to the MBA program.

As you will most likely come across some unfamiliar german terms, usually not taught on beginners level, we created a [glossary](#) for the most important things you may come across in the first time in Germany. You can find terms of the categories Application & Enrolment, Accomodation, University, General Administration and Living in Germany - each one with an english translation and a short desription.

### 13. German Language Courses

#### Why learn German?

Even though the entirety of classes and exams during your programme will be held in English, learning the German language is important for everyday life in Germany and will increase your chance on the German job market, as German is the main used language.

We highly encourage learning German for a successful stay in Darmstadt. Your intercultural experience will be enhanced if you are able to speak the local language while also learning about the culture. In addition to that, speaking the local language will enable you to settle in a lot quicker and to make friends more easily.

As you will most likely come across some unfamiliar German terms before you start a language course, we created a glossary for the most important things you may come across in the first time in Germany. You can find terms of the categories Application & Enrolment, Accommodation, University, General Administration and Living in Germany - each one with an English translation and a short description.

#### What is the best way to learn German?

First of all - there are multiple ways to learn a new language and which one is best depends on your preferences. However, it is recommended to practice the language besides of an official language course to get a feeling for the language and improve your speaking skills.

Good ways to learn German are for example by taking part in a German course offered by our language centre (see next section), by meeting people for tandem, making new friends, attend activities with other international students or study with online material. Please check the next sections for details and choose the option that suits the best for you.

## Does the university offer German Language Courses?

**Yes, it does!** The language centre of h\_da offers a variety of levels for German language courses. And the best? They are entirely free of charge for all students enrolled at h\_da!

As soon as you have been enrolled as an MBA student at h\_da, you can start a language course. In order to meet the application deadlines for the courses, please make sure to get in contact as early as possible, even before your enrolment.

There are two types of courses offered:

- **Intensive language courses** starting a month before each semester officially starts (September and March). These courses are scheduled for 3-4 weeks, Monday to Friday from 8am to 1pm. They are meant to prepare you for the language courses during the semester and give you a head start before your studies begin. The intensive courses start at Level A1.1, A2.1 or B1.1.
- **Semester courses** starting at the beginning of each semester (October and April). These courses are scheduled once a week for 4 class units (around 3 hours course time) during the whole semester. The courses are meant to further your language skills and to practise reading, speaking and listening. The semester courses start at Level A1.2, A2.2 or B1.2.

Unless you did a **placement test** certifying a certain level of language skills, **it is mandatory to participate in the A1.1 intensive course**, to take part in the regular courses during the semester. To be allowed to start in a higher level than A1.1, you also need to sit a placement test. This test is offered online and you will be sent a link as soon as you register for a course.

For more information, please get in touch with the [program management or administration](#) of your MBA program.

### Are there other institutes offering German language courses?

There is a variety of private language institutes in Darmstadt and around. These may be helpful for you, if you already have a German language level higher than B2 – which is where the university's courses usually end.

[Goethe Institute](#): High quality language courses for different skill levels (A1-C2), costs between 100€-270€.

[Volkshochschule Darmstadt](#): Courses focused on everyday life and professional area. Different levels are offered every semester with a cost around 100€-280€ depending of how many sessions the course has.

[VHS Darmstadt-Dieburg](#): Courses focus on everyday life and professional area from A1 to B1 level. Courses start every month, comprise of 100 hours and cost about 280€.

[Berlitz](#) Different level courses and group types can be offered there. For more information we recommend visiting their website.

[Lernstudio Barbarossa](#) It also offers courses of different levels and needs. For more details, we recommend visiting their website.

### What other opportunities do I have to learn German?

You can also learn German through self-learning, which can be flexible according to your schedule and activities. On the other hand, there is no personal guidance, feedback, or clarifications. We would suggest these options as a complement of your German courses or to start learning from home.

Please find some offers we would recommend below:

[German Academic Exchange Service](#): General advice for improving your German skills.

[Deutsche Welle](#): Free e-learning platform for different skill levels.

It is always a good opportunity to search for activities, where you get in contact with other students to improve your language skills. For example, we would recommend the activities of the [intercultural tutors team](#) of the Studierendenwerk Darmstadt.

Language apps like [duolingo](#) are a good opportunity to start with. In addition to the most known apps, there are a lot of options that go beyond the very basics. We found a good overview [here](#) (please note, that we did not check each app or the blog as such).

## 14. Working in Germany

Is it possible to work whilst studying?

Yes, it is possible. However, it is important to know that there are labour laws that precisely stipulate how many hours students are allowed to work. The regulations vary according to where the students come from.

Students from the **EU/EEA** (also students from Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, or Switzerland) have the same entitlement as German students and open access to the job market in Germany. You can work up to 20 hours per week while studying or respectively earn up to 450€ per month on average. If you exceed this, you will be required to pay into the German social security system and you will not be allowed to stay in the student tariff for health insurance.

If you are from a **non-European** country, you are permitted to work only 120 full or 240 half days a year. This also includes voluntary [work placements](#). There are exceptions for student assistant or research assistant jobs in universities, the Studierendenwerk or the AStAs, which are exempted from the time restrictions. If you wish to work more, you need a permit from the "AgenturfürArbeit" (Federal Employment Agency) and the foreigners' authorities. Please note, that Non-EU students are not allowed to work self-employed as a freelancer.

**Please note:** The labour laws pertaining to international students are very restrictive and if you break them, you risk being expelled from the country. For further information, please check the [German Academic Exchange Services'](#) homepage for detailed Information on work regulations for Students.

We strongly advise you that if you have any questions regarding working as a foreign student in Germany to contact the [Ausländerbehörde \(foreigners registration office\)](#) since they can give you up to date information, matching your individual case.

### How do I find a job (as a student)?

For the majority of students in Germany, it's quite normal to work part-time while studying. As an international student, you are allowed to work in Germany as well (please see the section "Is it possible to work whilst studying?" for further information).

In Germany, it is very common that companies post job vacancies on their own websites. Therefore, you should have a look at the websites of the companies you are interested in. Some examples of large enterprises located in Darmstadt are for example: [Merck](#), [Telekom](#), [Software AG](#), [Döhler](#), and [Evonik](#).

Besides, you can also check the following general job portals:

- The [job Portal of h\\_da](#)
- The job portal of the [faculty of economics and business administration](#)
- The job portal of the [local job center](#) (AgenturfürArbeit):
- [Stepstone](#) is an online job portal which is specialized in skilled workers and executives
- [Monster](#) is an Online job portal, similar to Stepstone
- The job portal of the [local newspaper "Darmstädter Echo"](#)
- The job portal of the [local newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung"](#)

### Do I need to speak German to find a job in Germany?

The number of job openings is very limited if you do not speak German. If you want to try anyhow, we recommend addressing companies situated in Darmstadt but operating worldwide.

However, we recommend making the most of the opportunity to take a language course while studying for your Master's degree. Of course, you can do an entire degree at a German university in English and fellow students might not have a problem answering you with a bit more than a "yes" or a "no". For personal contact with future colleagues, it is definitely advisable to have a command of the German language.

The University does offer German language courses free of cost for all students enrolled. Please see the section "German Language Courses" for further information.

### What are the requirements to find a job in Germany?

There are no special requirements for student jobs. Typical jobs for students, where you usually do not need any entrance qualification, are for example waitressing, cashiering or working as bike courier. However, please keep in mind that even though it is not impossible to find a part-time job speaking only English, it will be easier if you can speak basic German.

As an MBA student, you will have a bachelors' degree as well as some work experience. Therefore, we would suggest to aim for a qualified part-time job in the field of your first degree. Most companies offer jobs for students (Werksstudierendenjobs), which are often leading to a cooperation for a master thesis project. Herefore you will need a certificate showing that you are currently enrolled in a university.

If you want to apply for a qualified job or even full-time employment (when enrolling in the part-time MBA program), you will most certainly need to meet some formal criteria like a university degree in a specific course of study. The job requirements differ from job to job and you can find a precise description in the respective job proposal.

### What can I earn as a student?

Students in Germany can earn up to €450 per month on an annual average tax-free. If you earn more than this, you will receive an income tax number and have automatic tax deductions from your salary. Some employers may withhold income tax despite the low income, but you can reclaim this after submitting your income tax statement.

**Please note**, that if you exceed this amount, you will lose your student status. This means, for example, you will no longer be allowed to stay in the student tariff of your health insurance.

**Please note:** If you stay in Germany based on a residence permit for the purpose of studying, you need the permission of the Ausländerbehörde (foreigner's office) to work more than 20 hours a week and/or earn more than 450€. Work regulations for international students are very strict. You risk losing your residence permit, when exceeding the regulations.

### Where can I get assistance for finding a (student) job?

The Studierendenwerk Darmstadt provides assistance in searching for a job with the help of the comeTOgether Tutors. We recommend you to visit their [website](#) for more information.

The Career Center of the University of Darmstadt offers a job portal that will help you to find different opportunities for students, as well as guidance through the process. You can also receive an assessment on [How To Apply](#) in German and in English, and a check-up of your CV and Cover Letter. Click [here](#) for more information about the Career Center and start your search.

### How long can I stay in Germany for job search after graduation?

Students from non-EU countries are allowed to remain in Germany to seek a job for a maximum of 18 months after graduating. These 18 months pass quicker than you think, so we advise you to start job hunting during the final semester of your Master's degree, or at the latest four months before finishing your studies. While looking for full-time permanent employment after you finished your studies, you are allowed to work as much as you like.

You should start planning your career in Germany while still studying for your Master's degree. It is often helpful to have Job Experience from a part-time student job when searching for full-time employment. With a degree from a German university, especially when complemented by job experience, numerous job opportunities are available to you as an international graduate on the German job market as well as internationally.

The German Federal Government runs the website "[make it in Germany](#)", which we highly recommend checking for further information on job seeking and career opportunities in Germany.



## 15. The Vicinity - enjoy the Rhein-Main-Region!

### The Rhine-Main Region

If you want to explore the area around Darmstadt, there are countless possibilities no matter what kind of leisure activity you prefer to do; cultural, historic, culinary or sporty there's something new to explore for everyone.

Due to its favourable location in the Rhine valley and its close proximity to different mountain ranges like the Odenwald, Taunus and Spessart there are a wide range of ways to spend your free time, no matter if you prefer metropolitan cities, small idyllic villages with half-timbered houses, castles, parks, riversides or mountains. Aside from that, there is also plenty of typical German food, beer and wine to discover. This variety of options concentrated within such a short distance is unique in Germany!

In the next sections, you can find some of the interesting cities worth a visit around Darmstadt, as well as some areas to go to, when wanting to enjoy nature.

In addition to the these areas, places and sights there is a lot more to see in the Rhine-Main region but this document should give you a good overview of the area and the variety of what the region has to offer! For more information and further inspiration please check: <https://www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/en>

### Frankfurt

[Frankfurt](#), which is only about 20 minutes north of Darmstadt, is the financial capital of Germany and home to the European Central Bank (ECB) as well as the biggest airport in Germany and among the biggest ones in Europe.

Frankfurt has a rich cultural offering featuring the opera House ("Alte Oper" – Old Opera), where many well-known operas were performed for the first time. The city is also the birthplace of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

It also has a high density of art galleries (around 40) as well as plenty of remarkable museums such as the natural history museum "Senckenberg-Museum", which is the second-largest of its type in Germany and has the biggest exhibition of large dinosaur fossils in Europe.

Frankfurt's reconstructed old town is a popular destination for locals and visitors alike. Located directly next to the historical museum as well as the river Main, you can experience the old town in many ways.

## Wiesbaden

[Wiesbaden](#), which is the capital of the federal state of Hesse, is located in the heart of the Rheingau wine region and is one of the oldest spa towns in Europe. A great visit for a day trip to Wiesbaden is the Kaiser-Friedrich-Therme, a historical Art Nouveau spa.

Wiesbaden is known for its beautiful buildings like the 'Kurhaus', which does not only host a concert hall, but a convention centre and a casino as well. In addition, Wiesbaden offers opportunities for luxury shopping and a variety of cultural activities.

## Mainz

Located south of Wiesbaden on the other side of the Rhine river, which marks the border between the federal state of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate, lies [Mainz](#).

Founded by the Romans in the 1st century BC, Mainz has a remarkable cultural and historic heritage. The catholic cathedral and the Gutenberg Museum, exhibiting the original Gutenberg Bible (the first book printed with a movable-type printing press, which was invented by Johannes Gutenberg) only to name a few.

Not only is Mainz the capital of Rhineland-Palatinate but also Germany's wine capital and gateway to the region's vineyards. Popular destinations to explore German wine culture are **Bingen** and **Rüdesheim** a bit further down the Rhine from Mainz. The Rheingau is famous for its riverscapes, vineyards producing the renowned Riesling and historic castles along the River.

## Heidelberg

[Heidelberg](#) is located south of the Hessian Ried in the federal State of Baden-Württemberg and is popular among tourists from all over the world. It is a university town situated on the river Neckar featuring Germany's oldest university founded in 1386 as well as internationally renowned research facilities. It was also designated a 'City of literature' by the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

One of Heidelberg's most iconic landmarks is the Heidelberg Castle, which dominates the view of the old town. The oldest parts of the castle date back to the 1200s and the castle was expanded up until 1650. Much of it was destroyed during wars and fires in the 17th and 18th century and it has only been partially rebuilt. Yet, the castle is considered as one of the most important renaissance buildings north of the alps.

Additionally, the baroque old town with many typical German restaurants and the scenic setting providing beautiful views whilst strolling along the 'Philosopher's Walk' (Philosophenweg) make Heidelberg a tourist attraction.

## Hanau

The town of [Hanau](#) is located north-west of Darmstadt. It is the birthplace of the Brothers Grimm, world-famous for collecting and publishing folklore and fairy-tales such as "Cinderella", "Snow White" or "Beauty and the Beast" during the 19th century.

To celebrate this heritage, the Philippsruhe Palace with its park and amphitheatre acts as a backdrop for the annual Brothers Grimm Fairy-tale Festival. Aside from the Philippsruhe Palace, the former spa Wilhelmsbad with the respective Park are worth a visit as well as it is home to the puppet and toy museum of the state of Hesse (Hessisches Puppenmuseum). It displays puppets and toys from around the world and throughout the periods of the ancient to the modern world.

## Bergstraße

The [Bergstraße](#) (Mountain Road) is an ancient trade route dating back to the Romans and running from Wiesloch in Baden-Württemberg 80km north all the way to Darmstadt. The Bergstraße also marks the border between the Rhine lowlands in the west and the Odenwald mountain range in the East. Many of the towns and villages along the Bergstraße feature picturesque medieval half-timbered structures.

Furthermore, there is a chain of castles along the hilltops east of the Bergstraße, the northernmost of them being castle Frankenstein near Darmstadt, which is thought to be the inspiration for Mary Shelley's world-famous novel. However, one of the most remarkable buildings, which has been designated as world cultural heritage sight by UNESCO, is the Carolingian era Lorsch Abbey, dating back to the 9th century.

## Hessian Ried

Further south along the Rhine you can explore the **Hessian Ried**, a lowland region between the Rhine in the west and the Bergstraße (mountain road) in the east. It is home to the nature reserve "[Kühkopf-Knoblochsaue](#)" with around 2500 hectare. The Kühkopf is an island that was formed by a cut-off branch of the river during the time when the Rhine was straightened and is now enclosed by the rhine and the old river bend.

This hessian ried is a nice place to go for a bike ride along the river rhine or through the nature reserve "Kühkopf-Knoblochsaue". From Darmstadt, you can get there within 30 minutes by bike. The region is also popular to go jet skiing on the rhine, canoeing or stand-up paddling on the old river bend, or hiking through the nature reserve.

## Odenwald

The [Odenwald](#) is a low mountain range covering 2.500 square kilometres and located south-east of Darmstadt. Most of it belongs to the State of Hesse but it is also stretching into Baden-Württemberg in the south and Bavaria in the east. If you want to have a break from the fast paced life in the city or from studying, this region has a lot to offer.

Due to its distribution of forests, mountains, fields and meadows and a network of 10.000km of hiking trails, the Odenwald is very popular among hikers, cyclists and climbers. There are many different destinations for day trips that are worth visiting.

One of the more popular ones is the [Felsenmeer](#) (sea of boulders) below the top of Felsberg near Lautertal-Reichenbach, consisting of countless weathered rocks strewn across the hill like a stream. The Romans used this area as a quarry and on a lot of the rocks you can still see tool marks from Roman times. One of the most outstanding items the Romans have left is a giant column. In close proximity to the Felsenmeer, there are two popular cliffs for climbing: Hohenstein and Borstein.

Next to the beautiful nature of the Odenwald there are numerous pretty towns and villages featuring half-timbered buildings such as the famous late gothic town hall of [Michelstadt](#). In addition to the castles along the Bergstraße, there are many more castles and ruins to be explored in the Odenwald.

## Rheingau

The [Rheingau](#) is one of Germany's most romantic landscapes and famous for its world-class wines. Stretching along the [UNESCO World Heritage Upper Middle Rhine Valley](#) (Oberes Mittelrheintal) with its steep terraced vineyards on either side of the river peppered with historic villages and some 40 hilltop fortresses and castles, the region is a wonderful place for a boat or hiking trip - and of course a wine tasting.

Places you shouldn't miss are Eltville, Rudesheim and the Eberbach Abbey (Kloster Eberbach). The region also hosts famous cultural highlights, such as the [Rheingau music festival](#), the annual event "[Rhine in Flames](#)" or the Rheingau wine tasting in the end of each summer.

## Spessart

Similar to the Odenwald, the [Spessart](#) has a lot to offer for hikers, cyclists and sightseers alike just with added Bavarian charm. One of the outstanding sights for example is **Mespelbrunn Castle**, a picturesque late medieval/early renaissance moated castle dating back to 1412 and landmark for the Spessart region.

Further north along the Main at the western edge of the Spessart lies **Aschaffenburg**, an idyllic historical town known for the Johannisburg castle, one of the major buildings of German Renaissance built in the time of 1605-1614. Apart from that, Schönbusch Park with the Schönbusch castle is worth a visit as well as the Pompejanum – a replica of a Roman town house discovered in Pompeii, commissioned by King Ludwig I and opened in 1850.

**Miltenberg** is the gateway between the Odenwald and the Spessart mountain range. Its beautiful old town is located on one of the Main's river banks and features many half-timbered houses dating back to the 15th to 18th centuries as well as the oldest hotel in Germany ("Zum Riesen" – The Giant), which is also one of the oldest continuously operating hotels in the world dating back to at least 1411. The list of guests that have stayed at 'Zum Riesen' includes numerous famous personalities, ranging from several Holy Roman Emperors, Napoléon Bonaparte and Elvis Presley. Additionally, Miltenberg is home of the Faust Brewery, the oldest Brewery in the Rhine-Main Region and one way to have an authentic Bavarian experience.

## Taunus

North of Darmstadt lies the [Taunus](#) mountain range, which features the highest mountain in the state of Hesse, Großer Feldberg, at around 880m. The area not only attracts cyclists, hikers and runners alike but also features a rich historic heritage. The Saalburg, northwest of Bad Homburg, is a roman fort along the UNESCO World Heritage site 'Limes Germanicus', the former external frontier of the roman empire. Kaiser Wilhelm II ordered a complete reconstruction of the fort in 1897 which is the only completely reconstructed roman fort in Germany.