

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

# Destination: HAW Hamburg

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A GUIDE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS



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A GUIDE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS

خوش آمدید

欢迎

¡Bienvenido!

ברוכים הבאים!

HOCHSCHULE FÜR ANGEWANDTE  
WISSENSCHAFTEN HAMBURG  
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

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أهلاً وسهلاً

välkommen

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# Welcome

## FOREWORD FROM THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE:

We are glad that you have decided to study at HAW Hamburg and welcome you to our global campus with its more than 2,500 international students from more than 100 countries. With your diversity of perspectives, experiences, cultural backgrounds and languages, you are making an important contribution to education and research at HAW Hamburg. You also play an important role in promoting the ‘internationalisation at home’ of our campus, studying alongside our German students and giving them a chance to learn in and from an international classroom.

In order to tackle today’s complex global challenges, we need to promote the international exchange of knowledge and build people-to-people relationships across countries and communities. With this guide, we’d like to support you during your studies and to accompany you along the way. We wish you success in your studies and are on standby to answer any questions you might have and to provide you with information and guidance. Feel free to write, call or stop by at the International Office.

We are there for you!

Martina Schulze  
Head of the International Office

स्वागत

E Kaabo!

Bienvenue!

## FOREWORD FROM THE COMPILER:

When I first came to Germany over 20 years ago, there were lots of things I didn’t really understand about life here and lots that were a complete mystery to me, although I had very good German. And while the first few days are the most confusing of all, with ‘information overload’ coming from all directions, new things kept coming up as my time in Germany went by – terms, situations and Fettnäpfchen\* that left me baffled. I’ve tried to write this guide to include all the things that I would have really liked to know about back in those early days, weeks, months and years – and, obviously, things we think it’s important for you to know as an international student or academic.

This guide is mostly in English, but we have tried to give you as many important German words and terms as possible, for life on campus and in Hamburg. We’ve also added some German mini-introductions to its sections, to give your German vocabulary a boost and teach you some idiomatic expressions.

Enjoy your time here, and make the most of all the opportunities you have to live, laugh and learn.

Katherine Ebisch-Burton  
(academic translator/editor; compiled this guide on behalf of the International Office)

\*ins Fettnäpfchen treten = make a faux pas, a social mistake or error



**People from over 100 countries are part of HAW Hamburg's exciting present and are helping shape its promising future. This cultural diversity represents significant capital for HAW Hamburg as it develops and drives the future of its research, teaching and degree courses.**

# First things first: admin and paperwork

**You can find detailed information about all formalities you will need to complete after you arrive in Hamburg in your 'Arrival Guide', issued by the International Office. This is some additional information on follow-up admin, formalities and potential issues you will encounter during your time at HAW Hamburg.**

## **RE-REGISTERING EACH SEMESTER (RÜCKMELDUNG)**

You re-register for the new semester by paying your semester contribution (*Semesterbeitrag*) within the re-registration period (*Rückmeldefrist*). If you are late paying, you will be deregistered (*exmatrikuliert*)! The process for re-registering again after this is more complicated, and you will be charged an additional admin fee. Re-registration periods are 1 June-15 August for the following winter semester and 1 December-15 February for the following summer semester.

## **ID**

In German, the general term for official ID is *Ausweis*. For German citizens, this will usually mean the *Personalausweis* all adult citizens have to have. You should be aware that an *Ausweis*, for official purposes, means 1) an official, formal type of ID 2) with a photo. Your health insurance card, for example, usually won't count, because it doesn't meet condition 1). Your student ID card probably won't count either, although it can, of course, be used to prove your student status. Because you can, in theory, be asked to show your *Ausweis* (*sich ausweisen*) at any time, you may decide to carry your official ID card from your home country with you. In this case, you will need to take precautions against theft or loss. It's best not to carry your passport around routinely. You might consider taking a picture of it on your phone instead. You should certainly always carry your residence permit or the document confirming your residency status (*your Aufenthaltstitel*) with you!



## MOVING HOUSE

Don't forget to register your change of address when you move home (this is called *ummelden*). You'll also need to make sure you update your address with everyone who needs to send you post (HAW Hamburg, your utility and phone providers, your health insurer, and so on). You can set up a mail redirection service (*Nachsendauftrag*) with the Deutsche Post to cover anyone you forget to tell, or if your change of address is only temporary. This costs between 26.90 and 29.90 Euro for 12 months.

→ [www.deutschepost.de/de/n/nachsendeservice.html](http://www.deutschepost.de/de/n/nachsendeservice.html)

## STREET SELLING

Especially in places where a lot of students are, you may be approached in the street by people selling newspaper or magazine subscriptions at 'bargain' student prices, or wanting to persuade you to sign up to make a regular donation to a charity. They can sometimes be quite persistent if they notice you aren't sure how things work. Don't sign up to anything on the spot. Ask to take some information with you if you think you might be interested. If you do sign up and regret it when you get home, you will have to write a *Widerruf* to the address of the newspaper, charity or organisation. You have 14 days to do this. It needs to be in writing, not by email or phone.



# What it's all about: your degree course

**Sie sind also in Hamburg angekommen und haben Ihre erste organisatorische, 'Prüfung' erfolgreich gemeistert<sup>1</sup>. Jetzt geht's ans Studieren<sup>2</sup>. Hier sind ein paar<sup>3</sup> Tipps, damit es mit den Lehrveranstaltungen und dem Lernen gut klappt<sup>4</sup>.**

## CHECK YOUR HAW HAMBURG EMAIL!

HAW Hamburg will communicate with you via your HAW Hamburg email address. It's important to make sure you check this account regularly, or set up forwarding to your personal email account, to ensure you don't miss any important information. If there are attendance requirements (*Anwesenheitspflicht*) for your course or specific modules, take them seriously! If you know you are going to need to miss a session for an important reason, speak to the person teaching the course as soon as possible.

For each course and module, you will be advised of the number of credit points (CP – sometimes called *Leistungspunkte* in German) it is worth, how many hours of study this corresponds to, and how many of those hours are in-class (*Präsenz*) time and self-study (*Selbststudium*) respectively.

The self-study hours are a guide, but you should try and plan these hours into your schedule – things will get very difficult at exam time if you don't keep up. Don't forget that your modules usually build on one another. If you're struggling to understand something, ask the person teaching the course or your academic advisor or peer tutor.

**Why not get together with others on your course to study and revise (lernen)? Students often form an informal Lerngruppe which meets regularly to discuss the work and study together. These may be informal, but they are taken quite seriously, so do be reliable and contribute.**

Check out → [learn2gether](#), a service provided by the Peer-to-Peer programme and the Student Counselling Office.

<sup>1</sup> meistern = to master something, to be successful in doing/completing it

<sup>2</sup> es geht an (etwas) = it's time to (do/start something)

<sup>3</sup> ein paar = a few (don't confuse with *ein Paar*, a pair (of))

<sup>4</sup> klappen = to go well, work well







Make sure you observe any guidelines on good academic/scientific practice and on referencing issued to you by your faculty or whoever is teaching your course. Plagiarism can lead to you failing your exam or module, and it's getting easier and easier to spot!

Your degree course coordinator/academic advisor (*Studienfachberater/in*) can give you advice relating to your specific course and subject. Their office hours (*Sprechstunden*) will be advertised on noticeboards and online.

Throughout your course, you can access the advice and counselling services offered by our Zentrale Studienberatung, our student advice and support centre, where our colleagues can provide general assistance around your studies as well as counselling services and run workshops on learning and revision techniques, presenting with confidence, handling exam stress and other issues commonly facing students.



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# Home sweet home: accommodation

**Ob WG<sup>1</sup>, Wohnheimzimmer oder zur Untermiete<sup>2</sup> – in Ihrem Zuhause<sup>3</sup> sollten Sie sich wohl fühlen<sup>4</sup>. Hier gibt's Wissenswertes<sup>5</sup> rund um<sup>6</sup> die Studentenbude<sup>7</sup> oder den Elfenbeinturm<sup>8</sup>.**

## FINDING ACCOMMODATION

There's a useful guide to finding accommodation, and terms and concepts you might encounter, in your international students' 'Arrival Guide'. This section will tell you about things you need to know once you're settled into your Hamburg home.

Make sure to also check out the information on the following website → [www.haw-hamburg.de/en/study/campus-life/accommodation/](http://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/study/campus-life/accommodation/).

## UNDERSTANDING ACCOMMODATION ADS (THIS IS A HELPFUL EXCERPT FROM THE 'ARRIVAL GUIDE')

Apartments for rent are advertised according to the number of rooms (*Zimmer*) they have. The total excludes the kitchen and the bathroom. A '2-Zimmer-Wohnung', for example, is a one-bedroom flat – it has a living room and a bedroom (or, if a WG, two bedrooms) and (usually) a separate kitchen and a bathroom. Sizes are given in square metres (*Quadratmeter*, abbreviated to m<sup>2</sup> or qm). Apartments are usually unfurnished, but you can get furnished (*möbliert*) flats or rooms, particularly if someone is subletting to you while they are away (see below).

<sup>1</sup> WG = *Wohngemeinschaft*; house or apartment share

<sup>2</sup> zur Untermiete – living in a sublet (e.g. a room in a family house or flat)

<sup>3</sup> das Zuhause = home

<sup>4</sup> sich wohl fühlen = to feel comfortable, feel at home

<sup>5</sup> Wissenswertes = things that are good to know

<sup>6</sup> rund um = (all) about (a subject or topic)

<sup>7</sup> die Studentenbude = old-fashioned, now humorous term for a student room

<sup>8</sup> Elfenbeinturm = ivory tower; humorous reference to where academics are supposed to 'live'

Here is a list of important vocabulary relating to finding accommodation:

### Wohngemeinschaft

(WG) This is where you share an apartment with others (often, but not necessarily, other students). A *WG-Zimmer* is a room in a WG. The word for an apartment/flat is *Wohnung*.

### Kaltniete

The *Kaltniete* is the cost of the rent without the cost of heating, hot and cold water, other services, gas, and electricity. You might see wording like '*Miete: XXX Euro kalt*'.

### Warmmiete

The *Warmmiete* is the rent including charges for heating, hot and cold water, other services and utilities, often gas, and sometimes electricity. Make sure you check what exactly is included and what extra costs there may be. You might see wording like '*Miete: xxx Euro warm*'.

### Zwischenmiete/Untervermietung

If the tenant of an apartment or room in a WG will not be living there for a while (perhaps because they are going to study abroad), they may get permission from their landlord to rent their apartment or room to someone else during that period. This may be a good opportunity for you to find somewhere to live – so look out for these words.

### Kaution

This is the security deposit that a tenant has to pay on moving in. You will get it back when you move out if there has been no damage or wear and tear while you lived there.

### Besichtigung

An appointment to see an apartment or room – perhaps on your own (make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to be back, or, better still, take someone with you!), perhaps with others who are interested in it.

### Courtage/Provision

If the landlord is using a letting agent (*Makler*), this is the payment a new tenant may have to make to the agent. These payments can be quite large, so be careful.

### Beware of Fraud

Never transfer money in advance for an apartment you have not seen or without having signed a contract! If the accommodation is very central but costs less than 650 € then it is most probably fraud. If you are having even the slightest doubt, contact us!

### UNWRITTEN WG RULES

Some WGs consider themselves to be only about sharing living space, without spending time together socially – you might hear these referred to as a *Zweck-WG* ('purpose WG'). Others are more oriented towards socialising and even friendship; the house- or flatmates (*Mitbewohner\*innen*) may eat together, go out together or hold shared parties. Try and work out which one yours is and adjust accordingly – a more social WG is often more fun, but if you're the quieter type you might prefer one where you can keep yourself to yourself more.

Whichever type of WG yours is, you should make sure you clear up after yourself and share in the regular house cleaning, waste removal, etc. Sometimes there will be an established *rota* (*Putzplan*).

### LEAVING AN APARTMENT/WG/ROOM

Make sure you are aware of your notice period (*Kündigungsfrist*; see dictionary/glossary) and of your obligation to pay the rent and any utilities until this period is over, unless you find someone to take over the property (called a *Nachmieter*). If any utility (electricity, gas, landline phone, internet) bills are in your name, you must either give notice to the provider (also called *kündigen* – check your contract) or transfer them to whoever is staying in the apartment.

You'll be expected to return the apartment/room to the condition it was in when you moved in, and leave it basically clean, including removing all belongings and waste. If you don't, the landlord (*Vermieter*) may well keep at least part of your deposit (*Kaution*). Take pictures of the state of the room or apartment, both before you move in and when you move out (after removing all your things and repairing any damage), so you can prove its condition.



**Whichever type of WG yours is, you should make sure you clear up after yourself and share in the regular house cleaning, waste removal, etc. Sometimes there will be an established rota (Putzplan).**



## WASTE AND RECYCLING

Germans separate their rubbish for recycling to protect the environment and reuse valuable materials. This is called *Mülltrennung* or *Abfalltrennung*. The system may seem quite complicated at first, but it's easy to get used to.

- Green or brown bin: compost (e. g. fruit and vegetable peelings, flowers)
- Blue bin: paper, card and cardboard (but not milk cartons, because these have plastic foil inside and need to go in the yellow bin – see below)
- Yellow bin, sometimes called 'Gelber Sack' or 'Grüner Punkt' after the *Grüner Punkt* recycling symbol on some packaging: plastics, metal, packaging
- Grey/black/red bin (*Restmüll*): everything else (except the items listed under 'Special types of waste'); sanitary protection, wipes and cotton wool should also go in this bin and not be flushed down the toilet.
- Special types of waste (batteries, medicines etc.) - should not be disposed of in domestic rubbish. You can take unused medicines back to pharmacies (*Apotheken*) for disposal!

You will find large containers for glass (green, brown and clear glass are each disposed of separately), old clothes and electrical goods at central points in most neighbourhoods. There are disposal boxes for old batteries or light bulbs in supermarkets and drugstores. If you need to dispose of large items such as furniture or large electrical goods, or toxic substances

such as paint, you will need to take them to your district's *Recyclinghof*. You can find their locations online. Alternatively, you can pay for a *Sperrmüll* collection – *Sperrmüll* is anything too big for the bins which does not need special collection (but not filled bin bags!).

Here's information in German:

→ [www.stadtreinigung.hamburg/servlet/sperrmuell.html?mode=sperrmuellSelect&contenturl=/privatkunden/sperrmuell/abholung/dynamicContent.html](http://www.stadtreinigung.hamburg/servlet/sperrmuell.html?mode=sperrmuellSelect&contenturl=/privatkunden/sperrmuell/abholung/dynamicContent.html)

If old furniture etc. has obviously been left out on the street for *Sperrmüll* collection, it's OK to take it if you think you can use it. Some people have furnished entire apartments this way!

## DRINKS CONTAINERS/ BOTTLES ETC.

Both returnable/reusable (*Mehrweg*) and single-use (*Einweg*) drinks bottles, and cans, carry a deposit (*Pfand*) which you get back if you return them. There are machines in most supermarkets where you return single-use items and give you a chit which you take to the checkout to get your deposit back. Always check whether your drinks containers have *Pfand* and don't put these in the recycling. If you want to get rid of a *Pfand* bottle or can when you are out and about, it's thoughtful to put these next to (rather than in) the bin, as many people with little money collect them to claim the deposit.

# Managing your finances: money and jobs



**Man sagt manchmal, Geld regiert die Welt<sup>1</sup>. Auch wenn das zum Glück<sup>2</sup> nicht ganz stimmt<sup>3</sup>, ist es gerade als Studierende oder Studierender wichtig, mit Geld umgehen<sup>4</sup> zu können. Hier sind einige wichtige Infos zum Nachlesen<sup>5</sup>, damit Sie nicht pleite gehen<sup>6</sup>.**

## APPROXIMATE COST OF LIVING

For the purposes of application for a residence permit, the authorities consider adequate funds for a student in Hamburg to be at least 720 Euro/month. Many of you will have had to demonstrate you have these funds available in order to get your permit. Hamburg is an expensive city, and you may wish to supplement this income (and gain valuable experience) by working (see below).

## BANK STATEMENTS (KONTOAUSZÜGE)

Especially if you don't arrange online banking, you may not get bank statements automatically through the post. There are machines in every bank which will print your statements out for you if you put in your EC card. These are called *Kontoauszugsdrucker*. It's a good idea to remember to print (*ausdrucken* – not to be confused with *ausdrücken*, to express) your statements at least once a month, so you can see where your money is going.

<sup>1</sup> eld regiert die Welt = money makes the world go round (lit. 'money rules the world')

<sup>2</sup> zum Glück = luckily, fortunately

<sup>3</sup> stimmen = be true, be correct/accurate

<sup>4</sup> mit etwas umgehen = manage, handle something

<sup>5</sup> zum Nachlesen = to read up on

<sup>6</sup> pleite gehen = to go broke, go bankrupt

## PAYMENT METHODS

In shops, restaurants, and similar places, most people pay small amounts of under 10 Euro or so in cash, and larger amounts using an EC card (debit card). Many shops do not accept credit cards, and small shops may have a minimum spend (*Mindestbetrag*) for the use of an EC card. You may be charged for using an ATM (*Geldautomat*) of a bank that is not your own.

Remember that your EC card is not a credit card. You will have to pay significant interest if you go overdrawn (*das Konto überziehen*). Paying by cheque is not a 'thing' in Germany, and your bank won't issue you with a cheque book when you open an account.

Most people pay regular bills (utilities, health insurance premiums, rent, etc.) from their bank account using a standing order (*Dauerauftrag*), which you set up with your bank, or a direct debit (*Lastschrift*, sometimes called *Bankeinzug*). To set up a *Lastschrift*, you have to fill in and submit a form called a *SEPA-Mandat* to the company or organisation you will be paying the bills to. They will then take payment automatically, usually every month. The company should cancel the *Lastschrift* automatically when you stop using their services. If you pay by *Dauerauftrag*, however, you will need

to cancel this yourself at your bank. Always make sure you know when your *Lastschrift* or *Dauerauftrag* is going out of your account and make sure there is enough money to cover it!

## SHOPPING AND BRANDS

The cheapest food and groceries can be found at discount supermarkets such as Aldi, Lidl and Penny. Major mainstream supermarket chains such as Rewe and Edeka usually stock a cheap own brand (look out for ja! or *Gut & Günstig*). Organic food is labelled 'Bio' and is usually more expensive. If there is a *Wochenmarkt* near you, this is a good opportunity to buy your fruit and vegetables very fresh and often cheaply. These will usually happen on a specific day every week.

You can buy clothes, electrical goods, books and so on in central Hamburg (Mönckebergstraße, Jungfernstieg, Neuer Wall) or in department stores or shopping centres in other parts of the city (such as Karstadt, Hamburger Meile, Billstedt Center, Wandsbeker Quarree). If you like vintage or bargain clothes or books, look out for → [flea markets](#) (*Flohmarkt*), which usually take place at weekends (and are also the only place where it is acceptable to haggle/negotiate the price). → [Stilbruch](#) operates three second-hand shops in Hamburg.

You can buy toiletries, cosmetics and personal hygiene products at supermarkets or at a *Drogeriemarkt* such as dm, Rossmann or Budni. These are not pharmacies and do not have in-store dispensaries; you can get vitamins and plasters there, but not painkillers. Most Germans like to buy their bread and rolls at bakeries. The Hamburg word for a plain white bread roll is either *Rundstück* (old-fashioned), or the standard German word, *Brötchen*. A recent law states that shops must give you a receipt (*Kassenzettel*, *Kassenbon*) for all purchases, however small.

Usual opening hours are Mondays to Saturdays from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm. Many supermarkets may open earlier and some do not close until 10:00 pm. Banks, medical practices and post offices tend to have shorter opening hours and are either closed on Saturdays or only open until 12 noon. Doctors and offices may

also close at noon on Fridays. Almost all shops and services are closed on Sundays and public holidays, so make sure you plan your shopping and don't get caught out. The shops at the major train stations and at the airport are open on Sundays, but they are expensive.

German shops are no longer allowed to give out plastic carrier bags (*Plastiktüte* – see dictionary/glossary under bag) free of charge. You can usually find a selection of different types of plastic, paper and/or fabric bags next to checkouts; they have varying prices between 10 cents and 1 or 2 Euro. It's better to remember to bring your own bag, rucksack or shopping trolley along with you.

You can also help the environment (*Umwelt*) by removing any plastic packaging from your fresh food after you've been through the checkout and putting it in the bins that are there (usually marked with *Verpackung*).



**You can usually find a selection of different types of plastic, paper and/or fabric bags next to checkouts; they have varying prices between 10 cents and 1 or 2 Euro. It's better to remember to bring your own bag, rucksack or shopping trolley along with you.**

## WORK FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

All students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during the semester.

You can look for work on these websites:

- [www.stellenwerk-hamburg.de](http://www.stellenwerk-hamburg.de)
- [www.jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de)
- [www.jobcafe.de](http://www.jobcafe.de)
- [www.monster.de](http://www.monster.de)
- [www.stepstone.de](http://www.stepstone.de)

### Please note

#### a) Students from EU countries

(except Croatia) do not need a work permit to work during their studies.

#### b) Students from non-EU countries and Croatia

are allowed to work a maximum of 120 days (or 240 half days) per year without a work permit. The following text must be printed in your passport: *“Beschäftigung bis zu 120 Tage oder 240 halbe Tage im Jahr sowie Ausübung studentischer Nebentätigkeit erlaubt.”* [Employment of up to 120 days or 240 half days and part-time student work permitted.] Make sure you and/or your employer record these days precisely, because you or they may be checked to ensure the law is being complied with.

#### c) Work permit

If you take up part-time employment that involves more than 120 days per year, you need a work permit. Holders of student visas will only be granted one in exceptional circumstances. Students from EU member states have the same rights as Germans. If you need any advice on the amount of paid work you can do alongside your studies, come to the HAW Hamburg → [International Office](#) or contact the advice centre run by the *Studierendenwerk* (see address below under 'If you get into financial difficulties').

#### d) The 120-day rule and the exceptions

Students from non-EU countries and Croatia can work 120 days or 240 half days per year without a work permit (section 16, paragraph 3 of the AufenthG [Federal Residence Act]).

#### e) 1 day = 8 hours; half day = 4 hours

If you work more than four hours but less than eight hours on one day, this still counts as a full day. If you earn more than € 400 per month, you are required to pay German social security contributions incidentally.

#### f) Student jobs

The 120-day rule does NOT apply to student jobs. Apply to student jobs in the narrower sense, which means peer tutoring and student assistant positions at the HAW Hamburg. There are no limits on how much work you can take on if it takes place within HAW Hamburg. Some examples are working as a student assistant to a professor, supporting less advanced students in their learning and teaching courses to them (as a *Tutor\*in*), or helping out on research and other projects. Ask your professor about opportunities or check department noticeboards, email newsletters and mailing lists.

#### g) Internships/practical training, Bachelor's and Master's theses

If an internship/practical training is an obligatory element of your degree course, it does not fall under the 120-day rule. You do not require a work permit. This also applies or any work done in the course of your Bachelor's or Master's thesis, whether you complete it at a business, the university or a research institute.

#### h) After you have completed your studies/EU Blue Card

Once they have completed their studies, international students are permitted to remain in Germany for 18 months in order to find a job. This position must match your qualifications. During this time you are required to have enough money to cover your living expenses. You are permitted to work an unlimited number of days/hours. In 2012 Germany introduced the EU Blue Card for skilled graduates from non-EU countries. The requirements are a degree from a higher education institution and proof of employment in Germany.

For an overview of current regulations regarding work and jobs, please consult the following website:

→ [www.internationale-studierende.de/en/prepare\\_your\\_studies/financing/jobbing](http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en/prepare_your_studies/financing/jobbing)



## SOME USEFUL TERMS FROM THE GERMAN WORLD OF WORK

*450-Euro-Job* – Also called a *Minijob* or *geringfügige Beschäftigung*, this is a type of small-scale job which allows people to work small amounts alongside another job, studies or a pension without paying extra tax. You have a proper contract, usually without a fixed term. The wage is fixed at 450 Euro a month (the number of hours will depend on the type of work you are doing; alternatively, the hours will be fixed and the pay may be less, but won't be more than 450 Euro a month) and a lump-sum contribution to your social insurance will be paid for you.

You may see job ads which ask for a *Honorarkraft* or say you will be working auf *Honorarbasis*. In these 'jobs', you won't be an employee (even if you sign a contract/agreement) and you'll be considered self-employed and expected to tax your earnings yourself (over a particular threshold). Your health insurer also needs to know about these earnings.

If you work on a 'self-employed' basis for one client only, you may be considered what is called *scheinselbstständig*. This means your employer is treating you as a self-employed person even though you are really effectively an employee, in order to save paying social insurance contributions for you. This isn't allowed. It's mainly the employer's issue, but it could also cause

problems for you, such as back payments of social insurance contributions. Make sure you understand your status when you start a job and, if you are genuinely self-employed, get your income from a balance of different clients.

*Schwarzarbeit (schwarz arbeiten)* – don't ever do this! This is working 'cash in hand', untaxed and without any social insurance contributions being paid for you. It's illegal and could mean you lose your residence permit if found out, plus you will have no legal or financial protection if your employer fails to pay you, treats you badly or you have an accident at work.

*Kündigungsfrist* – Both you and your employer will need to adhere to a notice period in order to terminate your employment. This is usually the same for both sides. Check your contract. It's usual to only be able to terminate effectively at the end of a calendar month.

*m/w/d* – You may see these letters after the title of a job being advertised. This stands for *männlich/weiblich/divers* and means 'male/female/diverse [i.e. non-binary]'. It ensures that job ads written in the German grammatical masculine form aren't discriminatory and shows you that all genders\* can apply.

\*Since 2019, German law has recognised three genders – female, male and non-binary.

## IF YOU GET INTO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

It's very important indeed to keep paying your rent and your health insurance (*Krankenkassenbeitrag*). You are required by law to have health insurance and not paying your premium will eventually lead to your deregistration from HAW Hamburg and the loss of your residence permit. You can also be asked to leave your apartment or room if you don't pay the rent two months in a row. HAW Hamburg students who are experiencing a financial emergency through no fault of their own can turn to one of the Hamburg emergency funds. The → [International Office](#) may be able to help you access emergency hardship funds. Come and talk to us first. Here is an overview of available funds.

### a) VDFAS

The Association of Sponsors of Foreign Students (VDFAS) was founded by instructors, employees and friends of HAW Hamburg to provide fast and uncomplicated assistance to international students at the university who find themselves in a financial emergency through no fault of their own. Students are required to come to an in-person meeting at the HAW Hamburg International Office. Financial assistance of up to €400 can be made available. Students can apply for emergency financial support from the VDFAS a maximum of three times during their studies. They are not automatically entitled to receive this funding.

### b) Diakonisches Werk

The Diakonisches Werk, a charitable organisation that is part of the Protes-

tant Church, supports students at Hamburg universities who are from developing and emerging countries and are experiencing a financial emergency. It does not matter what religion they belong to. Contact the → [International Office](#) at HAW Hamburg first before approaching the Diakonisches Werk.

### c) Studierendenwerk

All students who find themselves in an unexpected, acute and temporary financial emergency can apply to Studierendenwerk Hamburg's emergency fund for an emergency loan or subsidised and/or free meals in the Studierendenwerk cafeterias. An in-person meeting and proof of a financial emergency are required before an application can be submitted. Applicants have no legal entitlement to assistance. Your point of contact is the Beratungszentrum Soziales & Internationales (Counselling Centre for Social and International Affairs).

### Beratungszentrum Soziales & Internationales – BeSI

Grindelallee 9, 3rd floor  
20146 Hamburg  
Tel: 040 419 02-155  
[besi@studierendenwerk-hamburg.de](mailto:besi@studierendenwerk-hamburg.de)

### Drop-in hours:

Mondays and Fridays  
9:30 am–12:00 noon  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
9:30 am–12:00 noon and  
2:00 pm–4:00 pm

→ [www.studierendenwerk-hamburg.de/en/counselling/counselling-centre-for-social-international-affairs-besi](http://www.studierendenwerk-hamburg.de/en/counselling/counselling-centre-for-social-international-affairs-besi)







# Getting around in Hamburg: transport

**German people usually pay attention to the red and green pedestrian signals at road crossings. You can theoretically be fined (Strafe zahlen müssen) if you cross the road when the red signal is on.**

## LOCAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM, SEMESTER TICKET

Your student ID card (*Chipkarte*) doubles as your 'semester ticket', which entitles you to travel on all Hamburg's local public transport services free of additional charges.

Travelling on public transport without a ticket is called *schwarzfahren* and usually results in an immediate charge of at least 60 Euro. If you do it repeatedly you may face criminal prosecution. *Our advice: don't!*

## BEING A PEDESTRIAN

German people usually pay attention to the red and green pedestrian signals at road crossings. You can theoretically be fined (*Strafe zahlen müssen*) if you cross the road when the red signal is on.

At road crossings, traffic is often allowed to turn right into the road where the crossing is when the green pedestrian signal is on. They have to stop and wait for you, so don't be alarmed or surprised if this happens.

Try to avoid walking on cycle paths (*Radwege*), which are often part of the pavement.

## NATIONAL TRANSPORT

If you want to travel outside the region, to take a look at other parts of Germany, you can use the excellent regional and long-distance rail network. You'll find it's a lot cheaper to book tickets in advance (use the Deutsche Bahn website at → [bahn.de](https://www.bahn.de)) – the earlier you manage to book, the less your ticket will probably cost. Doing a trip with regional trains (RE or RB) is also cheaper, though it often takes a lot longer. IC trains are cheaper than ICE. There are special youth discounts on national rail services (up to the age of 27).

A good and often very cheap option is to take an intercity coach (*Fernbus*). There's information (in German) on long-distance coach services from and to Hamburg here: → [www.hamburg.de/fernbus](https://www.hamburg.de/fernbus)

# Looking out for yourself: health and safety



**Hauptsache gesund<sup>1</sup> – aber wie dafür sorgen<sup>2</sup>, dass es auch so bleibt? Der folgende Abschnitt informiert Sie über das deutsche Gesundheitswesen<sup>3</sup> und Ihre Möglichkeiten, die Versorgung zu erhalten, die Sie benötigen<sup>4</sup>.**

## ROUTINE HEALTH NEEDS

For your day-to-day health needs, you will need to go to an *Allgemeinarzt (Arzt/Ärztin für Allgemeinmedizin)* or *Hausarzt /Hausärztin* (general practitioner). They may want you to see a specialist if they feel they can't help with your issue. In Germany, specialists cover more routine health needs than they do in some other countries, so don't be alarmed if you are sent to one. Your doctor will give you a form called an *Überweisung* (not to be confused with the form used to transfer money at the bank) with the name of the speciality on it and a brief note about the suspected issue. You then make the appointment yourself. Sometimes it can take a while to get an appointment (*Termin*). If you have children, a *Hausarzt* will usually not see them, even

for minor or routine issues; you should go straight to a paediatrician (*Kinderarzt/-ärztin*). You will be required to provide proof that your child has been vaccinated against measles (*Masern*) in order for them to be accepted by a day care facility or school. You can get them vaccinated at a paediatrician if they haven't been yet.

If you are worried about having the right vocabulary for a doctor's appointment, there is a publication in English and German which can help you:  
 → [Erste Hilfe – Illustriertes Gesundheitswörterbuch: Hinweise für internationale Studierende in Deutschland](#). (First Aid. An illustrated health dictionary: Information for international students in Germany)

<sup>1</sup> Hauptsache gesund = approximately 'just as long as we're healthy', or 'health is the main thing' (*Hauptsache* = the main thing)

<sup>2</sup> dafür sorgen = ensure (that)

<sup>3</sup> Gesundheitswesen = health system

<sup>4</sup> benötigen = to need, to require

This is a guide to healthcare in Germany produced for immigrants to Germany by the city of Hamburg and written in simple English. Some of it may not apply to you, so always fact-check first.

→ [www.hamburg.de/content-blob/11677264/553ade9da7a546bc712841a7ef75b658/data/englisch-gesundheitsversorgung-in-deutschland.pdf](http://www.hamburg.de/content-blob/11677264/553ade9da7a546bc712841a7ef75b658/data/englisch-gesundheitsversorgung-in-deutschland.pdf)

## CONTRACEPTIVES

Hormonal contraceptives (*Verhütungsmittel*), such as the contraceptive pill, require a prescription from a doctor, and your *Hausarzt* will probably ask you to see a gynaecologist (*Frauenarzt* or *-ärztin*) to get contraceptives. If you are 22 years old or above, you usually have to pay for contraceptives yourself. The link below contains information (in German) on how you can get contraceptives free of charge if you have a low income.

→ [www.hamburg.de/leistungen-hilfen/12939016/verhuetungsmittel/](http://www.hamburg.de/leistungen-hilfen/12939016/verhuetungsmittel/)

The organisation Pro Familia offers advice on contraception and unplanned pregnancy. Here is an English-language link to their services in Hamburg:

→ [www.profamilia-hamburg.de/en/home.html](http://www.profamilia-hamburg.de/en/home.html)

## OUT-OF-HOURS MEDICAL SERVICES

If you need a doctor in evenings, at weekends and on public holidays, outside regular doctors' consulting hours, you can call the out-of-hours medical service on **116 117**. This service will arrange for you to access a doctor if you need one.

### Out-of-hours practices (*Notfallpraxen*) in Hamburg

These services are open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 7:00 p.m. to midnight, on Wednesdays (when many doctors' offices close at lunchtime) from 1:00 p.m. to midnight, and on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 7:00 am to midnight.

#### Notfallpraxis Altona

Stresemannstraße 54  
22769 Hamburg

#### Notfallpraxis Farmsen

Berner Heerweg 124  
22159 Hamburg

There is more information on emergency medical assistance and out-of-hours practices in this English-language information sheet:

→ [arztruf-hamburg.de/assets/downloads/KVHH\\_Flyer\\_DIN\\_lang\\_EN.pdf](http://arztruf-hamburg.de/assets/downloads/KVHH_Flyer_DIN_lang_EN.pdf)

## HOSPITALS IN HAMBURG

If you have a medical emergency at night or at the weekend, you can go to the emergency department (*Notaufnahme*) of a hospital near you, such as Asklepios Klinik St. Georg, the University Hospital in Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE), or Asklepios Klinik Barmbek.

## INFORMATION ON POISONS AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES

If you are worried that you or someone else may have ingested a toxic substance, you can call **0551 192 40** (*Giftnotruf* Göttingen). The lines are open 24 hours a day and you can get advice in English.

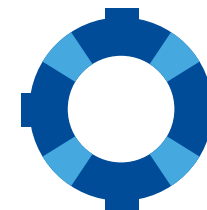
## EMERGENCY DENTAL SERVICES

If you need a dentist outside of usual opening hours, you can find out where to turn by calling **01805 05 05 18** (calls charged at 14 ct/min from landlines and up to 42 ct/min from mobiles).

## PHARMACIES AND MEDICINES

For most medicines, you will need a prescription (*Rezept*) from a doctor, which you will have to take to a pharmacy (*Apotheke*). Germany has fairly restrictive rules about what pharmacies are allowed to sell over the counter. For example, you will always need a prescription for antibiotics. Additionally, you will not find medicines such as paracetamol and ibuprofen in supermarkets. You don't need a prescription for these, but you'll need to go to an *Apotheke* for them.

You will usually have to pay a small prescription charge for each prescription. Pharmacies take it in turns to provide a local service at night and at weekends. Look up your local *Notapotheker* at → [apothekerkammer-hamburg.de/notdienst/](http://apothekerkammer-hamburg.de/notdienst/) or call **0800 00 22833**.



## MENTAL HEALTH

→ [HAW Hamburg's Student Counselling Office](#) can provide help and support if you are struggling with issues related to your studies, such as difficulties motivating yourself or getting down to work, worries about your performance or fear of exams. It can also help if you are experiencing difficulties with family or personal relationships or fellow students. The counsellors will listen and attempt to support you with anything that's worrying you. Please make an appointment for a one-to-one session by calling the service, attending its drop-in hours or sending an email. Please call or send an email to check whether drop-on hours are being offered.

Tel.: 040 428 75 9110  
 Mobil: 0152-247 440 63  
 Mon/Tues 10:00–11:00 am,  
 Thurs 1:00–2:00 pm

**Email:**  
[studienberatung@haw-hamburg.de](mailto:studienberatung@haw-hamburg.de)

### Drop-in hours

(no appointment required):  
 Mon/Tues 11:00 am–1:00 pm,  
 Thurs 2:00– 5:00 pm

### Drop-in hour (psychologist)

(no appointment required)  
 Tuesdays 2:00–3:00 pm

## Telephone listening service (Telefonseelsorge)

If you feel desperate or alone and need someone to listen to you, you can call the *Telefonseelsorge* at any time, day or night, weekdays, weekends or public holidays. Calls are anonymous and free of charge. The *Telefonseelsorge* specifies that the service is in German. The numbers you can call are **0800 111 0111, 0800 111 0222**

The *Telefonseelsorge*'s website has a list of international helplines:  
 → [www.telefonseelsorge.de/international-helplines/](http://www.telefonseelsorge.de/international-helplines/)

## Muslim listening service (Muslimisches Telefonseelsorge, MuTeS)

The helpline is open 24 hours every day. A Turkish-language service is available on Tuesdays.  
 Tel.: 030 443 509 821

## INTERPERSONAL ISSUES AND DISCRIMINATION

The → [Confidential Dispute Advising Office](#) is a point of contact for students and instructors at HAW Hamburg in the event of difficult situations and disputes between students and university employees. Such situations could include:

- Problems with the organisation of studies
- Conflicts related to exams
- unacceptable behaviour
- Complaints about racist or sexist comments
- Experiences of powerlessness due to unequal distribution of power

This service is neutral and impartial, and its staff support all parties to a conflict equally. Your personal information and everything you discuss with the service will be kept absolutely confidential. Please don't hesitate to contact them, even if you're not sure the Confidential Dispute Advising Office is the right place to help you with your situation. The Office has an international student and a professor available to provide specific assistance to international students ([conflictmanagement@haw-hamburg.de](mailto:conflictmanagement@haw-hamburg.de)).

## SAFETY HINTS

*Hamburg ist eine sehr sichere Stadt, in der Sie studieren, leben und feiern können, ohne außergewöhnliche Vorkehrungen zu treffen. Aber es kann überall Schwierigkeiten und Probleme geben. Diese Seiten geben Ihnen Informationen dazu, was Sie im Fall der Fälle\* tun können.*

Hamburg is a very safe city and you can go about your business here without taking specific precautions. This said, wherever there are a lot of people, difficulties can arise, crimes can take place and crises can occur. At HAW Hamburg there is always someone you can turn to in any situation you're struggling with.

In an emergency, you can contact your home country's embassy or consulate; there is a list on the website of the → [German Federal Foreign Office](#). At → [HAW Hamburg](#), the International Office team, the faculties' Student Exchange Coordinators and the International Student Coordinator for the Information Engineering course are available to help you with any questions you may have about personal safety or any difficulties you encounter. Here is a list of organisations that you can turn to.

\*lit. 'in the case of cases'. Means 'if the scenario you are talking about or planning for occurs'.

### a) Emergency contacts and telephone numbers

#### Ambulance/emergency medical assistance, fire service: 112

Please only call 112 if there is a fire or you need emergency medical assistance.

#### Police: 110

You can call the police free of charge from any phone using the number 110 if you need help, feel afraid or in danger, or if you are the victim of a crime. The police in Germany is reliable and safe to contact and you can trust police officers.

### b) Federal helpline on violence against women

The helpline is open 24 hours a day, including weekends and public holidays, and offers advice and support in 17 languages. Tel.: 0800 0 116 016

### c) Victim Support (*Opferhilfe Hamburg*)

Offers support for adult victims of crime, male or female, and their loved ones.

#### Opening hours.

Mon and Fri 10:00 am–1:00 p.m.

Tues and Thurs 10:00 am–5:00 pm

Weds 1:00–5:00 pm

Tel.: 040/381993

### d) Weisser Ring – Non-profit association supporting victims of crime

Weisser Ring offers advice and practical support to anyone who has been a victim of crime or whose life is impacted by crime or violence. You can call **116 006** anonymously and free of charge from wherever you are in Germany.

#### Weisser Ring Landesbüro Hamburg

Tel.: 040/2517680

E-Mail: hamburg@weisser-ring.de

### GOING OUT IN HAMBURG

Hamburg is a busy and lively city with diverse and exciting nightlife and plenty of things to do. It's a safe city with an excellent public transport network to get you wherever you're going and home again afterwards. However, it's always sensible to be aware and avoid taking unnecessary risks. We would like to give you some tips and advice for a good night out and a safe journey home.

- If you're going out for a night at clubs and/or bars, try to only go in a group. Make sure you know all the people you are with and all the people you will be travelling home with. Agree on a place and time to meet if you are separated during the evening.
- Make sure you know how to get home from wherever you are spending the evening. HVV, Hamburg's public transport organisation, has created an [→ app](#) to help you find your way home.
- Be aware of when your last train, underground or bus leaves and make sure you have enough money for a taxi if you think you may be travelling home later than this. This is especially important if you live outside Hamburg or in a suburban area such as Allermöhe, Kiwittsmoor or Rahlstedt.
- Some taxis do not have credit card payment facilities. Make sure you always have enough cash on you to cover the fare home.
- Hamburg has a good night bus network. Use the [→ HVV app](#) to check if there is a route you can take to get home.
- Pickpockets love areas where many people go on nights out. Hamburg is no exception. Take good care of your purse or wallet and make sure your ID and the keys to your home are safe. Don't take your passport out with you (take a picture of it to keep on your phone to use as ID) and lock it away when you are not at home.
- Some international students are below the legal drinking age in their home countries, but old enough to drink alcohol legally here in Germany. It's fun and exciting to go to pubs and bars, but please stay sensible and make sure you know your limits with alcohol. Don't leave your drink unattended and don't let anyone buy you a drink if you can't see the drink all the time.
- Keep your eyes and ears open to spot potential trouble and avoid situations which you think may become confrontational or dangerous – trust your instincts. It's better not to attend protests or demonstrations, as they can occasionally turn violent.





# Queues, booze and shoes: interacting with others

**Hamburg ist eine Stadt mit Herz<sup>1</sup> – und die HAW Hamburg ist im Herzen der Stadt. Aber es ist nicht immer leicht, die Gepflogenheiten<sup>2</sup> einer neuen Stadt und eines neuen Landes zu verstehen. Hier können Sie erfahren, wie man hier so tickt<sup>3</sup> – jenseits<sup>4</sup> von Stereotypen.**

## MAKING FRIENDS

Friendships may build up slowly. Try to chat to people you see in lectures or seminars (but not during class, of course!) and always say a friendly 'Moin' and 'Tschüss'. People are more likely to be open to friendships with someone they see regularly.

It's always very appreciated if you offer someone help with moving house/room (*Umzug*), and it can be a lot of fun – so if someone tells you '*ich ziehe bald um*', offer them a helping hand on the big day (*'kann ich (beim Umzug) mithelfen?'*). You never know – it might be the start of a great friendship.

If someone wants to know all about where you come from, this is a good opening to make friends, even though it can sometimes be hard to answer a lot of curious questions. Why not ask them to come along to the HAWWeltweit Kulturcafé?

The → [HAWWeltweit Kulturcafé](#) opened in winter semester 2019/2020 as a space for international students and those based in Germany to meet, interact and learn about one another. All students who are interested in intercultural issues are invited to come along, join in the conversation and get to know new people.

Events at the Kulturcafé include themed evenings all about various countries, discussion and debate on current political and social issues, presentations on customs, traditions and festivals from various cultures, games nights and cooking and sharing a meal together. If you come along regularly, you'll be able to help suggest topics and events for future semesters.

<sup>1</sup> mit Herz = warm-hearted, friendly, caring

<sup>2</sup> Gepflogenheiten = habits, customs

<sup>3</sup> wie man hier so tickt = what people are like here

<sup>4</sup> jenseits (von) = beyond; aside from  
(lit. 'on the other side of, on the far side of')



**Useful phrases:**

- Lass(t) uns mal zusammen für die Prüfung lernen.
- Wollen wir mal\*/nach der Vorlesung einen Kaffee trinken/was trinken\*\* gehen?
- Wollen wir am Wochenende bei mir zusammen kochen? (German people – not just students – enjoy cooking with friends)

\*\* *Was trinken (gehen)* can, but doesn't necessarily, mean alcoholic drinks, but it will usually mean in the late afternoon or evening.

**QUEUES/STANDING IN LINE**

If you're at the supermarket and another checkout (*Kasse*) opens, it's usually a free-for-all – which means that whoever reaches the new checkout first is served first, rather than those towards the front of the original queues. People will not be happy, though, if you push to the front of an existing queue (this is called *sich vordrängeln*).

**SHAKING HANDS**

Shaking hands is very common in German culture and might find its way back to there after the COVID-19 pandemic. Students usually don't do it among themselves, but your professor, for example, may offer a handshake when you go to their consultation hour (*Sprechstunde*). Don't refuse a handshake if you are offered one. If you need to refuse for religious reasons, explain this to the other person (*‘Leider kann ich aus religiösen Gründen Ihnen nicht die Hand geben’*) and offer a polite nod and smile instead. In some offices and authorities, particularly in the winter, there may be a notice saying that they are not shaking hands for infection control reasons.

**SIE AND DU**

You'll probably know that German has a formal (*Sie* – singular and plural) and an informal form of address (*Du* in the singular and *Ihr* in the plural). The basic rule is that you use *Sie* with all adult strangers, except with your fellow students – they always use *Du* to one another. Your professors and lecturers will probably use (and expect) *Sie*.

Sometimes – in a job, for example, or a research team – you may mutually agree to use *Du*. It's always the higher-status person who takes the initiative. If you arrive in a work or research team and notice that everyone (regardless of status)

says *Du* to one another, you'll be able to use *Du* as well and there probably won't need to be an explicit agreement. But sometimes the researchers may use *Du* to one another but *Sie* with the research group lead. In most cases, using *Du* goes along with using first names and using *Sie* with using *Herr/Frau* and last names. More and more companies and shops have started addressing their customers with *Du*.

**SHOES**

Some Germans may like you to take your shoes off when you enter their home or room. This is less likely at a student party, but may happen when visiting a family at home, for instance. You can always ask your host (*Gastgeber*) if you're not sure. Interesting fact: The word for 'guest' – *Gast* – doesn't have a feminine form. So you are always *der Gast* if you are a guest or a visitor somewhere, even if you are female.

**VISITING PEOPLE**

It's polite to bring flowers or cake/wine. Often parties will be bring and share/pot luck, where you will be asked to bring a prepared dish of food along. Sometimes there will be a list and you will be asked to fill in (*eintragen*) what you are going to bring. If you have been asked to a BBQ (*grillen/ein Grillfest*), the host may supply the meat/vegetarian alternative (*Grillgut*)

and you may be requested to bring drinks, bread, a salad or dessert. It's usual and polite to ask *'Kann ich was mitbringen?'* (Can/Should I bring something along with me?)

**HOW TO USE A GERMAN THERMOS-KAFFEKANNE**

At some point during your time in Germany, you are 99.999999% certain to come across one of these:



You'll often see them at meetings or events, and they usually contain coffee or (fruit/herb or black) tea. To pour yourself a cup, unscrew the lid, but only a little way, then pour. Or, if the lid has a little lever, press that down, and keep holding it down while pouring.

**BIRTHDAYS**

Germans enjoy celebrating their birthdays, and even when it's an adult, you'll hear people referring to the *Geburtstagskind* (birthday child). Often the word *Geburtstag* is used to mean a birthday party (*'Ich möchte dich zu meinem Geburtstag einladen.'*)

The way to wish someone a happy birthday is to say *Herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag* or *Alles Gute zum Geburtstag*. This is called (*zum Geburtstag*) *gratulieren*.

In Germany, it's considered bad luck to wish someone a happy birthday before the actual date. Sometimes people celebrate their birthdays on the evening before the actual birthday. This is called *reinfeiern*, and it's considered rude to leave the party or give birthday wishes before midnight.

If you know that it was someone's birthday a few days ago, you can wish them a happy belated birthday by saying *Herzlichen Glückwunsch (or Alles Gute) nachträglich*. Sometimes, especially in some workplaces and clubs/societies (*Vereine*), there is an expectation that the *Geburtstagkind* will bring in cake, sweets, biscuits or similar for their colleagues to share. It always makes a good impression if you do this on your birthday.

### MEET THE GERMANS – AN EDUCATIONAL DEUTSCHE WELLE SERIES

Don't miss: "From beer to nudity and ridiculous grammar – Meet the Germans uncovers the quirks and idiosyncrasies of the German culture. Through videos with presenter Rachel Stewart and other online content we bring you insider tips and a light-hearted but informative look at life in Germany" on the web, Instagram and Youtube: → [www.dw.com/en/top-stories/meet-the-germans/s-32641](http://www.dw.com/en/top-stories/meet-the-germans/s-32641).

For the German version of the series, please check out → [www.dw.com/de/themen/meet-the-germans/s-32643](http://www.dw.com/de/themen/meet-the-germans/s-32643).



**Sometimes people celebrate their birthdays on the evening before the actual birthday. This is called *reinfeiern*, and it's considered rude to leave the party or give birthday wishes before midnight.**



# Dictionary and glossary of terms, phrases and things you need to know about

## 1. HAW Hamburg terminology for international students and academics (German-English)

### GENERAL TERMS

Bachelor	Bachelor's / Bachelor's degree
Bachelor Prüfungszeugnis	Bachelor's certificate of examinations
Bachelorstudiengang	Bachelor's degree course
Bachelorarbeit	Bachelor thesis
Bachelor Prüfung	Bachelor's examination
Bachelor Urkunde	Bachelor's degree certificate
Master	Master's / Master's degree
Master Prüfungszeugnis	Master's certificate of examinations
Masterstudiengang	Master's degree course
Masterarbeit	Master thesis
Master Prüfung	Master's examination
Master Urkunde	Master's degree certificate

**FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS****Fakultät Design, Medien und Information**

Department Design

Department Information

Department Medientechnik

**Faculty of Design, Media and Information**

Department of Design

Department of Information

Department of Media Technology

**Fakultät Life Sciences**

Department Biotechnologie

Department Gesundheitswissenschaften

Department Medizintechnik

Department Ökotrophologie

Department Umwelttechnik

Department Verfahrenstechnik

Department Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen

**Faculty of Life Sciences**

Department of Biotechnology

Department of Health Sciences

Department of Biomedical Engineering

Department of Nutrition / Home Economics

Department of Environmental Engineering

Department of Process Engineering

Department of Industrial Engineering and Management

**Fakultät Technik und Informatik**

Department Fahrzeugtechnik und Flugzeugbau

Department Informatik

Department Informations- und Elektrotechnik

Department Maschinenbau und Produktion

**Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science**

Department of Automotive and Aeronautical Engineering

Department of Computer Science

Department of Information and Electrical Engineering

Department of Mechanical Engineering and Production Management

**Fakultät Wirtschaft und Soziales**

Department Pflege und Management

Department Public Management

Department Soziale Arbeit

Department Wirtschaft

**Faculty of Business and Social Sciences**

Department of Nursing and Management

Department of Public Management

Department of Social Work

Department of Business

**HOCHSCHULORGANISATION UND FORSCHUNG / UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES; RESEARCH**

Präsidium

Studium und Lehre (vizepräsidiale Funktion)

Internationales (Funktion)

Hochschulrat

Hochschulsenat

Hochschulgremien

Hochschulanzeiger

Dekanat

Stabsstelle Forschung und Transfer

Lehrstuhl; Professur

Berufung (auf einen Lehrstuhl)

Mittelbau

Wissenschaft

wissenschaftliche/r Mitarbeiter/in

wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs

(Forschungs)förderung

Drittmittel

Promotion

Studium

Promotionsbetreuer ('Doktorvater')

Executive Board

Academics and Teaching

International Affairs

University Advisory Board

University Senate

University governing bodies; key university committees

HAW Hamburg official gazette

Dean of the Faculty/Faculty Dean's office

Research and Knowledge Transfer team

chair (in)

appointment (to a chair)

non-professorial academic staff

academia; science and research

researcher; lecturer

early career researchers/early career academics

research funding; research grant

third-party (research) funding

doctorate; doctoral studies

degree (course)

supervisor

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**STUDIUM UND LEHRE / ACADEMIC MATTERS**


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Studierendenzentrum	Student Service Center
Zentrale Studienberatung	Student Counselling Office (for general academic advice and psychological support)
Chipkarte	(Student) ID Card
Studierendensekretariat	Student Admissions and Registration Office
Immatrikulation	enrolment; registration
Immatrikulationsbescheinigung	proof of enrolment
Leistungskonto	course and grade overview
OE	OE Week; orientation; induction
Zentrum für Karriereplanung	Career Service <i>Karriereberatung</i> : careers advice
Studien- und Prüfungsordnung	Course and Examination Regulations
Zusatzfach	additional subject; supplementary subject
Studiengang	degree course
dualer Studiengang	cooperative degree programme
konsekutiv ( <i>Master</i> )	consecutive ( <i>A consecutive Master's degree course is one that builds directly on a previously studied Bachelor's degree course</i> )
Pflichtmodul	required module
[offene] Sprechzeiten	drop-in hours
Wahlpflichtmodul	required elective module
Wahlmodul	elective module

Regelstudienzeit	standard duration of course/standard course completion period/target course completion period <i>This is the period of time students are expected to have completed their degree in. It is normally given in semesters.</i>
Studienfachberatung	(departmental) student advisory (session) ( <i>person</i> ) academic coordinator
Sommersemester	summer semester
Vorlesungszeit	teaching period ( <i>colloquially 'semester', this is inaccurate, as a semester encompasses both teaching and non-teaching periods</i> )
vorlesungsfreie Zeit	vacation; non-teaching period
(Studien)schwerpunkt	focal area; specialism
Vertiefung(sstudium)	advanced studies
wissenschaftliches Arbeiten	good academic/scientific practice; study skills
Grundlagen ...	fundamental principles in ... / key principles of ...
Grundlagenstudium	foundational studies
Praktikum (Laborpraktikum)	practical; ... lab; ...(lab practical)
Praktikum ( <i>for gaining work experience or professional practice</i> )	internship; industrial placement
Propädeutikum	preparatory studies/preparatory course
Prüfungsleistung	examination (assessed and graded)
Studienleistung	assessment (assessed as 'pass' or 'unsuccessful')
Abgabetermin	deadline (for handing work in)

Nachteilsausgleich; Härtefall(antrag)	special circumstances
Beurlaubung	leave
Durchschnitt(snote)	grade average
Zeugnis	certificate of examinations
(Abschluss)urkunde	degree certificate
Abschlussnote	overall final grade
bestehen	to pass (a module, an examination)
bestanden	pass(ed)
nicht bestanden	not passed; unsuccessful; 'failed'
Exmatrikulation	deregistration

## 2. Useful terms for Hamburg and German life

### AG

In a campus context, this stands for *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* and may mean a club or society revolving around a particular interest, or a working group convened to focus on a specific issue.

### ANTRAG

A very useful word, and one you'll no doubt meet a lot during your time in Germany. This is a formal, almost always written request or application for something – for example, to enrol at HAW Hamburg, for student finance (*BAföG*), or for special circumstances in exams. If something is said to be *auf Antrag*, this means you don't get it automatically and you need to apply for it in this way (*einen Antrag stellen*).

### AUSFALLEN

When an event or something that was supposed to be happening is cancelled. *Die heutige Lehrveranstaltung fällt leider aus.* = Today's lecture is regrettably cancelled.

### BAG

*Tasche, Tüte, Beutel*  
*Tasche* – a handbag.  
*Tüte* – carrier bag, usually plastic or paper.  
*Beutel* – often made of fabric.



### EGAL

*Es ist mir egal* = I don't mind/care. Useful when you are being given two or more options and don't mind which, or being asked whether something (a date, time, course of action) would suit you. However, this can be read/heard as being a bit abrupt and dismissive, so if you want to be polite, say *es macht mir nichts aus* (= I don't mind).

### EINKAUFEN/SHOPPEN

You use *einkaufen* (*ich kaufe ein*) if you are talking about shopping for necessities, such as food/groceries and cleaning products. You say *shoppen* if you are going shopping 'for pleasure' – browsing for clothes, books or gifts.

### EINLADEN

- 1) To invite someone in the general sense – to visit one's house (*nach Hause/zu sich einladen*), to an event (*Einladung zur Erstsemesterbegrüßung*) or party (*ich würde dich gern zu meinem Geburtstag einladen*)
- 2) This is where you need to be careful. If you are going somewhere with someone else where you will need to pay (a restaurant or bar, the cinema, etc.), saying '*ich lade dich ein*' means that you are offering to pay for them. In English, to invite someone (*out*) doesn't necessarily carry this implication.

Therefore, if you want to suggest going out together, but you don't intend to pay for the other person or people, it's best to avoid *einladen*. Say instead: *'Wollen wir zusammen ins Kino gehen?'* or *'Lass uns am Freitag was trinken gehen.'*

### EINWEG/MEHRWEG

You may see this in relation to drinks bottles or packaging. *Einweg* means single-use, *Mehrweg* means returnable – that is, you can take the bottles back to where you bought them so they can be used again. A deposit (*Pfand*) is also payable on many *Einweg* containers. You can return these to machines you will find in supermarkets.

### ERMÄSSIGUNG

A reduction or concession (e.g. for students) on the cost of entry to a attraction, a cinema or concert ticket, etc. – *'erm.'* stands for *ermäßigt*.

### FORMLOS

This means there isn't a particular form (or form of words) to do something official (apply for something or provide information, for instance). You may, for example, be asked to apply for something auf *formlosen Antrag*. This just means you write a simple letter saying (for instance) *Hiermit beantrage ich xxxx* – that's enough and you don't need to fill in any additional forms etc. (obviously don't forget to sign it and add your contact details!).

### GIROKONTO

A current account with a bank or Sparkasse.

### GRILLGUT

What you bring to a BBQ to cook – be it meat or vegetarian/vegan alternatives like halloumi, veggieburgers or vegetable skewers.

### ICH MÖCHTE EIN KONTO ERÖFFNEN

= I would like to open an account (at the bank)

### IN ORDNUNG

= OK

### KOMMILITONE/-IN

= A fellow student.

### KÜNDIGUNG/KÜNDIGUNGSFRIST/ FRISTGERECHT

*Kündigen* is what you do if you want to formally end a contract or agreement.

Depending on the subject of the contract or agreement, different notice periods (*Kündigungsfrist*) apply, which are usually set out in law and which you cannot ignore. For example, if you have signed a rental contract to run indeterminately (*unbefristet*), you must give three months' notice if you wish to move out, and if you move out before then, you will still be liable to pay the rent until the notice period is up (unless you find someone to take over – a *Nachmieter*).

If you work, your employer (and you) will also have a *Kündigungsfrist* with minimum notice if they (you) want to end your employment. This is often two weeks for the first six months, and four weeks or longer after that. It is often the case that a *Kündigung* will only become effective at the end of a month.

The phrase *Kündigungsfrist ist zwei Monate zum Monatsende* therefore means that, for example, in order for the contract to end on 31 August you have to make sure your *Kündigung* reaches the other party by the end of June (sometimes you are allowed to do this up to three days into the new month, so in this case July – check your contract!). Usually, a *Kündigung* will only be acceptable in writing (with a signature – so an email is usually not acceptable).

### LAMPE

This can mean both a lamp (including lampshade) and a lightbulb or LED.

### LERNGRUPPE

A group of students who meet informally to study and revise together.

### LÜFTEN

Very important indeed in Germany! You may even find mention of *lüften* in your rental contract. This means 'to air' and you will be expected to air your room or apartment regularly to avoid the development of mould (*Schimmel*), especially if you live in an older building (*Altbau*).

*Stoßlüftung*, which is recommended, means opening windows wide for a fairly short period a couple of times a day. *Kipplüftung* is when you have the window permanently auf *Kipp* (or *angeklappt*) – turn the handle so it is pointing straight upwards and pull it towards you, so the window opens a little bit at the top. Many people like to air like this, but it is not supposed to be as good for keeping mould away. (It can also be dangerous if you have house cats – they could get their heads caught).

*Lüften* is good, but *Zugluft* – a related word (sometimes just *Zug*) – is the dread of many Germans, who believe draughts are unhealthy. Always check before opening a window that any people sitting in the draught don't mind. (*'Stört es euch, wenn ich das Fenster aufmache?'*)

### MEETING

As in the case of 'bag', there are many different German words which in English would be covered by the one word 'meeting'. A group or team of people (e. g. at work) getting together to discuss things could be a *Besprechung* or *ein Meeting*. If it's a formal committee, it will probably be a *Sitzung*. A one-to-one meeting to discuss a specific issue may be a *Gespräch*. Or people may be less specific and simply say they have a *Termin* (appointment – see below).



**MOIN/MAHLZEIT**

You'll probably know by now that here in Hamburg we say *Moin* for hello. Sometimes people say *Mahlzeit* (lit. 'meal') as a greeting around lunchtime.

**MÜLLEIMER/MÜLLTONNE**

*Mülleimer* = small waste container in your home; *Mülltonne* = large container outside that is emptied by waste disposal services. Another word for *Müll* is *Abfall*.

**NOT**

Emergency. *Notausgang* = emergency exit. *Notfallplan* = plan to be followed in case (case = *Fall*) of emergency.

**PRAKTIKUM**

In general use, this is a period spent gaining work or professional experience, usually as a student or recent graduate. It's also used in many degree courses at HAW Hamburg to mean the lab practicals you will have to do. The plural is *Praktika* (although even many native speakers think it is *Praktikas*).

**PROTOKOLL**

A written record, for example of a meeting or exam. *Gedächtnisprotokoll* = a record written from memory just after the event.

**SCHWARZES BRETT**

Not a blackboard! This is a noticeboard – you'll see a lot of them around campus – where you can find information of all kinds. There are official ones for faculties, departments and degree courses, and informal ones anyone can use, where people advertise jobs, fun events or student societies or hang up notices looking for a new person to share their apartment or someone to buy their old computer.

**SILVESTER**

= New Year's Eve

**SPRECHSTUNDE**

Consultation hours held by the doctor or your professor, an advisory service or an official body or authority. Some *Sprechstunden* will be open, which means you can just drop in, some will be by appointment only (*mit Termin*).

**SPÜLE/(GESCHIRR)SPÜLER/  
WASCHBECKEN**

*Spüle* = kitchen sink. (*Geschirr*)*spüler*, or *Spülmaschine* = dishwasher (from *spülen*, to wash dishes) *Waschbecken* = a sink in a bathroom, or in WC facilities.

**TELEFONAT**

A telephone conversation.

**TERMIN**

An appointment at the doctor's or somewhere formal or official. *Nur mit Termin* = appointment necessary.

**ÜBERWEISUNG**

- 1) The act of transferring money from one bank account to another, or the form (more properly *Überweisungsträger*) which you use to do this.
- 2) The form you will be given by your doctor if he or she thinks you need to see a specialist (see Health and safety section above).

**WATER**

Hamburg (and indeed all German) tap water is perfectly safe to drink and tastes fine, but, culturally, many Germans are not keen on drinking tap water, and buy it bottled. They mostly do this in crates of returnable glass bottles. This water is often sparkling and may be called *Sprudel(wasser)*, *Selters* or just *Wasser* – if someone offers you water and you would like it still, check.

**WG**

Stands for *Wohngemeinschaft* and means a shared flat or house.

**ZUSAGE/ABSAGE**

A *Zusage* is a positive response to an application or invitation, an *Absage* is a negative response. You may get a *Zusage* if you successfully apply for a scholarship, or an *Absage* if you apply for a job but don't get it. *Absagen* is also used when something has to be cancelled: *Leider muss wegen Krankheit die heutige Veranstaltung abgesagt werden*.



# Whatever your situation – here's help

SITUATION	NAME OF ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS	CONTACT HOURS/ DAYS	SERVICE IN ENGLISH?
There is an emergency	Police (emergency number)	110 (free)	24/7	Try and communicate in German if possible
	<i>Feuerwehr</i> (fire service; also responsible for medical emergencies)	112 (free)	24/7	Try and communicate in German if possible
It's not a life-threatening emergency but I need a doctor and can't wait	Arztruf Hamburg	116 117	24/7	Possibly (English-language information here: → <a href="https://arztruf-hamburg.de">arztruf-hamburg.de</a> ) See also → <a href="https://arztruf-hamburg.de/assets/downloads/KVHH_Flyer_DIN_lang_EN.pdf">arztruf-hamburg.de/assets/downloads/KVHH_Flyer_DIN_lang_EN.pdf</a> )
I think I or someone else may have ingested something poisonous	Information on poisons and toxic substances ( <i>Giftnotruf</i> )	0551 192 40	24/7	Yes
I have been the victim of a crime	Police (to report the crime)	040 4286-50 (non-emergency number of Hamburg police) or the Hamburg police's online station → <a href="https://www.polizei.hamburg/onlinewache/">www.polizei.hamburg/ onlinewache/</a> (NB: in an emergency call 110)		Ask if you can discuss the matter in English
... and I need support	Weisser Ring (victim support association)	116 006 or 040 251 768 0	116 006: daily, 7:00 am–10:00 pm	Yes; they will try and find someone who can speak your language → <a href="https://weisser-ring.de/english">weisser-ring.de/english</a>

SITUATION	NAME OF ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS	CONTACT HOURS/DAYS	SERVICE IN ENGLISH?
<b>I need to report my bank card or credit card lost or stolen</b>	<i>Sperrnotruf</i> (emergency card cancelling hotline)	116 116 (free within Germany)	24/7	No evident information
<b>I feel depressed, lonely/isolated, sad and need someone to talk to</b>	Telephone listening service <i>Telefonseelsorge</i>	0800 111 0111 0800 111 0222 All these numbers are free of charge.	24/7	No (there is some information in English if you click on this link → <a href="http://www.telefonseelsorge.de/international-helplines/">www.telefonseelsorge.de/international-helplines/</a> and scroll down the page a little)
	Muslim listening service <i>(Muslimisches Seelsorgetelefon)</i>	030 443 509 821	24/7	No evident information. Ask if you can talk in English
	Student telephone listening service <i>Studentische Telefonseelsorge, Evangelische Studierenden-gemeinde</i> (the student community of the German Protestant church in Hamburg)	040 411 70 411	daily, 8:00 pm–midnight	No evident information. Ask if you can talk in English
<b>I am in financial difficulties</b>	International Office	040 428 75 91 83 teresa.schaubs@haw-hamburg.de	Mon and Tue 11:00 am–1:00 pm, Thurs 2:00–5:00 pm (by phone) or by appointment (Stiftstraße 69, room 232, 20099 Hamburg)	Yes

SITUATION	NAME OF ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS	CONTACT HOURS/DAYS	SERVICE IN ENGLISH?
<b>I'm pregnant and I don't know what to do</b>	Pro Familia	040 309 974 910	Mon, Tue, Thurs 10:00 am–2:00 pm Wed 2:00 pm–4:00 pm Fri 10:00 am–12:00 pm	Presumably yes – extensive English-language information on website → <a href="http://www.profamilia-hamburg.de/en/">www.profamilia-hamburg.de/en/</a>
<b>I am pregnant or have small children and need help.</b>	HAW Hamburg's Family Office	040 428 75-9035 040 428 75-9046 familienbuero@haw-hamburg.de	Mon–Thurs 8:30 am–9:30 am, 12 pm–1pm Fri 8:30 am–9:30 am	Ask if you can discuss the matter in English
<b>I am taking care of my parents/a sick relative and need help and advice.</b>				
<b>I have lost a family member or close friend and need support.</b>				
<b>I am student with a disability or long-term health condition and need advice</b>	HAW Hamburg's advising services related to studying with a disability or long-term health condition.	Telephone office hours Mon 10:00 am–12:00 pm Thurs 11:00 am–1:00 pm	24/7	Yes → <a href="http://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/study/advising/studying-with-a-disability-or-chronic-illness/advising-and-contact-information/#c26771">www.haw-hamburg.de/en/study/advising/studying-with-a-disability-or-chronic-illness/advising-and-contact-information/#c26771</a>
<b>I am in an abusive or violent relationship</b>	Federal helpline on violence against women	0800 0 116 016 → <a href="http://www.hilfetelefon.de/en.html">www.hilfetelefon.de/en.html</a>	24/7	Yes
	General information on domestic violence (in German)	→ <a href="http://www.hamburg.de/haeusliche-ge-walt/">www.hamburg.de/haeusliche-ge-walt/</a>		

SITUATION	NAME OF ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS	CONTACT HOURS/DAYS	SERVICE IN ENGLISH?
I need legal advice	ÖRA (Öffentliche Rechtsauskunft)	→ <a href="http://www.hamburg.de/oera/">www.hamburg.de/oera/</a>	→ <a href="http://www.hamburg.de/aktuelles/14748348/bezirksstelle-alstertal/">www.hamburg.de/aktuelles/14748348/bezirksstelle-alstertal/</a>	Yes
I am being harassed or bullied on campus	Vertrauensstelle of your faculty	The → <a href="#">Confidential Dispute Advising Office</a> has students in each faculty and two special points of contacts for international students (a student and a professor) who can be contacted at <a href="mailto:conflictmanagement@haw-hamburg.de">conflictmanagement@haw-hamburg.de</a>	Ask for an appointment	Yes
I have a problem with a shop or service or need advice on my consumer/customer rights	Verbraucherzentrale Hamburg (consumer advice association)	→ <a href="http://www.vzhh.de/beratung">www.vzhh.de/beratung</a> (information in German)	See the list of phone numbers and information in the link to the left	Ask if you can discuss the matter in English

Witamy!

Bem-vindo!

Hoş geldiniz

Thàn Tâm Đón Chào!

## IMPRINT

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### **HAW HAMBURG**

International Office

Stiftstr. 69

20099 Hamburg

[haw-hamburg.de/international](http://haw-hamburg.de/international)

### **Photo credits:**

David Ausserhofer/HAW Hamburg

S. 8–9 Nikada, istock

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### **Design:**

Sandra Spitzer

Juni 2021



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**HOCHSCHULE FÜR ANGEWANDTE  
WISSENSCHAFTEN HAMBURG**

Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

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