

## *Information for International Students at the Dept. of Geosciences, University of Bremen*

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# Five Reasons to Study in Germany

[https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/plan-your-studies/5-reasons-to-study-in-germany\\_70674.php](https://www.study-in-germany.de/en/plan-your-studies/5-reasons-to-study-in-germany_70674.php)

## 1 Before leaving your Home Country...

You would like to study at the University of Bremen and are now preparing for your move. You have to contact the German diplomatic representation in your home country for a visa, and arrange for certified documentation of your financial support. We recommend you to take care of several other issues before leaving your home country, since it will be very difficult, time consuming and costly to arrange them while in Germany. Make sure to bring certified copies of the originals and certified English translations of the documents required for your enrolment. Ensure that your passport is valid throughout the entire period of your residency in Germany. If your passport expires while you are living in Germany, you may have to turn home for a renewal. Also, if family members wish to accompany you, please clarify with the German diplomatic representation in your home country that they are eligible to do so under the Aliens' Act.

Please make sure you have with you:

- a valid passport containing your student visa to Germany (NOT a tourist visa!)
- your notification of admission to the University of Bremen, or the letter of acceptance to the Master programme you applied to
- proof of financial security, financial resources, or financial support
- certified copies of the original AND certified (!) English translations of your secondary school diploma, your academic diploma(s) and transcripts, your academic degrees and awards, and your language certificates and diploma(s).

You may bring with you:

- your personal medicines and favoured remedies,
- health insurance documents (if available) and your vaccination records
- rain & windproof clothing
- some cash (euros) or credit cards to cover initial expenses upon your arrival in Germany
- your international driver's licence (if available)
- some passport photographs
- a power plug and a voltage converter, if necessary, to match your electronic equipment to the German electricity supply (230V/10 or 20A/ 50Hz)
- your electronic devices for studying – we recommend a laptop.

### 1.1 Visa and residence permit

In accordance with international treaties and agreements, Germany does not require a visa from citizens of the EU, Norway, Switzerland, and the USA. Citizens of all other nations have to obtain a visa to enter Germany. Three types of visa are available:

- **Language course visa:** A language course visa cannot be changed into a student visa.
- **Student applicant visa:** A student applicant visa is valid for three months only. The German diplomatic representation in your home country issues this type of visa only to students who have not yet received notification of admission to the institution of higher education to which they have applied. After admission, the student applicant visa has to be changed into a student visa.
- **Student visa:** A student visa is valid for one year. This type is the only one valid for a course of study other than a short-term language course in Germany. To obtain a student visa, please visit the German diplomatic representation in your home country. To apply you will have to present a valid passport, your letter of acceptance at the University of Bremen, and proof of your financial resources or support. Please contact the German diplomatic representation in your home country for more details concerning the application requirements and procedure.

## 2 General information concerning Bremen and the University of Bremen

Bremen is a lovely, interesting, historical and at the same time picturesque modern city. It definitely is worthwhile exploring it. We recommend that you pay a visit to the tourist information early during your time in Bremen, to learn about the most interesting attractions (<https://www.bremen-tourism.de/>). To get around on campus you will find the campus map useful (s. link below).

### 2.1 The City of Bremen

The City of Bremen lies on the lower reaches of the river *Weser* in the middle of the North German Plain. Just a short distance downstream, the river estuary flows into the North Sea, passing the string of East Frisian Islands which enclose the *Wattenmeer*, a unique biosphere nature reserve and national park within the State of Lower Saxony. The capital of Lower Saxony, Hannover, the Hanseatic Town of Hamburg and the neighbouring Netherlands are all just one hour away by train. Nowadays, almost 570,000 people live in the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen which, together with its sister town of Bremerhaven, makes up the smallest state in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Bremen can look back over a long tradition of commerce and maritime trade, a proud history which has also left its mark on the town of today. The ports which have had such an impact on the development of the town made Bremen famous as a marketplace for goods from all over the world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Bremen and Bremerhaven were also important as a gateway for passenger traffic. All told, more than seven million people left their country via the ports of the two-town state. Bremerhaven became the largest port of departure on the European mainland for adventurous emigrants seeking a new life in the New World. Whereas, until recently, shipbuilding was of the upmost importance for the economic development of the State of Bremen, this has since been superseded by other industries and now it is the automotive branch and car manufacturing, the aviation industry, space technology and the foodstuffs industry which have been choosing Bremen as their preferred location.

To residents and visitors alike, the town is known as a town steeped in tradition, a green and friendly place, full of cultural activity and offering a high quality of life. The seven theatres located here regularly host opera, drama, music and dancing ensembles and Bremen is home to several smaller private theatre companies. The visitor will also find a large number of cultural collections of scientific repute, including *Schloß Schönebeck* in the suburb of Vegesack, which holds a collection documenting the maritime history of this part of the town; the *Focke Museum*, where many artifacts concerning the artistic and cultural history of Bremen are on display; and the *Übersee Museum*, a veritable showcase depicting various ways of life from Alaska to Africa, not to forget several cultural museums and art galleries. An absolute must is the *Universum Science Center*, located right on campus. It is a museum focused on the themes “human body”, “nature”, and “cosmos”, challenging your senses: feel, hear, see and touch what life is all about. A journey around the world, always following the 8th degree of longitude is possible in the *Klimahaus* in Bremerhaven. Discover the climate of our planet at close quarters and get to know the people living there. Nearby, the *Auswandererhaus* – the German emigration center, the *Schiffahrtsmuseum* and the *Zoo am Meer* offer the possibility to deepen your knowledge about Bremen history, tradition and arctic animals.

The *Kunsthalle*, situated on the site of the old city wall, regularly houses exhibitions of modern and classical art. In the immediate vicinity is the *Gerhard Marcks House*, with its collection of some of the great sculptor's work. The *Paula-Becker-Modersohn House* in *Böttcherstraße* has on show a number of works by this artist, who was a member of the famous artists' colony which settled in the village of Worpswede near Bremen. Located in the alluring atmosphere created by a converted coffee-roasting factory on a small island in the river is the *Neue Museum Weserburg*, which boasts the biggest collection of contemporary art in Europe.

Beside this abundance of cultural opportunities, Bremen can offer a lot by way of leisure time attractions. For instance, there are plenty of opportunities for long walks along the Weser Dyke, built alongside the river to protect the town from floods: Then there is the huge park known as the Bürgerpark, the gardens on the site of the old city wall called the Wallanlagen, or the magnificent botanical garden called the Rhododendronpark. Many people simply prefer to take it easy in some of the numerous cafés which can be found not only in the parks, but also in the city itself. The 'alternative' district, known in Bremen as the *Viertel*, literally vibrates with life, especially at night. There are pubs and restaurants to suit everyone and catering for all culinary desires, where you can spend a "gemütlichen" evening. The promenade along the River Weser, called Schlachte, offers a wide range of international bars and restaurants.

If you want to be more active, Bremen can offer almost every kind of sporting activity, from rowing in the Bürgerpark, to a serious workout in the fitness gym - something for everyone. Very near to the university you can swim in the lake called Unisee. The quality of the water in the River Weser is so good nowadays that one can take a bath in the river, too.

## 2.2 The University of Bremen

Bremen is a young university town. The university formed in 1971. Ever since it was founded, the University of Bremen has purposefully pursued a policy of creating close links between its teaching and research activities. A good example is its approach to studying in projects ("Bremen Model"), which fosters elements of independent research-based learning oriented to societal issues. Today, this is underscored in a number of study elements, the strong orientation to interdisciplinary studies, and the University's guiding principles. Implementation of research-based learning is facilitated by the culture of internal consensus. Especially characteristic for its teaching profile is the University's focus on research-based learning at an early stage of studies, the anchoring of a comprehensive program of General Studies in the curriculum, and the supportive integration of e-learning components. Today roughly 23,000 people are active as students, teachers, researchers, or employees of the University of Bremen. It is the science center of Northern Germany, renowned for its strengths in the sciences and engineering disciplines, as well as the humanities and the social sciences. The exceptional quality of research in Bremen is due, among other things, to the university's close collaboration with numerous independent research institutes, both on campus and around the region. Their competence and vitality have attracted more than four hundred research and business ventures to the technology park around campus, creating a nationally recognized hub of high technology.

For many years now, the University of Bremen has been among the **top league** of German universities in the area of research. Research conducted at the University of Bremen is interdisciplinary. In other words: Bremen research transcends the borders of traditional disciplines and is embedded within six research concentrations, also known as **high-profile areas**:

- Ocean, Polar and Climate Research
- Materials Science and their Technologies
- Minds, Media and Machines
- Social Change, - Politics and State
- Health Science
- Logistics

The University of Bremen numbers among the most successful universities in Germany with regard to acquiring **external funding** for research projects. In 2017 the University's scholars and scientists acquired some 110 million euros of research funding — almost one third of the University's entire budget.

The 12 Faculties offer courses and study programmes in over 120 subjects. Courses are components of the regular teaching programme within faculties, or may be part of special programmes, for example, the summer university, or international Master programmes designed to provide intense training on selected subjects. For detailed information on courses and programmes offered, please visit the Internet presentation of the University of Bremen ([www.uni-bremen.de](http://www.uni-bremen.de)) and find the web site of the faculty representing your special field of interest (<http://www.uni-bremen.de>).

## **The academic year 2021/2022**

### *Winter semester*

Orientation week:	October 11 – 15, 2021
Start of lectures	October 18, 2021
Christmas break:	December 23, 2021 – January 05, 2022
End of lectures	February 04, 2022

### *Summer semester*

Start of lectures	April 19, 2022
End of lectures	July 22, 2022;

### *Public holidays in Bremen*

German Unification Day	October 3
Reformation Day	October 31
Christmas	December 25 & 26
New Year's Day	January 1
Easter	April 15 (Good Friday), April 17 & 18, 2022
Labor Day	May 01
Ascension Day	May 26, 2022
Whitsun	June 05 & 06, 2022

The academic year at the University of Bremen lasts from October 1 to September 30 in the following year. The academic year is divided into two semesters: The winter semester comprises the months October to March and the summer semester lasts from April till September. Each semester includes periods during which lectures are held, and a so-called lecture-free period.

Many departments organise their own introductory and orientation talks and meetings prior to lectures beginning proper in the winter semester. As a rule, examinations take place at the end of the lecture period. In some cases examinations may also be held at a later date within the lecture-free period. Term papers and other more lengthy written assignments are often undertaken during the period when lectures and courses do not take place. At the Department of Geosciences some courses (like laboratories, field work or special projects) are being scheduled as blocks assigned to a few weeks within the semester breaks.

## **3 Campus facilities**

### **3.1 Campus map**

Of main interest for new and international students may be the availability and variety, as well as the location, of individual facilities on campus, for example, catering services, computer and library facilities. You will find the campus map a useful source of information concerning availability and campus geography: [Campus Map](#).

To get to the university from the airport or the main train station, simply take the tram no. 6, it goes directly to the University. In search for the GEO-building, get off at the stop "Universität/ Zentralbereich", walk up the stairs on the other side of the road, and from there you see the department on the right hand side.

### **3.2 'Studierendenwerk' (Student Welfare Service)**

The task of the 'Studierendenwerk' is to take care of the economic, social, health and cultural needs of students studying at universities in Bremen. Some examples of this are: catering services in the refectories and cafeterias, administration of student halls of residence, private accommodation service

for students, psychological-therapeutic and cultural support. You will find more information with contact persons and phone numbers on the Internet at [Studierendenwerk](#)

On the campus map you will find the major catering facility, the 'Mensa', located pretty centrally on campus. The Mensa menu is published weekly on the Internet ([Food and Drink](#)). Upon presentation of the student ID card, students may benefit from cheaper prices, available as a result of the subsidization policies of the city of Bremen. The Studierendenwerk Bremen has introduced a 'Mensa card', a rechargeable chip card which facilitates the fast, cashless purchase of food and beverages. Mensa cards are available through an information booth in the Mensa building. Besides the Mensa, students will find for example small restaurants, a Chinese take-away and cafés on campus.

### **3.3 'Zentrum für Netze' (ZfN) (Computer Network Centre)**

The Computer Network Centre 'Zentrum für Netze' operates the campus network and the central IT services as well as the university's identity management. Furthermore, it is responsible for the support and training of users, the operation of the central computer pools for courses and for the management and issuing software licenses. With your enrolment, you will receive a free @uni-bremen.de e-mail-address.

The ZfN is located on the 1st floor of the 'SFG' building (SFG on the campus map),

Enrique-Schmidt-Str. 7

Opening hours:

Mon to Fri 10:00 to 12:00.

Phone +49 421 218 61305

Fax +49 421 218 61306

E-Mail: [zfn-verwaltung@uni-bremen.de](mailto:zfn-verwaltung@uni-bremen.de)

Website: [ZfN](#)

The Zentrum für Netze operates the university's central e-mail server for all students and employees. New students and lecturers need to activate their university account before first use. Students will find the required activation code in their semester documents.

Students who do not possess their own computer may use public terminals, available on campus in a number of buildings, among them the ZfN. Please ask for room numbers.

The University of Bremen has established an 11 Mbit WLAN (WireLess Access Network), which allows students and university staff possessing a notebook with WLAN card to access the Internet from anywhere on campus.

### **3.4 'Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek' (SuUB) (State and University Library)**

The University of Bremen is host to the State and University Library (SuUB). The library holds 3 million books and a variety of other media as well as 13,000 regularly subscribed journals. This formidable academic resource services the needs of students, researchers, and the general public. An easy-to-use Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) allows self-serviced loan and return. OPAC, as well as the online inter-library loan system, compact-disc databases, and electronic books can be accessed via the SuUB homepage ([Library](#)).

The main library is located in the Bibliothekstrasse.

Public hours:

Mon - Fri 8 am - 10 pm

Sat 10 am - 6 pm

Phone +49 421 218 59500

Fax +49 421 218 59610

E-mail: [suub@suub.uni-bremen.de](mailto:suub@suub.uni-bremen.de)

To sign up for an SuUB user card, students have to fill in the application card, which is available at the front desk in the library, and present this together with their student ID, passport and the confirmation of registration (on white paper copy) which they obtained from the Residents' Registration Office.

Every first Wednesday of the month at 11 am the SuUB gives an introduction to the use of the library, on how to search the catalogues and how to borrow books and journals. - Central Library (uni campus), no registration necessary.

Users who wish to work in the library will find that the available facilities suit their needs. In addition, photocopiers are available to copy papers of interest for your homework. Copy cards are available at the front desk.

### **3.5 Student counselling**

#### **Assistance for studies**

All questions regarding your studies, e.g. regarding course sequence and the lectures on offer should be addressed to the consultancy for study affairs at your department. Here you can obtain answers to specific questions, e.g. concerning examinations, and learn about new contact persons. You will find an overview of the 12 faculties and their study advisors on the Internet at: [Student Counseling](#)

At the **Department of Geosciences** your most important contact persons are:

Prof. Dr. Heiko Pälike, Dean of Studies, Room GEO 2150, Phone +49 421 218 65980,  
[hpaelike@marum.de](mailto:hpaelike@marum.de)

Dr. Ulrike Wolf-Brozio & Dr. Barbara Ventura, Referees for Study Affairs, Room GEO 1330 + 1350,  
Phone +49 421 218 65004 + 65005,  
[studfb5@uni-bremen.de](mailto:studfb5@uni-bremen.de)

Examination Office, Room GEO 1170 & 1180, Phone +49 421 218 65012, -13,  
[master.promotion.fb5@uni-bremen.de](mailto:master.promotion.fb5@uni-bremen.de), [stefan.siemers@uni-bremen.de](mailto:stefan.siemers@uni-bremen.de)

#### **Study workshop**

The 'Studierwerkstatt' offers e.g. courses on how to learn learning techniques and skills (programme information [Studierwerkstatt](#)).

#### **Psychological advice office**

At the 'Psychologische Beratungsstelle' (PBS) you can receive advice e.g. on how to overcome fear of examinations or on personal problems (Phone: +49 421 2201 11310, Email: [pbs@stw-bremen.de](mailto:pbs@stw-bremen.de)).

#### **Information for physically challenged students**

A special booklet is available for physically challenged students, giving lots of useful tips and the names of contact persons.

You can get personal advice from:

- KIS: Ingrid Zondervan, Phone +49 421 218 61050, [kis@uni-bremen.de](mailto:kis@uni-bremen.de), [www.uni-bremen.de/kis](http://www.uni-bremen.de/kis)
- IG Handicap: interest group of disabled and chronically ill students, Phone +49 421 218 7252, [handicap@uni-bremen.de](mailto:handicap@uni-bremen.de)

#### **Gender and diversity aspects**

There is a whole range of special options available for female students. More details of these and other facilities can be obtained from the Central Commission for Women's Issues. This is the main representative body for female students and researchers (Phone +49 421 218 60075, E-mail: [zentrale.frauenbeauftragte@uni-bremen.de](mailto:zentrale.frauenbeauftragte@uni-bremen.de)). The contact address for matters pertaining to discrimination and violence is the 'Arbeitsstelle gegen sexuelle Diskriminierung und Gewalt am Ausbildungs- und Erwerbsarbeitsplatz', Phone +49 421 218 60180, E-mail: [chancen2@uni-bremen.de](mailto:chancen2@uni-bremen.de)

#### **Family Care Office**

Any issues regarding pregnancy, childcare or other family-care aspects are matter of the

[Family Care Office](#) or the associated AG Pflegende Angehörige and AG familienfreundliches Studium.

### 3.6 International Office

Information online: [International Office](#)

Advice and consultation for international students:

Ms. Claudia Pellegrino

SFG, Room 0370

Phone +49 421 218 60365

Email: [claudia.pellegrino@vw.uni-bremen.de](mailto:claudia.pellegrino@vw.uni-bremen.de)

Office hours: Mon, Thu 10:00 – 12.00, Wed 14:00 – 16:00

ERASMUS-students:

Ms. Cornelia Krain

VWG, Room 0570

Phone +49 421 218 60375

Email: [incoming@uni-bremen.de](mailto:incoming@uni-bremen.de)

International summer courses and language courses:

Ms. Christine Rodewald

VWG, Room 0290

Phone +49 421 218 60369

E-mail: [brodewald@uni-bremen.de](mailto:brodewald@uni-bremen.de)

#### Programme KOMPASS (compass)

Join the kompass-community and engage in creating studies and free time together. In case of academic questions, trained tutors will help you. Additionally we offer a diverse leisure program and interesting workshops.

The kompass-program addresses to students and employees studying and working at the university as well as all persons interested in international exchange.

Get to know more about the kompass-program and experience the colorful world of the community!

[Kompass](#)

### 3.7 'Allgemeiner Studierenden-Ausschuss' (AStA) (General Students' Council)

The 'Allgemeiner Studierenden Ausschuss' (AStA) is the official organisation of students at German universities. Its mission is the representation of students in their relations with the university and the public, and to provide information to students concerning university affairs. Accordingly, they chose the motto: by students for students.

The AStA offers support to students dealing with various kinds of every-day problems, such as information concerning the semester ticket, and advises students on social and financial matters. The AStA office issues international student ID cards (ISIC). It prints and presents information and announcements in pamphlets and on pin-boards on campus. AStA services include the comparatively cheap rental of bikes, cars and small pickups to students, and it can also help arrange accommodation, jobs, sports courses etc. At the AStA office students may make use of the office equipment, such as fax and photocopiers. Please visit the Internet pages of the AStA Bremen at <http://www.asta.uni-bremen.de> for more detailed information. At the University of Bremen the AStA office is located in the student house or glass hall (StH on the campus map):

[Asta](#)

Bibliothekstrasse 3

AStA-Büro:

Raum A2060

Mo-Thur 10 am – 4 pm

Fr 10 am – 3 pm



Tel.: (0421) 218- 69733  
E-Mail: [asta@uni-bremen.de](mailto:asta@uni-bremen.de).

### **StugA**

Contact to other students and advice is mediated by the student representatives - *Studiengangsausschuss*, StugA for short. This is the student interest group within a department. In the GEO-building, you find the StugA in room 1320, Email: [stuga@geo.uni-bremen.de](mailto:stuga@geo.uni-bremen.de)  
Website: [StugA GEO](#)

## **3.8 Practical tips related to studies and campus**

### **‘Veranstungsverzeichnis’ - List of Courses**

The University List of Courses contains information on all courses, seminars and lectures offered by the University of Bremen, as well as the number of ECTS credit points awarded. It also comprises addresses, telephone numbers and office hours of the professors and other teaching staff. You will find the complete curriculum on the Internet at [Lecture Calendar](#).

### **Module Handbooks – Description of Courses**

Departmental course- or module-bulletins can be obtained from the Internet. These bulletins contain a full description of the modules offered by the department together with their prerequisites and further details and recommendations. They also often provide literature references to help students with preparation for their courses. The Department of Geosciences publishes the module information as well as other study-relevant information on [education 2021](#). **In addition, you will find not only the module descriptions, but also the latest course descriptions linked on the list of courses in your degree program on the homepage [www.geo.uni-bremen.de](http://www.geo.uni-bremen.de)**

### **Books**

In addition to the University Library there is also a bookshop on campus where you can order and purchase any book on the market.

### **Eating and drinking**

Except for the central dining hall, you will find a number of cafeterias, cafés and other catering outlets on campus. The prices for the food and drinks on sale are clearly displayed. There is also a small grocery shop on the campus ‘Glass Hall’.

### **Culture and music**

There is a number of active initiatives to be found on campus, i.a. theatre, university choir, orchestra, Big-Band. More information can be found in the cultural events calendar – ‘Kulturelles Veranstaltungsverzeichnis’ – which is released each winter semester. Posters and notices all over the campus also inform about various events about to take place. Information on the cultural scene in Bremen can be obtained from the office for cultural affairs at the student services office – ‘Büro für Kulturelle Angelegenheiten des Studierendenwerks’, Phone +49 421 22 01 10104, [Culture](#)

### **Sports/Gymnastics**

The Center for University Sport – ‘Zentrum für Hochschulsport’ - organises a comprehensive sports program. Their information brochure appears each semester mid-March and mid-September ([HOSPO](#)); Information and registration in the building Sportturm and under the phone number +49 421 218 61651.

### **University souvenirs**

can be obtained at the University book shop on Campus on the boulevard.

## 4 Information for Incoming Students

The following chapter is full of useful links, detailed information about finding accommodation, medical treatment and customs and habits in Germany. So don't miss them.

### 4.1 Learning German / learning English

The University of Bremen (UB) is becoming more and more international, with its number of foreign students increasing every year. For this reason, foreign languages have become an integral component of studies at UB. The **Centre for Languages** ('Sprachenzentrum der Hochschulen im Land Bremen', SZHB) in cooperation with the Goethe Institute offer language courses for all students in German, English, and many other languages. Additionally, you can practice foreign languages by visiting the 'Selbstlernzentrum' (self-learning centre) which is located in GW 2, room A 3070. There, you can read newspapers or listen to radio or TV broadcasts in original language or use electronic dictionaries or electronic learning programmes.

**Regular German courses** for foreign students of the University of Bremen are offered by the Goethe-Institute. Information on courses: [hochschulkooperation-bremen@goethe.de](mailto:hochschulkooperation-bremen@goethe.de)

Further information is available from the Modern Languages Centre (Sprachenzentrum)

Phone +49 421 218 61960

Website: [FZHB](#)

#### Tandem

You would like to learn German and at the same time teach a German your mother tongue? Tandem finds a "language partner" for you whom you will meet about 2 hours a week (it's up to you!) for informal conversation. If you are interested, write an e-mail to: [tandem@uni-bremen.de](mailto:tandem@uni-bremen.de)

### 4.2 Accommodation

Wouldn't it be perfect, if you arrive in Bremen and a room or an apartment is awaiting you? Unfortunately, German public institutions of higher education generally do not offer student residences on campus. Students have to find a place to live by themselves. Since at the beginning of the term all new students of Bremen University are looking for a nice and low-priced apartment to rent, the hunt for housing may turn out to be quite an exhausting activity. If you want to bring your family, we strongly advise you to find accommodation before you move your family to Bremen. Preferably you start looking for an apartment before you even leave home.

#### Student residences

The University of Bremen maintains a limited number of affordable, furnished rooms and apartments off campus. To obtain accommodation in one of these student residences, you have to apply directly to the 'Studierendenwerk' using their application form. But do not count on this option. These student houses are located within walking distance of the university campus and of students' clubs. The latter promote social interaction with other students and an international flair. Apartments may be single or shared by up to eight persons, depending upon the number of rooms. Some residences offer accommodation for families, too. All rooms and apartments are furnished and include a small kitchen and bathroom; however, bed linen, towels, tableware or cooking utensils are not provided. The rent is between 200 and 350 € per month, including costs for heating, water and electricity.

To apply for accommodation at a student residence, you are required to use the official application form. Fill in your personal information, and mark the appropriate check-boxes (tick-boxes) to indicate your preference for a particular type of accommodation and a specific house. Living outside of Germany, you are not available for a personal interview, limiting your choice to the one-room-apartments ('Ein-Zimmer-Apartment'). Please tick this option for each hostel and sign the form. Attach your passport photo to the application form. Then send it together with a copy of your proof of financial resources, and a copy of your acceptance to your Master programme directly to Student Welfare

Service ('[Studierendenwerk](#)'). Once they have received your application form, they can try to arrange accommodation for the duration of your studies at the University of Bremen.

**However, it is important to understand that currently available student residences offer accommodation for less than 10% of all students in Bremen. Therefore do not rely on your chance of obtaining one of these highly preferred rooms!!! Also note that you will only be informed if your application succeeds. If you do not hear from the 'Studierendenwerk', you are still without accommodation.**

#### **Studierendenwerk Bremen**

**Bibliothekstraße 7**

**28359 Bremen**, Germany

Phone +49 421 22 01 101 29

[Dormitories](#)

[wohnraumvermittlung@stw-bremen.de](mailto:wohnraumvermittlung@stw-bremen.de)

#### **Private student residences**

A good overview of private student residences is given on: [Housing](#)

Please contact the landlord by yourself, obtain detailed information concerning the room and the rent, and arrange to see the accommodation.

#### **Looking for a long-term accommodation while you are in Bremen**

A popular option is to "share a flat". Sometimes there are vacant places in already shared flats. In this case there is no need to organise a new group in order to live in a shared apartment. To get such a room you have to make an appointment with the other occupants to introduce yourself. Thereafter the occupants will decide whether you can move in. Depending on the particular situation, you will then make a contract either with one of the tenants, who him-/herself is the main party to the rental contract, or with the landlord himself. Once you are in Bremen, you may also contact the Studierendenwerk for the option of sharing an apartment in one of the student residences.

Besides the flats rented out by private persons, there are also a couple of estate agencies which lease flats. These agencies are not estate agents in the normal sense, because *they* only negotiate between landlords and tenants, but instead they rent out their own property. Such companies usually own whole buildings, or even blocks of flats where rented flats are concentrated. A caretaker and gardener are often employed for such a block. In some cases, a concierge service is also available (this is very unusual in Germany).

Please be aware that most rooms and apartments that are available on the free market are unfurnished. There are, however, several possibilities to obtain very cheap second-hand furniture. Again, the small ads in the local newspapers are useful sources. At the 'Umtauschbörse' you can even find stuff for free ([www.umsonstladen.de](http://www.umsonstladen.de)). For the transport of large items students may rent a van through the AStA car rental service.

#### **Where to live?**

To get an impression of the city layout and where the university is situated you can browse the online city map at <http://www.bremen.de/stadtplan>.

Along with your Student ID you will receive a "Semester Ticket" which allows you to use the public transport free of charge during the whole semester. With your Semester Ticket you can also use trains for travelling around Bremen and up to about 50 km away. The university campus itself is easily reachable by different means of public transport (bus, tram, regional buses) practically from every single part of the city and its surroundings. Local public transport is run by BSAG and functions rather well. BSAG offers an online timetable at their web page (<http://www.bsag.de>), which helps you to find a route even between two addresses.

City districts which are popular for students to live are *Walle*, *Findorff*, *Neustadt*, *Viertel* and *Vahr*. *Walle*, *Viertel*, and *Findorff* are “old town” style districts with usually privately owned houses. One-room-apartments with bathroom and kitchen will cost from 250 € a month. Also, some flat-share communities can be found here. *Vahr* is a “new style” city district built mostly in the '60s and '70s. In the *Neustadt* both private buildings and small houses are mixed together. The districts of *Veegesack*, *Blumenthal* and *Lesum* lie in the northern part of Bremen. All these districts were formerly independent towns, which is recognizable even today through their own individual town centres. Although the public transport to the university includes a short trip with the local train, it is popular to live there and study in the central part of Bremen. Besides privately owned flats, an estate agent GEWOSIE ([www.gewosie.de](http://www.gewosie.de)) offers flats at competitive prices.

In the vicinity of the university is the town of *Lilienthal*. Although it is an independent town, but very close to the district of *Horn*, it is well connected by public transport with the university and with the city centre. As in other parts of the city there are small private houses or buildings where flats of different sizes can be rented.

### **Rental terms and conditions**

According to local regulations, on signing a contract for a flat, single room or room in a shared apartment you have to pay a guaranty deposit (‘Kaution’) for the room which will be returned when you leave. The guaranty deposit amount is usually equal to two months’ rent. The guaranty amount can be paid directly to the landlord or deposited on a special sub account at the bank. All local banks offer a special service for such deposits (15 € fee).

After signing the contract you will have to pay the rent for the first month immediately. Together with the rent you have to pay a guaranty deposit and, if applicable, other fees such as for estate agents. Also you have to consider the money needed to furnish the flat with at least one mattress.

Useful **sources of information** are the bulletin boards on campus, social network groups on facebook and twitter and the Bremen newspapers such as ‘Weser Kurier’ or ‘A bis Z’. To make your search successful, try to find as many other information sources as possible, e.g. contact fellow students for support.

### **The ABC of small ads:**

When checking the rental advertisements you will stumble across many quite incomprehensible abbreviations.

“2 Zi.-Whg” = 2 room apartment; “2 ZKDB” = 2 rooms, kitchen, hall, bathroom; “zzgl. NK” = plus costs for heating, electricity, water and refuse collection, for example; “ZH” = central heating; “K” = deposit required; “NR” = non-smokers; “KN” = kitchenette available; “NMM” = net monthly rent, thus the costs for heating, electricity, gas, water, and refuse collection have to be paid in addition; “MZV” = rent has to be paid in advance; “Prov.” = estate agent’s fee; “WG” = shared housing; “WBS erforderlich” = only people to whom the City of Bremen has granted a special permit on social grounds are eligible; “kalt” = cold rent, indicating that heating and other costs have to be paid in addition; “Abstand” = you have to buy part of the existing furnishing.

## **4.3 Finding your way through every day**

This section includes miscellaneous topics which may be of interest for incoming students. Especially if you have spent most of your life in a country with a very different cultural background from the European culture, you may familiarise yourself with the *mélange* of topics presented below. It might help you to avoid unpleasant surprises when living in Germany.

### **Eating habits in Germany**

The classic German breakfast is hearty and comprised of bread, cheese, cold meats, jam, and coffee or tea. Traditionally, the main hot meal in Germany is lunch, eaten between 12:00 and 13:00. As the name in German suggests, the evening meal or “Abendbrot” is essentially composed, once again, of

bread and butter with cold meats and cheese. Traditionally it is served earlier than in many other countries, around 19:00. However, these traditional habits are no longer observed by everyone. Lots of Germans eat different things for breakfast or nothing at all, only have a snack at lunchtime, or eat a hot meal sometime in the evening. Even though eating habits are becoming increasingly varied, before starting to eat people still wish each other "Guten Appetit".

### **Groceries shopping**

Germans do not eat and buy only sausage. Of course, cabbage, potatoes, dumplings, and pounds of meat do exist but also much, much more. The choice of food in Germany is so vast that you (and, indeed, many Germans, too) can avoid traditional German fare, sausages and meat altogether. Nearly all supermarkets regularly stock mozzarella, mangos, melons, and maté. In Turkish, Korean, Italian, and other speciality shops in larger towns you can get everything you can possibly imagine.

Restaurants and speciality shops in Germany are comparatively expensive. Discount shops are considerably cheaper but the choice is smaller, the shops are simpler, and the people on the tills are the fastest in the world. Highly recommendable are the popular weekly farmers' markets where you can buy fresh products from the region. You should take a bag or basket with you, as your purchases will usually be filled into your bag loose or wrapped up in paper, which nearly always tears before you get home.

Shops are open between 8:00 and 18:00 on weekdays and from 8:00 until 14:00 on Saturdays. Most supermarkets stay open until 22:00 on weekdays and 16:00/18:00/20:00 on Saturdays. Sundays all shops are closed except for those selling flowers and cakes, which are allowed to open for a few hours to ensure that everyone can have a piece of fresh cream cake for Sunday tea. What would Northern Germany be without its "Kiosks"? Here, or at the next filling station, you will find "essential" items such as drinks, magazines, chocolate, and many other necessities of life till 23:00, including Sundays. Note that these shops are quite expensive.

### **Eating out**

Many Germans like eating home cooked foods, but not exclusively. You can find restaurants from nearly all the countries in the world. Whether Persian, Thai, Russian, Mexican, or Korean - the choice of restaurants in Germany is vast. Students are particularly fond of Italian, Greek, and Turkish restaurants as they are often comparatively reasonably priced. Others are addicted to fast food at take-aways or delivery services bringing pizzas, Chinese, and Mexican dishes. Be aware that, as in every country, the restaurants have adapted their 'traditional' food to please the local taste and liking, and in some cases you may not approve.

*Tiping:* the prices quoted actually include 16% value added tax and a service charge. Nevertheless, it is customary to leave a tip in restaurants, cafés, and other places where your bill is brought to your table. The rule of thumb is: if a bill is under 5 € you round the sum up to the next full euro; if it is over 5 euro you allow about 10% for a tip – of course only if the service was friendly and the food good. Nobody expects large tips from students because they are known to be notoriously short of money.

### **Normal mail & telephone**

**Post offices:** You can recognise a post-office and letterbox by the yellow sign with a black post-horn. Within Germany you currently pay 0.80 € for a standard letter up to 20 grams and 0.60 € for a standard postcard. Overseas post is sent by airmail, which cost extra fee. You can find out what other letters and parcels cost by asking at the post office or reading the brochures available there or at [www.deutschepost.de](http://www.deutschepost.de). The postal code ("Postleitzahl" = ZIP code) of even the smallest German village can be found in the directory of postal codes.

### **Waste separation**

Germans are very aware concerning ecological matters. They enthusiastically separate waste paper, bottles, cans, corks, batteries, bio-degradable waste, and everything you can collect and recycle. Paper, glass, and cans are put in special containers. Many bottles and cans are returnable bottles/cans that are taken back to the shop where the initial deposit (10-50 cents) is refunded.

Anything with a specific green-white symbol on it goes into the “yellow bags” to be recycled. In order to reduce the number of plastic bags used, many shops charge 10-20 cents for a plastic carrier bag.

### **On the move**

**By bike:** Bremen is renowned for being friendly to cyclists. You can purchase very reasonably priced used bicycles either at a flea market, or via private advertisements in the newspapers, especially the advertising newspaper A-Z (see below), or at auctions of lost property held by the city authorities.

**Semester Ticket:** The Semester Ticket issued to students of the University of Bremen not only permits completely free transport by bus and tram within the town limits, but also by rail in the surrounding countryside. The ticket is valid for the areas served by VBN - Verkehrsverbund Bremen/ Niedersachsen – including the rail services to Hamburg, Hanover, Cuxhaven, Wilhelmshaven, Esens, Emden and Norddeich.

**Public transport within Bremen (BSAG – Bremer Straßenbahn-AG):** With your semester ticket you can use all public transport within Bremen (and somewhere beyond) for free. You will not have your Semester Ticket on the day you arrive, though. Since the fares for public transport are otherwise quite expensive, you should take advantage of the discounts offered for buying group, day, week and monthly season tickets. These can be bought at the main railway station or at Domsheide in the city center. They are not obtainable on board the buses and trams.

## **4.4 A little guide to German habits and other peculiarities**

### **Etiquette & attitudes**

As in all countries there are certain forms of behaviour and manners that are considered polite or impolite. You should be familiar with the German way if you don't want to put yourself on the spot. Students are more informal than the average German, thus it is advisable to take note of both behavioural codes.

### **Greeting and introducing people**

Students who know each other usually greet each other at all times of the day and night by saying “Hallo” or “Grüß dich”. They do not usually shake hands. Otherwise, it is polite and common to say “Guten Morgen” until about midday, “Guten Tag” until about 18:00 and “Guten Abend” later on. In Northern Germany many people use the simple greeting “Moin” all day long; the word is derived from the local dialect and stands for ‘Have a nice day’. You usually say “Auf Wiedersehen” if you leave; students just say “Tschüss”.

If you are introducing people to each other you simply add (by way of explanation) “(Das ist) Herr Schmidt - (Das ist) Frau Meier”. Young people of the same age merely say “Max - Ingrid”. Usually you introduce the men to the women first and then the women to the men, just as you usually greet the women first and then the men. If it is a formal occasion you use the phrase: “Darf ich vorstellen?” or “Darf ich bekannt machen?” (“May I introduce...?”)- Herr Meier - Frau Schmidt“.

### **To shake hands or not to shake hands**

The rule of thumb is: do not shake hands with other students or in public offices. However, if you attend an interview or a consultation session with a professor, always shake hands. In such cases you wait until the senior person (i.e. the professor or prospective boss) offers you his/her hand. Employees of the institution of higher education or large companies do not shake hands when they meet. If you see someone you know in the street, you greet him or her vocally, at least in passing. There are also situations in which it is polite to greet strangers, for example, in lifts, on the stairs of a block of flats, in smaller shops or in the waiting room at the doctor's by just saying a general ‘Guten Tag’. You also greet the postman bringing the post and the dustmen taking away the rubbish.

### **Authorities - A general piece of advice**

Dealing with the German authorities is not always easy (as it is with bureaucracy in many countries...). If civil servants send you from one place to another or are unfriendly, do not despair. Just stay calm

and polite. And going to the next person presumably in charge you may say “Herr/Frau ... sent me to you” so you won’t be blamed for ending up in a wrong office.

### **Dress code**

On the whole, there are no strict rules about what to wear in Germany: You wear more or less what you like. Youngsters can get away with holes, patches, and (far too short) short trousers, adults, on the other hand, will not find it so easy. Students wear whatever they like but people who wear slashed jeans will certainly attract different sorts of friends than those who prefer ties or pleated skirts.

### **Punctuality**

It cannot be denied that Germans place a lot of emphasis on punctuality. If you have an appointment with your professor or a doctor, there is one thing you should certainly not do – keep him or her waiting for your appearance! Amongst themselves students are usually more easy-going. Perhaps this is due to the fact that university lectures seldom begin on the hour (“s. t.” = sine tempore) but only 15 minutes after the full hour at the “academic quarter” (“c. t.” = cum tempore). The academic quarter can also come into play if you have been invited to someone’s home. For casual invitations you could be a few minutes late. However, if the invitation is more formal or you are invited to a big dinner, you had better try to be on time.

### **Invitations**

Germans are often rather reticent with invitations to begin with. Only good friends can just drop in on each other unannounced. If you are invited to dinner with your professor or boss, you should take a bunch of flowers with you for the hostess. When you are invited to share a pan of spaghetti with other students in their flat (“WG”) you do not need to take flowers with you, but it is common to ask if you can bring anything. If you are told ‘no’, a bottle of wine will certainly be welcome.

### **Relations between gender**

As in many other parts of the world, also in Germany both the traditional image of women and the traditional role patterns have been abandoned by the women’s emancipation movement. Women have gained equal rights and achieved a similar professional status to men. They are self-assured and do not permit being ruled, although good manners like opening doors are certainly appreciated. The very least a man must accept is that a woman saying “no” actually means “no”. Depending on which culture you come from, you might be shocked by the Germans’ liberality with regard to dress. Flimsy clothing in summer is not acceptable in every country, but in Germany it is tolerated. In the wake of the “sexual revolution” of the sixties both men and women take the initiative in making contacts. Homosexuals, too, live openly and the topic is not longer taboo. In any case, the requisite precautions should be taken: unfortunately, AIDS is a problem in Germany, too.

### **Useful Internet links**

[“Welcome to Germany”](#)

[Tourist information Bremen](#)

[German Foreign Ministry](#)

[Trains, connections and prices](#)

[Bremen airport](#)

Long distance buses: [Fernbus/Flixbus](#)

[Pin board Bremen](#)

[Timetable](#) of bus and tram network Bremen

## **5 Formalities**

There are quite a number of issues which you need to take care of within your first few days in Bremen. Since they are all interdependent, we recommend you follow the order below. Students accepted to one of the international Master’s programs at the University of Bremen are asked to check

with the office of their particular Master's course to learn about possible deviations from the procedure described below, and for additional services offered to their new students.

## 5.1 Residents' Registration Office

During the first few days after your arrival in Bremen, you have to register at the Residents' Registration Office ('Meldebehörde'). For your convenience you will find a branch of the Residents' Registration Office on campus: the 'bremen\_service Universität' (bsu). The bsu office is located on the ground floor; enter the building from the roofed, north facing side near the tram stop "Universität Zentralbereich", and go to the 'Pavillon', room B 0480.

Office hours:

Tue 9 am to 1 pm

Wed 10 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 4 pm

Thu 9 am to 1 pm

You may wish to register during the Orientation Week, which usually is organised by the International Office together with the office of your Master's program before classes start. This way you could take advantage of the presence of a German tutor. Avoiding communication problems will help to make your visit to this office stress-free for you and for the officers.

For registration you have to fill in a registration form ('Anmeldung und Ummeldung'), and present your passport and visa. Registration forms are available from both the municipal authorities located in Bremen city centre and the office on campus. You have to fill in your own personal information and your new address in Bremen or your interim address, as applicable. In addition, the registration form requests the name and residence information of your new landlord or the renting organisation/company. Make sure you have that information on hand when registering. Upon completion of your registration you will receive a confirmation of registration ('Meldebestätigung'), which is printed on very thin, white copy paper. Please keep this paper in a safe place. You will need it on different occasions, e.g. when applying for a library card. Please note that every time you change your place of residence you have to inform the Registration Office within the first week.

## 5.2 The Aliens' Registration Authority

This is your next port of call if you intend to stay in Germany more than 3 months. On campus the Aliens' Registration Authority shares office facilities with the Residents' Registration Office (see above). In order to register you need:

- a completed application for a resident's permit (forms to be obtained at the registration office)
- your passport and visa
- your confirmation of registration ('Meldebestätigung')
- your notification of admission to the University of Bremen / enrolment certificate
- proof of health insurance cover
- proof of financial resources or the letter documenting your scholarship award
- a passport photograph and 40 € to cover service charges

## 5.3 Visa renewal

The Schengen visa, which was issued by the German diplomatic representation in your home country in the EU, usually is valid for three months, and has the status of a temporary residence permit. Before these three months have elapsed you will have to extend the visa for 12 or 24 months.

If you have a student visa, it is valid for the whole time of your study in Bremen. You simply have to report to the authority at the beginning of your stay. The Aliens' Registration Authority is responsible for renewing visas, and may amend your visa if you are accepted to switch to a different study programme. If you move to a different town you will have to cancel your registration with the Aliens'



Registration Authority in the town you are leaving, and re-register with the office in your new town of residence. If you move within the same city, simply update your resident's registration within a week.

### **Moving?**

If you change address at any time during your stay in Germany, please make sure that you notify at least the following offices:

- the Residents' Registration Office
- your faculty secretary, or the office of your Master's programme
- your health insurance
- your bank
- your scholarship organization, if you are a scholarship holder

In addition you may wish to instruct the post office to redirect your mail from the old to the new address. The relevant form ('Nachsendeantrag') is available at any post office. This service is valid for a limited time period and can be obtained for a set fee.

## **5.4 Enrolment Requirements and Semester Contribution**

To get an idea about the enrolment procedure please read the following information. To enrol at the University of Bremen you have to appear in person at the registrar's office for international students ('[Sekretariat für Studierende – International](#)'), located on the ground floor of the administration building ('VWG' on the campus map). They are responsible for all formalities regarding registration and renewal of registration for international students.

Opening hours:

Mon, Tue, Thu 9 to 12 am

Wed 2 to 4 pm

To enrol you have to present the completed application form, your passport, the notification of admission to your study programme, certified copies of your original education certificates together with the certified English translations, your health insurance certificate, or the proof of exemption, and two passport photographs. Your application will be considered 'complete' only after the mandatory semester contribution has been transferred. At that point your enrolment documents (e.g. student ID card, public transport card) are printed automatically, and mailed to the address you provided on the application form. If you used an interim address for registration, make sure to inform the registrar's office immediately about any change of address. They request students to give notice about a change of address using the [MOIN](#) portal.

Please note that registration at the University of Bremen is valid for one semester only. For each subsequent semester you have to **re-register**. Pay the semester contribution (see below) through your bank account. At the registrar's office you present your completed re-registration form together with the health insurance certificate for the new term which will be mailed to you. Please note: the closing dates for re-registration usually fall within the previous semester. Registration deadlines are August 15 for the following winter term, and February 15 for the summer term. If you fail to renew your registration in time, you will not be allowed to continue your study. Please keep this in mind when planning to travel!

**Semester contribution:** The semester contribution is mandatory for students of the University of Bremen. Currently the semester contribution amounts to 378,66 € (winter semester 2021/22). Of this sum the biggest part will be paid for the student's semester ticket, which is issued by the local public transport association. The General Students' Board (i.e. the 'Allgemeine Studierenden-Ausschuss'; AStA), the Student Welfare Service ('Studierendenwerk') will receive their money and the remaining part is an administration fee.

For the payment of the semester contribution students need to use the [bank account information](#) of the University of Bremen. To transfer the semester contribution, use your own, newly opened German bank account. The University of Bremen does not accept cash payment of the semester contribution.

### **The 'Semester Ticket':**

The semester ticket is issued through the 'Verkehrsverbund Bremen Niedersachsen' (VBN), a collaboration between the 'Bremer Strassenbahn AG' (BSAG), the rail company 'Deutsche Bahn' (DB), and numerous local public transport companies. The semester ticket grants access to the VBN services and the public transport network. Using the semester ticket students may travel without extra costs within the city of Bremen and the immediate surroundings of the city. Also, students may travel quite a distance into the region of Lower Saxony, e.g. from Bremen to Hamburg and back. However, they are restricted in their choice of connections. Students have to pay additional fares if they are using the modern, fast methods of transport like the ICE, or on some specific routes and connections that are excluded from the semester ticket. For information concerning routes, feasible connections, travel schedules, additional fares, please visit the appropriate Internet sites: [www.bsag.de](http://www.bsag.de); [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de); [www.vbn.de](http://www.vbn.de); or consult the Internet presence of the AstA Bremen (<http://www.asta.uni-bremen.de>). The AStA also provides a rough map showing the validity range of the semester ticket (<http://www.asta.unibremen.de/dienste/semneu.htm>).

## **5.5 Opening a bank account**

In Germany all banks, even private ones, are subject to state control. The major banks are the Commerzbank, the Deutsche Bank, and the Dresdner Bank, as well as the Sparkasse Bremen, and the Postbank. Opening times differ from one bank to another but are usually weekdays from 9:00 to 16:00 and to 18:00 on Thursdays. They often close at lunchtime from 12:00 to 14:30.

In order to open a bank account you need to present a valid passport. Non-EU citizens have to produce a valid visa, or a residence permit that will last at least 6 months longer. You may wish to open a 'Giro-Konto' (current or checking account), which allows money deposits and withdrawals, as well as money transfer transactions and automated deduction of regular payments such as rent and insurance contributions. Please note that a 'Giro' account does not pay interest on your money. In addition you may consider opening a savings account. For students, bank accounts are free of service charges. Present your student card ('Immatrikulationsbescheinigung') to prove your status when opening your bank account. If at the time you cannot prove your enrolment, just sign up as a regular client. You may change your status upon availability of your student card. From regular clients, the bank charges basic service fees and additional fees for every financial transaction.

If you wish to use cash dispensers (automatic teller machines - ATMs), sign up for an ECcard (debit card) when opening your bank account. The EC-card provides access to the ATM system in the whole of Germany. In addition, you may pay bills at shops and in restaurants with your debit card. Using the ATM service of your bank and associated banks is free of charge, while you have to pay a fee when using the service offered by other banks. The delivery of your EC-card will take 2-4 weeks after application.

## **5.6 Health insurance and medical treatment**

To enrol at the University of Bremen you need valid health insurance (compulsory!). Health insurance cover must commence with the start of the semester. In Germany you may choose between several health insurance providers. When you sign up with the provider of your choice, they immediately issue the certificate of insurance that is required at the registrar's office. As a member of a recognized foreign health insurance provider, you are exempt from the obligatory German health insurance requirements. Please check with your home health insurance provider. Only a few companies from some EU countries are recognised in Germany, though.

Whichever system you use, for registration you have to produce a confirmation letter or certificate which indicates the recognised identification number of your health insurance provider.

The 'gesetzlichen Krankenkassen' (statutory health insurance funds) take over the costs for medical and dental treatment, for medicaments, stays in hospital and many other services associated with health care. The insured persons have to assume some of the costs for medicines and some other services, unless exempted. Costs for artificial dentures, orthodontics and spectacles are not covered fully by the 'Krankenkassen'.

In Germany the contributions for the health insurance for students are laid down by law. That is why you pay the same contribution at any statutory health insurance provider (currently about 90 € / month). When choosing your company, you should pay attention to extra benefits on service or special offers for students. Structure and services differ from provider to provider.

### **Family insurance**

In the event that members of your family come to Germany with you (spouse, children) they may under certain circumstances be eligible for co-insurance at no extra cost. Condition is that the family members are not themselves subject to compulsory insurance, that they reside in Germany and that their income does not exceed a certain limit.

### **Voluntary insurance**

After you become 30 years of age or have completed 14 regular semesters of study you can still be well looked after by the 'gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung'. Students living in Germany who are no longer insured within the compulsory system can join an insurance as voluntary members, if they can prove evidence of "prior insurance". The period of "prior insurance" has to be either 24 months within the last 5 years or the last 12 months (without interruption) prior to the registration with a German 'Krankenkasse'.

### **The insurance card (health insurance chip card)**

The insurance card is your entry pass to all medical services and preventive care measures included in health care insurance. Always take that chip card along; you have to hand it over each time you visit a doctor or dentist.

### **Doctors**

Apart from general medical practitioners, there is a huge number of specialist doctors (eye specialists, dermatologists etc.). Usually you will have to make an appointment to see a doctor. If you are in acute pain and you have to be treated immediately or, at least, on the same day, you can go to a doctor's surgery without an appointment or at short notice. You will find the names and addresses of doctors, listed according to their field of specialisation, in the telephone directory. You have the right to choose your own doctor. However, you should ask friends and your tutor for recommendations. If you do not want to ask local people for advice you can turn to AStA or the International Office. Also, as a student of an international Master's programme at the University of Bremen, you could check with your Master's programme office for English speaking doctors.

If you are privately insured and are not in acute pain we recommend you to contact your insurance before undergoing major treatment and check how much you will have to contribute to the costs. If you go to the dentist and you get dentures, you will always have to pay a part of the costs yourself. You should always take your health insurance chip card and your identity card along to your doctor's appointments. If you are privately insured you will get an invoice from your doctor that you first of all need to pay. You then submit this invoice to your insurance company and the amount will be refunded.

### **Hospitals**

In Germany there are public, non-profit (denominational), and private hospitals. In nearly every university town there is a university hospital where you can be treated as an outpatient, too. If you are sent to hospital, your health insurance will cover the costs, although you will have to pay a small contribution during the first 14 days. Please note that unless it is an emergency, you should first contact a doctor.

### **Emergency services & emergency calls**

If you need urgent medical treatment at night or at the weekend you can either go to the outpatients' department at a hospital or ring the doctor on call. You will find the addresses of these doctors in the daily newspaper under the heading "Ärztlicher Notdienst". You can also ring any doctor's number; the answering machine will tell you the number of the doctor currently on call. The 'Ärztlicher Notfalldienst' is located in Richard-Wagner-Straße 1a, Phone +49 421 19292

Opening hours

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 00:00 – 7:00 and 19:00 – 24:00

Wed 00:00 – 7:00 and 15:00 – 24:00

Sat, Sun, public holidays 00:00 – 24:00

### **Emergency call 112**

is the free phone number to ring in order to get an ambulance, the fire brigade, the police or any other assistance in a real emergency. Do not dial this number for fun or trivial reasons. If you make an emergency call, state clearly what happened and where it happened and wait on the line for further questions.

### **Pharmacies**

In Germany you can only obtain medicaments from pharmacies. These are not to be confused with *Drogerien* who only supply simple remedies like cough mixture or very mild drugs. There are two categories of medicaments: those which are freely available and those for which you require a doctor's prescription before they are issued. You can only obtain the latter if you are able to present a prescription drawn up and signed by a medical practitioner. The law on pharmaceutical products in Germany is very strict. Some medicaments which may be freely available in other countries (antibiotics, for instance) are considered prescription drugs in Germany.

You must pay for non-prescription drugs yourself. For drugs having been prescribed by a doctor you only have to pay a contribution (that is unless you are exempted from such payment). Insured in a private 'Krankenkasse' you first pay the cost of medicaments yourself and then submit the receipts to your 'Krankenkasse' to refund.

Opening hours

Weekdays 9 am – 7.30 pm, Wednesdays often close on afternoons

Sat 9 am – 1 or 4 pm.

Emergency service: Somewhere in your area there will always be a pharmacy which is open – day or night. The pharmacies take turns to stay open and you can find out which ones are on duty from the local newspaper or the notices displayed on the doors of other pharmacies. In the event that you should need medicaments at night or at the weekend, ring the bell on the door of the pharmacy which has emergency duty. The law requires that one pharmacy in a radius of seven kilometres must be open at all times. At the following Internet site you will find addresses of the pharmacies in your area as well as the emergency duty rosta for the whole of Germany: [www.apotheken.de](http://www.apotheken.de). Pharmacies charge a supplementary fee of approx. 2 € on items bought outside normal opening hours. Please note, day or night: Strong medicaments will only be issued on presentation of a doctor's prescription!

## **5.7 Other insurances**

### **Accident insurance**

As student you are insured against accident on the premises of the university and on the route to and from university and place of abode. If you are a scholarship holder, please check to see if any alternative arrangements exist.

### **Pension and unemployment insurance**

Students do not usually have to pay contributions.

**Attention!** This could change if you do any jobs whilst you are studying or have an additional occupation. Then you could under certain circumstances have to pay contributions to social insurance.

### **General Liability Insurance**

A general liability insurance represents a safeguard which may become important to you in case you cause an accident. Please consider this scenario as an example: you cross a street to catch your bus, not noticing a car approaching. Forced by your action, the driver has to brake very hard, and a second, following car crashes into the front one. In such a case you may be held legally responsible for having caused this accident, therefore you have to pay for the damage that occurred to property and any injuries to persons. An insurance against those kind of claims is not really expensive. That is why we strongly advise you to get yourself protected.

## **6 Money and finances**

### **Cash & Currency**

Since January 2002 the German currency has been the euro (€). The smallest unit of this European currency is the "cent" (Ct.). 100 "cent" are 1 "euro" There are 8 different coins: the 1 cent, 2 cent, 5 cent, 10 cent, 20 cent, 50 cent, 1 euro, and 2 euro. Similarly, there are 7 different notes: the 5 euro, 10 euro, 20 euro, 50 euro, 100 euro, 200 euro, and 500 euro. The reverse side of each coin shows individual designs relating to the respective member states. Euro coins and notes can be used anywhere in the 'Eurozone', regardless of the national imprints on the sides of the coins. In large stores, restaurants and hotels you can usually use credit cards, but not in smaller guesthouses and shops.

### **6.1 Cost of living**

Many foreign students coming to Germany do not possess scholarships. They have to present proof that they can finance the entire period of their stay in Germany (so-called proof of financial resources) to a German diplomatic representation and to the Aliens' Registration Authority. Be aware that you will incur a lot of expenses during the first few days of your stay in Bremen: a deposit on accommodation, the first instalment of the rent, health insurance contributions, semester contribution, enrolment etc.

We recommend you reserve at least 500 € for these initial expenses. You are allowed to import as much foreign currency into Germany as you wish, but you should check on currency regulations in your own country.

At present you need about 1000 -1300 € per month to lead a modest life:

- Accommodation: 300-500 € per month on average. Deposit: one to two months' rent (returned on expiry of the lease – if there is no cause for complaint).
- Medical insurance: approximately 100 € per month.
- Lunch at the University: 5 € each day, on average.
- The amount required for other expenses (food, books, telephone and internet, stationery, travel, clothes, sport/leisure etc.) vary from person to person, but are unlikely to be less than 300 € per month.
- Semester contribution: students at Bremen University are required to pay a small contribution for university services (approx. 380 € per semester).
- An additional budget of approximately 200 € per month should be calculated to cover costs of excursions, books and other necessary study materials or copy cards.

### **6.2 Working (Employment)**

With the exception of students coming from member states of the European Union, EFTA countries and Switzerland, international students are only permitted to work for a very limited period during their

studies (90 days) before requiring an official work permit. It is therefore of paramount importance that you remain realistic about the amount of money you will need and take the proof of sufficient funds seriously! The regulations concerning work permits for international student are very strict indeed. You can even be deported for breaking the rules!

Student assistantships ('Hiwi' = 'Hilfswissenschaftler' = 'studentische Hilfskraft') are available at most faculties, some may even be offered in the administration section. For this kind of job, the time restriction of 90 days does not apply, as long as your studies are not affected negatively. These jobs are either advertised on pin-boards within the faculty, lecturers may choose to announce the availability of an assistantship at their lectures, or you may learn about a job option through personal contacts (e.g. friends, faculty members, tutors). Hence you have to be alert and present at your faculty if you are looking for a student assistantship. The best way is to learn about the field of study of individual research groups, and then contact the head of the group of your research interest directly for an informal interview, in which you discuss your career plans and your wish to work as a student assistant in this research group.

The local Employment Office will provide assistance in finding a casual or temporary job for students. If you need to earn a little extra money, contact the Career Center, which belongs to the Employment Office and is located on the boulevard of the university:

#### **Career Center Universität Bremen**

ZB (campus center), [B B 0560 bis B 0590](#)

Bibliothekstr. 1

28359 Bremen

Phone +49 421 218 61036 / -37

In addition, watch out for the notice boards at different locations in the university where notes about jobs are put up. Also, many job offers are published on the Internet at [www.bremen.de/brett.html](http://www.bremen.de/brett.html).

### **6.3 Scholarships, Grants and Stipends**

You can search the [Scholarship Database of the German Academic Exchange Service](#) (DAAD) for the right type of support for your study or research stay. In addition to the DAAD programs there, you will also find references to a number of other funding organizations.

#### **Deutschlandstipendium:**

[Germany Scholarship Brochure](#)

[Information for UB Students](#)

### **6.4 Help in difficult situations**

In case you get into a difficult personal situation during your stay in Bremen and don't want to contact a representative from the department, you are welcome to get in touch with the following organisations:

#### **XENOS e.V.**

is a non-profit association founded to provide assistance to students from abroad who through no fault of their own find themselves in some kind of difficulty. Xenos is able to provide material assistance to help with the costs of, e.g. rent or health insurance, for a maximum of a couple of months. Applications are scrutinized thoroughly and applicants are expected to display a considerable amount of own initiative.

Applications for Xenos assistance must be passed through the [International Office](#)

#### **Assistance for International Students in Financial need**

International students who find themselves in acute material circumstances can apply for financial assistance on a **"one-time, last-time" principle**. Please find more on:

<http://www.uni-bremen.de/en/international/your-stay-in-bremen/finances.html>

### **AISA Office**

The “[Autonomer Internationaler Studentenausschuss \(AISA\)](#)” department of the ASTA [Students’ Union] offers advice and help to foreign students.

Every thursday, 10:00 to 12:30, the AISA has its consultation-hour for international students with children (AStA-Etage, Room 2030). The AISA offers its help regarding

- one-time-assistance after childbirth
- refund of the Semesterticket-fee
- donations and give away-campaigns
- free childcare
- possibilities to socialize, get-together, exchange and stay in touch
- clearing up questions and sorting out problems which international students with children might have to struggle with

and for many more concerns.

Please call 0421-218 69746 for more informations or visit the [AISA-Homepage](#).

# **WELCOME TO BREMEN!**