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Berlin Mathematical School

BMS



GUIDE BOOK

for BMS Students





Foreword

The purpose of this guidebook is to prepare students for study at the Berlin Mathematical School (BMS). It is unofficial and should not be read legalistically. It outlines the requirements for study in Berlin and describes the services provided by the BMS program and the three participating Berlin universities. Specific questions concerning the program should be addressed to the staff of the BMS One-Stop Office.

For some international students, visa-related documents are required prior to entry into Germany and procuring these documents in some countries takes more time than is normally expected. It is therefore very important for all new students to read chapter "5: Before you Leave" and chapter "6: Upon Arrival".

Other publications of interest to new students are the BMS Study Regulations and the Mentoring Guidelines. The BMS Study Regulations explain the policies of the BMS and describe the study program and your academic responsibilities as a graduate student at the BMS. The Mentoring Guidelines provide information about the BMS mentoring program. These documents are included in your admissions package and are also available on our website here:

→ www.math-berlin.de/about-bms/downloads

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with our website. In particular, you can find answers to many questions for both Phase I and Phase II students under the link "Students". There is also a list of the BMS courses on offer each semester under "Academics".

If there is any doubt regarding the interpretation of any information provided in this guidebook, or if there are questions about the graduate program involving matters that are not covered here, please contact the BMS One-Stop Office. Please note that a downloadable version of the BMS Guidebook containing active hyperlinks can be found here:

→ www.math-berlin.de/images/guidebook.pdf

We look forward to welcoming you to Berlin!

BMS One-Stop Office, February 2025





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Prof. John M. Sullivan, Annika Preuß-Vermeulen, Prof. Holger Reich, Nadja Wisniewski, Prof. Gavril Farkas

Welcome to the Berlin Mathematical School

Dear BMS Student,

Berlin is an excellent place to study mathematics!

You realized that when you applied to the Berlin Mathematical School (BMS), a graduate school of three of Berlin's universities: Freie Universität Berlin (FU), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU), and Technische Universität Berlin (TU). The BMS was established in October 2006 with the aim of entering into competition with great role models such as the prestigious American universities that the founders of the BMS themselves attended as doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows. We have therefore designed a graduate school to enable students who have already completed a first degree to set their sights directly on advanced graduate studies and the accelerated completion of a doctoral degree.

Since 2006, the BMS has been building toward that goal: until 2018 with funding from the federal and state governments' "Excellence Initiative" and since 2019 within the Cluster of Excellence MATH+ with funding from the "Excellence Strategy". This support enables the BMS to offer a wide range of opportunities to its

students and create outstanding conditions for study. The BMS One-Stop Office advises students on matters ranging from the online application process, visa issues, housing and child-care, to applying for postdoctoral positions. This guidebook is part of that advisory service and will help you to plan your next steps before you start studying at the BMS. The staff of the BMS One-Stop Office will be happy to answer any questions you may still have after reading this guidebook.

Mathematics students from all over the world come to the BMS to benefit from and contribute to Berlin's diverse research environment. We look forward to working with you, teaching you, and helping you to build a successful career in mathematics.

Welcome to Berlin!

Prof. Dr. Holger Reich
Prof. Dr. Gavril Farkas
Prof. John M. Sullivan, PhD
Nadja Wisniewski, *MATH+ Managing Director*
Annika Preuß-Vermeulen, *BMS Coordinator*



1. The Berlin Mathematical School

The Berlin Mathematical School (BMS) is a joint graduate school of the mathematics departments of the FU, HU and TU in Berlin. It combines the broad expertise in mathematics at the three universities with an excellent environment for graduate studies.

The concept of the BMS is based on three key elements:

- **a structured English-language study program** consisting of Core Courses with a fixed curriculum, a broad spectrum of Advanced Courses, and many specialized events involving distinguished international visitors and guests
- **professional management** that coordinates all components of the BMS, such as the study and visitor program, a mentoring program, outreach activities, and a recruitment process that ensures the excellent calibre of successful applicants, while aiming at gender equality and a broad participation of international students
- **efficient quality management** monitoring all aspects of the graduate school, including student progress and performance, mentoring, and the study program.

The BMS is a complete graduate school, where students who have completed a first degree, bachelor or equivalent, can directly set their sights on advanced studies and the rapid completion of a doctoral degree. The courses are designed for talented and determined students from all over the world who are ready for a challenge.



Studying at the BMS

The BMS study program guides a student with a bachelor's degree through a structured course program, an oral qualifying exam, up to a doctoral degree in four to five years.

Phase I is the first part of the program and includes a lecture program created specifically for the BMS coordinated among the three universities. Each semester, 15 to 20 Core Courses are offered in English. During Phase I, every BMS student should complete at least five Core Courses, plus two Advanced Courses (including one seminar) within three to four semesters. At the end of Phase I, all BMS students must take the BMS Qualifying Exam. This is an oral exam which is compulsory to complete Phase I and to be admitted to Phase II. All Phase I students are enrolled as master's students and recommended to complete a master's degree parallel to Phase I.

Phase II is the research phase of the BMS PhD Program. BMS doctoral candidates should take advantage of the opportunities offered by Berlin's mathematics research environment.

The complete list of associated research units can be found here on our website:

→ www.math-berlin.de/about-bms/people-a-organization/units



Excellent Conditions for Study

The BMS creates outstanding conditions for study by offering its students a wide range of opportunities and support, including scholarships for many students, supervision and mentoring for all students, and an excellent study and working environment at the three participating universities. For example, there is a “BMS Lounge” at the HU and TU, both of which serve as a meeting place for students to get together between lectures. In addition, professors at the BMS offer students individual support in their roles as Phase I advisors, Phase II supervisors and mentors, and guide them through the manifold opportunities within Berlin’s mathematics landscape. Female students can be assured of receiving particular encouragement on their career path as the BMS strives towards its goal of achieving an equal ratio of male to female students.

1.1 MATH+ Fridays

The MATH+ Friday Colloquium (MATH+ Friday) is a lecture series given by distinguished mathematicians from all over the world. Each speaker explains how their research fits into the mathematical landscape in general, remarks on open problems, and demonstrates applications and analogies in other fields of mathematics and beyond. The aim is to offer a broad overview of a specific research area to enable everyone in the audience to grasp the main concepts involved.

1.2 Kovalevskaya Lunch

Each semester, MATH+ designates one of the MATH+ Friday Colloquia as the Sonia Kovalevskaya Colloquium. This lecture features female mathematicians, who are invited to share their experiences as women in the field of mathematics. The Kovalevskaya lecture is preceded by an informal lunch for female students only to give them the opportunity to talk to an outstanding female mathematician about career paths and to exchange experiences.

1.3 “What is ...?” Seminar

The “What is ...?” Seminar is a student-run seminar that deals with a concise mathematical question in a manner that is accessible both to students and mathematicians not familiar with that area. The seminar is designed for a student audience of any mathematical discipline, from any university in Berlin, and provides an opportunity to meet other students from various fields, while gaining a general knowledge of mathematics. The “What is ...?” seminar is usually held before the MATH+ Friday Colloquium and aims to complement the topic of the Friday lecture. BMS students are encouraged to attend all seminars and volunteer to become speakers.

1.4 Mentoring

The BMS Mentoring Program was developed to provide individual guidance to BMS students in both their academic and personal development. Mentors can pass on their personal and professional experiences in order to help students develop independently. The guidance sessions are confidential and discussions relating to non-academic or even more personal issues are encouraged. The Mentoring Program also functions as a way to detect any difficulties the student may be experiencing, so that additional support can be offered as early as possible and countermeasures can be taken if necessary.

Phase I students are assigned a mentor and an advisor from the BMS faculty. The advisor and mentor should give guidance and advice throughout Phase I, while



providing perspectives for Phase II. These two faculty members are often, but not always, the same person.

The duties of the Phase I advisor include:

- advising you on your study program and giving recommendations
- meeting you on a regular basis to evaluate and follow your academic progress
- informing you about the BMS Study Regulations and Qualifying Exam.

The role of the Phase I mentor is to:

- offer honest advice and support on personal issues
- offer insight on the challenges of undertaking a PhD project
- provide information about the Berlin mathematics landscape, the various research groups, research opportunities and possible career paths.

The Advising/Mentoring Guidelines for Phase I can be found on our website:

→ www.math-berlin.de/images/BMS-PhaseI-Advising-Mentoring-Guidelines.pdf

Phase II students have a thesis supervisor who provides support in all aspects of the PhD thesis, and gives advice on choosing the right conferences and publishing articles. In addition, Phase II students also have a separate mentor.

The Phase II mentor can:

- help you broaden your professional network
- suggest employment opportunities and funding possibilities
- offer a second opinion with regard to your research or career plan
- provide support if you encounter difficulties with your thesis supervisor.

Both the supervisor and the mentor can assist students in forming a career plan and in establishing a professional network. New Phase II students must find a mentor within the first six months and should choose their mentor from the faculty list. If necessary, the Diversity Manager can assist you with this. Those starting in the winter semester are allocated an “initial mentor” from the postdoctoral faculty in order to give them time to find a mentor.



The Guidelines for Mentoring in the BMS (Phase II) can be found on our website:

→ www.math-berlin.de/images/bms_mentoring_guidelines_phase_ii_engl.pdf

1.5 Soft-Skills Seminars

The BMS offers Soft-Skills Seminars throughout the year. These seminars aim to help students develop the necessary skills for a career in mathematics, in academia or in the private sector. They take place on a Friday or else on a Friday and Saturday. To date, seminars have been held on the following topics:

- intercultural communication
- presentation training
- time and self-management
- good scientific practice.

The current list of Soft-Skills Seminars can be found on our website:

→ www.math-berlin.de/academics/soft-skills-seminars





1.6 Diversity

The BMS embraces diversity be it in terms of gender, country of origin, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, disability or anything else that makes people unique. We actively strive to create an environment that welcomes diversity and facilitates the exchange of new perspectives. We aim to foster a respectful, accepting environment for everyday life in Berlin, for studying at the universities and institutes, and for research and teaching.

The MATH+ Mentoring, Gender and Diversity Committee oversees all MATH+ projects, including advertising, recruiting, and Phase I and Phase II studies. BMS students come from all over the world and we have welcomed aspiring young mathematicians from over 75 countries to date. Furthermore, the BMS continues to achieve its goal of a student ratio of 50%

international students. The proportion of the female student body in 2024 was over 30%, but the BMS still strives to reach its goal of 50% female students.



1.7 Buddy Program

The BMS “Buddy Program” is designed to welcome new students to Berlin. Your buddy can pick you up at the airport when you arrive, help you get settled in to your accommodation and show you around Berlin.



1.8 BMS Orientation

Every year in October the BMS offers an orientation week for new Phase I and Phase II students. During this week, the new students can get to know the BMS staff and faculty, learn about courses and study regulations, tour the university campuses, attend an “Intercultural Training” and participate in a walking tour through the inner city of Berlin. This year’s BMS Orientation week will take place from 7 to 11 October 2024.



1.9 Support for Students with Children

The BMS provides additional support to students with children and students who are pregnant. We will accommodate your needs as a parent with individual solutions, for example by arranging for time off or reducing your study load. The FU, HU and TU have suitable rooms for parents with children as well as daycare facilities on campus.

More information can be found on our website at:

→ www.math-berlin.de/about-bms/equity-diversity/for-student-parents

Assistance or further information

For assistance or further information related to Sections 1.2, 1.4 to 1.6 and 1.9, please contact:



Gender & Diversity Manager

Tanja Fagel
(diversity@math-berlin.de)

Family Support Centers at the FU, HU and TU

In addition to the support offered by the BMS, student parents can also take advantage of the services provided by the three universities. Each university operates according to a family-friendly policy to ensure that students, faculty and staff can balance their work and home life.

The family support that is offered by each university is audited by the Hertie Foundation.

Family Support Centers

@ FU Berlin

Rudeloffweg 25 – 27, 14195 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 838 51137

E-mail: family@fu-berlin.de

→ www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/abt-1/stabsstellen/dcfam-service

@ HU Berlin

Unter den Linden 6, Room 1028, 10117 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 2093 20015

E-mail: familien@uv.hu-berlin.de

→ www.familienbuero.hu-berlin.de/en/the-family-friendly-university

@ Campus Adlershof

Johann von Neumann-Haus, Rudower Chaussee 25,
Haus 2, Room 2.227, 12489 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 2093 3955

E-mail: familien@uv.hu-berlin.de

→ www.familienbuero.hu-berlin.de/en/copy_of_contact?set_language=en

@ TU Berlin

Straße des 17. Juni 135, Room H 1111 (1st floor),
10623 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 314 25693

E-mail: familienbuero@tu-berlin.de

→ www.tu.berlin/familienbuero

Services for families in Berlin

This is the official website of the Berlin senate with information and services for families with children:

→ www.berlin.de/sen/bjf/en/



2. Infrastructure

2.1 BMS One-Stop Office

The BMS One-Stop Office supports BMS students in various administrative issues ranging from travel, visa, housing, and bureaucratic issues. If we can help you in any way, please come and talk to us. We are happy to be of assistance!

The main BMS One-Stop Office was located in the TU math building. Since June 2023 the rooms can no longer be used, and the BMS currently has only one office and one study space for students at TU. The BMS will move to a newly built TU math research building in 2025 and will then have office space for Phase I students at TU again as well as a BMS lounge. In addition, One-Stop Office staff members operate weekly office hours at the FU and HU throughout the semester. Office hours can be found on our website:

→ www.math-berlin.de/contact

BMS One-Stop Office @ TU Berlin

Straße des 17. Juni 135 (EB Building)
3rd floor, Rooms EB 306 + 307

BMS Coordinator & TU Liaison Officer

Annika Preuß-Vermeulen
tu-liaison@math-berlin.de



HU Liaison Officer

Daniele Mariano
hu-liaison@math-berlin.de



FU Liaison Officer

N.N.
fu-liaison@math-berlin.de

BMS @ FU Berlin

Arnimallee 6 (Pi Building)
Ground Floor, Room 021

BMS @ HU Berlin

HU Campus Adlershof
Rudower Chaussee 25 (Johann von Neumann-Haus)
Ground Floor, House 1, Room 1.003

2.2 BMS Lounge

Each BMS Lounge serves as a meeting place for BMS students to relax, discuss ideas over coffee and meet the staff of the One-Stop Office. At the FU, there is a common lounge area that BMS students can use during the week. The BMS Lounges at the TU and HU are open on weekdays. In addition, students who have been allocated an office space or study room may be allowed to access the lounges on the weekends, too.

2.3 Study Rooms

The BMS has limited office space and study rooms for BMS Phase I students at all three universities. At the HU and TU, Phase I students are allocated either a personal (or shared) office space or a study room with a lockable desk. At the FU, there is a shared study room with personal lockers. Please contact the One-Stop Office if you would like to have an office or use a study room at any of the universities. Phase II students are allocated an office or study space in their research group.

2.4 Financial Support for Conferences

The BMS encourages all students to attend mathematics conferences. We will cover the costs for registration fees and travel for one conference during Phase I and one conference per year during Phase II.



2.5 Summer Schools

BMS Summer Schools are concentrated periods of lectures that focus on specific mathematical topics. They typically take place in June or August:

➔ www.math-berlin.de/events/summer-schools

If you have a specific academic interest that you would like to cover more thoroughly, but have no opportunity to do so during the semester, let us know! We welcome input from all students and may be able to turn your idea into the next BMS Summer School.

2.6 Language Courses

The BMS offers assistance to those international students with little or no German language skills by covering the cost of one preparatory language course in "German as a Foreign Language" (Deutsch als Fremdsprache aka DaF). The BMS offers a DaF course in September, four to six weeks before lectures begin. For those students who are unable to attend the BMS language course, the BMS will subsidise the cost of another DaF course in Berlin with up to €250. To be eligible for reimbursement, the student must com-

plete the course with an attendance rate of 80%. For more information on how to find German language courses in Berlin and how to apply for the reimbursement, check here:

➔ www.math-berlin.de/students/travel-regulations/for-language-courses-or-conference-fees

Language Schools and Institutions in Berlin

@ FU Berlin

➔ www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/en/sprachangebot/sprachen/deutsch/

@ HU Berlin

➔ www.sprachenzentrum.hu-berlin.de/en/courses-and-registration

@ TU Berlin

➔ www.tu.berlin/en/zems/academics-teaching

Language Exchange

➔ www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/en/slz/tandem/index.html

➔ fakultaeten.hu-berlin.de/de/sprachlit/international/from-abroad

➔ www.skb.tu-berlin.de/en/language-learning/



Other

- ➔ www.goethe.de/ins/de/ort/ber/enindex.html
- ➔ www.berlin.de/vhs/kurse/deutsch-integration/ (in German)
- ➔ www.inlingua-berlin.de/en/
- ➔ en.berlinoschule.com

2.7 Sports Courses

All three universities offer a wide variety of sports courses for a minimal registration fee. Please check the following websites for further information.

@ FU Berlin

- ➔ www.hochschulsport.fu-berlin.de/ressourcen/Seiten/information-in-english.html

@ HU Berlin

- ➔ zeh2.zeh.hu-berlin.de/sportarten/aktueller_zeitraum/ (in German)

@ TU Berlin

- ➔ www.tu-sport.de/ (in German)

If you need assistance with website information that appears in German only, please contact the One-Stop Office. We will be happy to help you.

2.8 Music

The Collegium Musicum is the FU and TU's joint music society. It consists of five ensembles: a large choir, a chamber choir, a symphony orchestra, a small symphony orchestra and the "Uni Bigband Berlin".

- ➔ www.collegium-musicum-berlin.de (in German)

The HU also boasts a music society consisting of a symphony orchestra, a philharmonic choir, a student philharmonic, a large choir, a chamber choir and the "Humboldt Bigband".

- ➔ www.musikundmedien.hu-berlin.de/umd (in German)

Unität is the Berlin Studierendenwerk's "choir for all". Students enrolled at any Berlin university are welcome to join.

- ➔ www.stw.berlin/en/culture/stage-music/choir-unitaet.html





3. German Higher Education System

There are 428 institutes of higher education in Germany. 109 of them are full research universities (Universitäten), 245 are universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen), and the remainder comprises various colleges. There are over 2.9 million students enrolled at German institutes of higher education, 51 % of which are female, and 16.3 % are international students. As of 2024, Germany is the most attractive non-English speaking country for international students, and is one of the top five most attractive countries worldwide.

3.1 Course Programs and Timetables

The academic year at German universities is divided into two semesters spanning two six-month periods: a winter and a summer semester (see table).

3.2 Methods of Academic Instruction

Universities offer various methods of academic instruction that may be weighted differently depending on the university in which it is held. The following provides a general overview of the various methods.

Lectures (Vorlesungen) involve a university instructor speaking about a specific topic. Students can prepare or follow up on these lectures by reading appropriate texts (reading lists are usually provided). Students receive credits (Leistungspunkte) for attending lectures, and in some cases, a written or oral exam is

given at the end of the semester in which students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of the material taught in the lectures.

Academic Calendar 2025/26, inc. Public Holidays

Winter semester 1 Oct 2025–31 Mar 2026	
3 Oct 2025	German Unification Day
13 Oct 2025	First day of classes
19 Dec 2025	Last classes before the holidays
25 Dec 2025	Christmas Day
26 Dec 2025	Boxing Day / St Stephen's Day
1 Jan 2026	New Year's Day
5 Jan 2026	Resume classes
13 Feb 2026	Last day of classes
8 Mar 2026	International Women's Day
Summer semester 1 Apr 2026–30 Sep 2026	
3 Apr 2026	Good Friday
6 Apr 2026	Easter Monday
13 Apr 2026	First day of classes
1 May 2026	Labor Day
14 May 2026	Ascension Day
25 May 2026	Whit Monday / Pentecost Monday
17 Jul 2026	Last day of classes



Seminars (Seminare) enable students to work on small research projects under the guidance of an experienced researcher. Presentation of seminar papers, discussions, and subsequent review with fellow students and the seminar organizer play a key role. Students receive credits by either presenting a research paper, submitting an assignment or taking a written examination. Some universities use seminars to extend and apply the content taught in lectures. Since this method of instruction requires active student participation, seminars should ideally be held in small groups. Due to high demand, early registration is required for some subjects in order to secure a place.

A tutorial (Tutorium) serves to deepen and extend the content taught in lectures and seminars. Tutorials are basic study courses led by advanced students. In contrast to tutorials, consolidation courses are held by university instructors, lecturers, assistants or research assistants and are sometimes called exercises (Übungen).

A colloquium (Kolloquium) is an academic meeting at which experts or students present their current work and discuss it with participants from the same field. Colloquia provide an opportunity for students to exchange ideas and information in the final research phase.

3.3 Advisory Services

Finding your way through the higher education system in Germany may seem like wandering through a maze, but there are many advisory services available to answer questions and solve any problems students may encounter. The BMS One-Stop Office should be your first port of call.

BMS One-Stop Office (see 2.1)

The One-Stop Office aims to support BMS students in all practical issues that may occur. Contact details can be found in Section 2.1 of this guidebook and on our website:

➔ www.math-berlin.de/contact

BMS Student Representatives

The BMS Student Representatives advocate the interests of the BMS student body to the BMS administration and faculty. They actively participate in BMS committee meetings to make sure BMS student voices are heard. The student reps are elected annually by BMS students, and those who are interested in experiencing the administrative side of academia are encouraged to volunteer as candidates in the next Student Representative Election.

E-mail: stud-rep@math-berlin.de

➔ www.math-berlin.de/students/student-representatives





The International Office

The International Office is a central point of contact for all international students. It is part of the university administration and is responsible for international academic relations and all related affairs, including student exchange, and incoming and outgoing students.

@ FU Berlin

→ www.fu-berlin.de/en/studium/international/

@ HU Berlin

→ www.international.hu-berlin.de/en?set_language=en

@ TU Berlin

→ www.tu.berlin/en/i-e-academic-advising-service/advising/academic-advising

Central Study Counseling Office

The Central Study Counseling Office (Zentrale Studienberatung) deals with general study-related questions, as well as inquiries about course content and requirements.

FU Center for Academic Advising and Psychological Counseling

→ www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/studienberatung/

HU Counseling and Information Services

→ www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/counselling/wir1-eng

TU General Student Counseling Service

→ www.studienberatung.tu-berlin.de/menu/academic_advising_service/parameter/en/

The Departmental Student Body

The Departmental Student Body (Fachschaft) is made up of students from specific disciplines, who represent student interests in the relevant department. At the beginning of every semester, its members offer advice to students in their first semester on studying their specific subject. The Departmental Student Body for Mathematics at the three participating universities would be pleased to welcome you as a new member.

@ FU Berlin: FSI Mathematik

→ fsi.spline.de/mathe/ (in German)

@ HU Berlin: Fachschaft Mathematik der HU Berlin

→ amor.cms.hu-berlin.de/~mathefsr/ (in German)

@ TU Berlin: Mathe-INI

→ www.math.tu-berlin.de/mathe_ini/v_menuue/wir_ueber_uns/ (in German)

Doctoral Candidates' Portal

The following portals offer potential doctoral students a general idea of doctoral studies.

@ FU Berlin

→ www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/promovieren/

@ HU Berlin

→ www.hu-berlin.de/promovierende-en

@ TU Berlin

→ www.tu.berlin/en/research/advancement-of-junior-scholars/

HU Docs

Network for all doctoral candidates at HU Berlin

→ www.projekte.hu-berlin.de/en/docs-en/index_html?set_language=en

Advisory Services for Gender Equity

@ FU Berlin: Chief Gender Equality Officer

→ www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/frauenbeauftragte/

@ HU Berlin: The Central Women's Representative

→ frauenbeauftragte.hu-berlin.de/en/about-us/office-of-the-central-women2019s-representative/the-team

@ TU Berlin: Koordinationsbüro für Frauenförderung und Gleichstellung

→ www.tu.berlin/en/gleichstellung/about-us/main-women-and-gender-equality-officer

Advisory Services for International Students

Free advisory services at each university (also in English) are available to assist students in a multitude of



ways. For example, the staff can answer questions about the admissions procedure, help with visa-related problems, offer advice and assistance in emergencies, and give support in cases of discrimination.

@ FU Berlin: AStA FU

Otto-von-Simson-Straße 23, 14195 Berlin

E-mail: ris@astafu.de

➔ astafu.de/en/beratung/international

@ HU Berlin: RefRat

Hedwig-Dohm-Haus, ground floor

Ziegelstraße 5, 10117 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 2093 46647

E-mail: beratung.auslaenderinnen@refrat.hu-berlin.de

➔ www.refrat.de/beratung.auslaenderinnen
(in German)

@ TU Berlin: AStA TU

TK-Gebäude, Raum TK 112

Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623 Berlin

E-mail: stud-int@asta.tu-berlin.de

➔ [www.asta.tu-berlin.de/en/
international-student-advising/](http://www.asta.tu-berlin.de/en/international-student-advising/)

Legal Advice for Students

Included in the advisory services offered by the above student bodies is free legal advice. Consultation is carried out by professional lawyers with knowledge in all subject areas and the legal information provided is binding. An appointment with a lawyer can usually be arranged through each of the services listed above. Contact details and office hours can be found on the websites given.

Psychological Counseling at the Universities

Studying abroad should be a joyful experience, yet sometimes a combination of personal, academic and health circumstances can make it stressful too. The problems you may have to deal with can be so varied and personal that you might need someone neutral and impartial to talk to. That is what the Counseling and Psychological Services are there for. You can contact them to discuss a range of issues from study motivation, orientation at university, meeting deadlines and exam nerves, to study overload, homesickness,

family problems, depression or any other academic or non-academic issue. At your first meeting, you and the counselor will decide what steps can be taken to solve your specific problem. Further appointments can be made or else the counselor will help you find a therapist if necessary. The counseling sessions are strictly confidential.

@ FU Berlin: Center for Academic Advising and Psychological Counseling

Illtissstraße 4, 14195 Berlin

E-mail: psychologische-beratung@fu-berlin.de

➔ [www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/studienberatung/
psychologische_beratung/](http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/studienberatung/psychologische_beratung/)

**@ HU Berlin: Psychological Counseling
Campus Nord**

Room 326, 3rd Floor

Invalidenstraße 110, 10115 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 2093 70272

Campus Adlershof

Emil Fischer House, Room 1.302

Brook-Taylor-Straße 2, 12489 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 2093 5585

E-mail: psychologische-beratung@hu-berlin.de

➔ www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/counselling/psyber

**@ TU Berlin: Counseling and Psychological
Services**

Main Building, Rooms 0059/60/61

Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623 Berlin

E-mail: psychologische-beratung@tu-berlin.de

➔ [www.tu.berlin/studienberatung/im-studium/
psychologische-beratung](http://www.tu.berlin/studienberatung/im-studium/psychologische-beratung)

Students with Special Needs

In addition to the aforementioned offers, counseling for students with disabilities, chronic illnesses or other special needs is available at each of the universities. Support is offered on a range of topics including barrier-free access, admissions procedures, housing needs, finances, attending lectures, preparing for and taking exams, etc.

@ FU Berlin

➔ www.fu-berlin.de/en/service/behinderung/



@ HU Berlin

→ www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/behinderte/behinderte-en?set_language=en

@ TU Berlin

→ www.barrierefrei.tu-berlin.de/menue/studieren_mit_behinderungen_und_chronischen_krankheiten/parameter/en/

3.4 National Student Services

The National Association of Student Services in Germany

The DSW (Deutsches Studentenwerk) is the National Association of Student Services at universities in Germany. Its local student chapters (Studentenwerke) deal with students' social affairs, allocate student residences and offer a social advisory and counseling service.

→ www.stw.berlin/en/

Berlin Student Services – Studierendenwerk Berlin

Through a mandate of the German Federal State of Berlin, the Studierendenwerk Berlin provides social, economic and cultural support services to students of all public higher-education institutions in Berlin. The range of services includes:

Dining Facilities (see 6.7)

31 student dining halls, 16 cafeterias and 16 coffee bars provide wholesome food at low prices to more than 36,000 guests daily. Visit their website at:

→ www.stw.berlin/en/student-canteens/

Student Housing (see 5.6)

Almost 9,500 accommodation places made up of single rooms and small apartments are available in 33 student residences. Visit their website at:

→ www.stw.berlin/en/housing/

Counseling and Support

In times of crisis, the Counseling Service provides assistance with non-academic problems or with psychological issues, supports international students and students with disabilities, and offers day-care



Mensa (TU)

facilities for children of student parents. Visit their website at:

→ www.stw.berlin/en/counselling/psychologic-counselling/

Jobs

The Job Placement Service strives to match unskilled as well as highly qualified students with employers offering jobs throughout the region. Job seekers with some German language skills will have an advantage when job hunting. Visit their website at:

→ www.stw.berlin/en/job-agency/studentjobs.html

InfoPoint Studierendenwerk Berlin

Here are the contact details of the Studierendenwerk Berlin at each of the three universities.

→ www.stw.berlin/en/contact.html

@ FU Berlin

Otto-von-Simson-Straße 26, 14195 Berlin

@ HU Berlin

Behrenstraße 40/41, 10117 Berlin

@ TU Berlin

Hardenbergstraße 34, 10623 Berlin

InfoPoint Studierendenwerk Berlin

Phone: +49 30 93939 70

E-mail: info@stw.berlin

Studierendenwerk Berlin

→ www.stw.berlin/en/

→ www.stw.berlin/en/international/



4. The Three Berlin Universities

4.1 Freie Universität Berlin

Freie Universität Berlin (FU Berlin) was founded in 1948 by professors and students, in response to the persecution faced by students who took a critical view of the system at the Universität Unter den Linden (today HU Berlin), at that time located in the Soviet sector of the divided city. The idea of the foundation of a free university attracted widespread support, including financial aid, from the international community. This helped pave the way for Freie Universität Berlin to become a university with an outstanding international reputation. Since the founding of the university, its academic ethos has always been defined by three values: truth, justice, and freedom.

Freie Universität has approximately 33,900 students in 255 degree programs. Among those are 3,500 doctoral students, 41 % of which come from outside Germany. The university is made up of eleven departments, one joint medical school with HU Berlin and four central institutes. Research is focused on the humanities, social sciences, medicine and natural sciences. Most of FU Berlin's facilities are located in the leafy residential district of Dahlem in southwest Berlin.

The **Dahlem Research School (DRS)** at the FU has established an overarching framework for structured graduate education. It provides comprehensive training to its doctoral and postdoctoral researchers at every stage of their graduate careers. The Berlin Mathematical School is one of the graduate programs represented at the DRS, therefore all BMS students registered at the FU have access to the services it offers, which include a wide range of courses.

FU Berlin Institute for Mathematics

➔ www.math.fu-berlin.de/en/

DRS

Hittorfstraße 16, 14195 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 838 62061

E-mail: drs@fu-berlin.de

➔ www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/drs/



Pi-Building (FU)



DRS (FU)



Institute of Mathematics (HU)



HGS (HU)

4.2 Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU Berlin), founded in 1810 by the liberal Prussian educational reformer and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt, is Berlin's oldest university. The foundation concept put forward by Humboldt envisaged an "universitas litterarum", which would achieve a unity of teaching and research, and provide students with an all-round humanist education. This concept spread throughout the world and gave rise to the foundation of many universities of the same type over the following 150 years. As a result, the HU became known as the "mother of all modern universities".

Today Humboldt-Universität is a public university offering 171 degree courses to 34,752 (exc. Charité) students, 58% of whom are female students and almost 15% international (as of September 2024). The university is made up of nine faculties, six central institutes, five central units and nine interdisciplinary centers. The teaching and research profile of the university encompasses all major disciplines of the humanities, social and cultural sciences, medicine, and agricultural science, as well as mathematics and the natural sciences. Courses are held at the traditional institutes of Campus Mitte, the picturesque Campus Nord or on the modern Natural Science Campus Adlershof.

The main university library, the Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum, provides access to over six million printed books and journals, as well as digital resources including 200,000 e-books, 16,000 e-journals and 200 databases.

The **Humboldt Graduate School (HGS)** was founded as the umbrella organization for the university's structured doctoral programs. Its aim is to create an ideal environment for young scholars and scientists during their doctoral studies. The support provided includes services and training tailored to meet the students' needs. The Berlin Mathematical School is a member program of the HGS, therefore all BMS students have access to the services it provides, including a wide range of soft-skills courses.

HU Berlin Department of Mathematics

➔ www.mathematik.hu-berlin.de/en

HGS

Luisenstraße 56, 10115 Berlin
Room 216

Phone: +49 30 2093 1720

Fax: +49 30 2093 1718

E-mail: hgs@hu-berlin.de

➔ www.humboldt-graduate-school.de/en

*Institute of Mathematics (TU)*

4.3 Technische Universität Berlin

Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) was founded in 1879 as the result of a merger between the School of Architecture (est. 1799) and the Academy of Trade (est. 1821). It was closed at the end of World War II and re-established under its current name in 1946. Although it was Germany's first technical university, its educational mission was reallocated post-WWII to include an emphasis on "universal education". By including the humanities in its compendium of subjects, the TU Berlin became the first technical university in Germany to present a humanistic element in its scholastic profile. The aim was to bridge the gap between technological research and social responsibility.

Technische Universität has approximately 32,400 students, 34% of which are female or non-binary and almost 30% international (as of 2024). The seven faculties offer more than 100 degree courses and its research and teaching endeavors are characterized by a broad spectrum of academic disciplines, rang-

ing from engineering science, natural science, planning science and economics, as well as the humanities and social sciences. The main campus is located in the district of Charlottenburg with other campus buildings concentrated in the districts of Wedding, Schöneberg and Steglitz-Zehlendorf.

The **Center for Junior Scholars** Office is an office for doctoral and postdoctoral services at the TU Berlin. As well as providing basic facts about doctoral work in Germany and detailed information on research opportunities, it also offers support to early-stage researchers and focuses its activities on the needs of doctoral candidates both before and during their time at the TU Berlin. As one of the BMS participating universities, all BMS students have access to these services.

TU Berlin Department of Mathematics

➔ www.math.tu-berlin.de/menue/home/parameter/en/

Center for Junior Scholars

Fraunhoferstraße 33–36, 10587 Berlin

Johannes Moes – VB, Room FH 5-5

Phone: +49 30 314 29622

E-mail: info@cjs.tu-berlin.de

➔ www.tu.berlin/en/research/advancement-of-junior-scholars/

Mathe-Café at TU

The Mathe-Café can be found on the 8th floor of the math building (Room MA 844). Established in 1989 by math students of the TU, this student-run café offers tea, coffee and snacks. Math students can meet here to discuss math problems, share ideas or even offer to become a volunteer to help keep the café running for future generations of math students! It is open on weekdays from 10 am to 3 pm and a games evening is held once a week.

A downloadable version of the BMS Guidebook containing active hyperlinks can be found here:

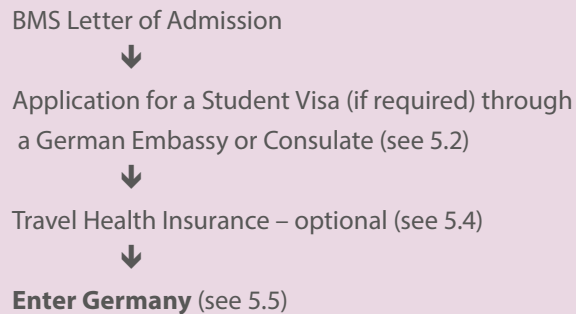
➔ www.math-berlin.de/images/guidebook.pdf



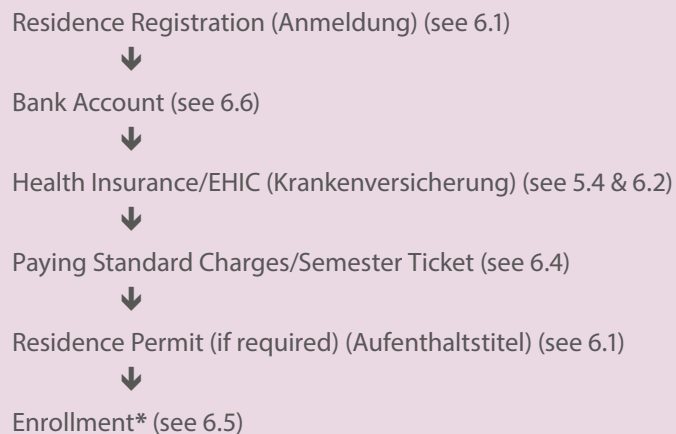
5. Before You Leave

5.1 Overview of Entry into Germany and University Enrollment Procedures

Requirements for Entry into Germany



Steps to University Enrollment



After University Enrollment

Computer Accounts (see 6.7)
Mensa Card (see 6.8)
Library Card (see 6.9)

Your BMS Liaison Officers will send you a checklist with all the necessary steps for your move to Berlin incl. an enrollment guide. To prepare yourself at this point, please read the following chapters carefully. Please contact the BMS Office if you have any questions or concerns regarding the information provided here in the guidebook or online.

*** Please note:** for the purpose of university enrollment, you must bring all of your university certificates and transcripts to Berlin with you. They must be either the originals or certified copies. Photocopies will not be accepted. If these documents are not in English or German, they must be accompanied by a certified English or German translation.

5.2 Visa

The following information provides only a brief overview of the key facts and does not replace the official information supplied by a German embassy or consulate.

Please contact a German embassy or consulate in your home country regarding current visa and residence requirements for studying in Germany. Depending on your citizenship, you may need a visa to enter Germany and/or a residence permit to stay. Details of the documents to be presented with your visa and/or residence permit application are available on the website of the German embassy or consulate in your home country or directly from their office. The address of German embassies and consulates around the world can be found on the German Federal Foreign Office website:

➔ www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/about-us/auslandsvertretungen

Please note: when applying for your visa, it is your citizenship that determines the appropriate procedure you must follow, not the country you are currently living in or the university you graduated from. For example, if you study in another EU country and have a residence permit for that country, but your nationality is neither EU nor from one of the eight countries listed in the following paragraph, then you need to apply for a student visa for Germany. If this is the case, please contact the German embassy in your country of origin or the German embassy in the country you are currently living in.

Visa Exemption due to Citizenship

Citizens from EU and EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) do not require a visa to enter or study in Germany, but only need a valid national ID card or passport. Members of the following eight countries do not require a visa to enter Germany: Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, UK and US, but only need a valid passport. However, an entry visa is still highly recommended. All students from these eight coun-

tries must apply for a residence permit within three months of entering Germany.

Visa Requirement due to Citizenship

Students from all other countries not mentioned above must obtain a visa before entering Germany. It can take up to twelve weeks for a visa to be issued, so please make sure you enquire about visa requirements at the relevant German embassy or consulate well in advance of your departure. An entry visa for the purpose of study is required in order to enroll at a Germany university. Following enrollment, an entry visa must be converted into a residence permit for study purposes.

Please note: it is not possible to convert a tourist visa into a residence permit for study purposes after entry into Germany.

Here is an example of the documents you must submit to the relevant German embassy or consulate in your country in order to obtain an entry/study visa for Germany:

- Letter of Admission from the Berlin Mathematical School
- Proof of Financial Support (e.g. confirmation of BMS scholarship; bank statement)
- Proof of Health Insurance
- Academic Transcripts (proof of all academic credits earned or examinations passed).

Please note: remember to contact a German embassy or consulate in your home country regarding current visa and residence requirements, as the preceding information provides only a brief overview and does not replace any official information from a German embassy or consulate.

Phase II students: If you are starting a PhD position with an employment contract, you must apply for a visa and residence permit for scientists. You must provide your employment contract or a confirmation from the hiring university. You must have a valid residence and work permit, before you can start your employment.



5.3 Proof of Financial Support

German authorities require verification that you can support yourself financially for at least one full year in Germany. All students offered a place at the Berlin Mathematical School must prove their financial status to the relevant German embassy or consulate in order to obtain a visa (unless the aforementioned 'Visa Exemption due to Citizenship' applies).

Students awarded a BMS Scholarship can prove their financial status to the relevant German embassy or consulate by submitting their BMS Letter of Admission. Students admitted without a BMS Scholarship must be able to supply other proof that they can finance their study and living expenses.

Income or assets of approximately €861 per month (€10,332 p/a) is the current minimum requirement; however, you may be asked to provide proof of a higher amount (compare this figure with 5.7 Cost of Living).

Please enquire at the German embassy in your own country about exactly what type of proof they require, but in general **the following documents may be accepted:**

- *Proof of parents' income and assets*
- *Scholarship from a recognized grantor (e.g., BMS, DAAD)*
- *Guarantee to the Foreigners' Registration Authority from a resident of Germany who agrees to assume the costs for you*
- *Security deposit on a blocked account*
- *Bank guarantee*
- *Proof of other financial support*

5.4 Health Insurance

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) (see 6.2)

The European Health Insurance Card is part of a health service agreement between the EU and EFTA countries. It gives citizens of those countries access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare

during a temporary stay in any of the 31 countries. In order to be eligible for this service in Germany, you must apply for the EHIC before you come to Germany. For further information please check the EHIC website:

➔ www.ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=559

Other Foreign Health Insurance (see 6.2)

Private health insurance from other countries is valid in Germany only if it is recognized by the German authorities as being equivalent to German public health insurance. Please check this with your insurance company before you leave your home country.

Travel Health Insurance

Health insurance cover for students in Germany is mandatory. Those of you who will arrive in Berlin without any of the above two insurance options are advised to take out a travel insurance policy before leaving your home country. The duration should be long enough to cover your journey and initial stay in Germany up to the date you become officially enrolled at one of the three Berlin universities. This will ensure that you have emergency health cover until you take out an insurance policy here.

Please note: travel insurance does not replace mandatory health insurance in Germany, which usually becomes valid from the date you officially enroll at the university.

Some relocation companies have designed special packages of visa-related services for international students coming to Germany.

One of these is Expatrio, which provides an all-inclusive offer combining a travel health insurance, a blocked account (if necessary) and a German bank account, among other things:

➔ www.expatrio.com

Upon your enrollment, Expatrio automatically switches your travel health insurance into a public health insurance under the German provider TK (Techniker Krankenkasse), which has been working closely to the BMS in the last years.

5.5 Documents to Bring to Germany

Mini Checklist:

Identification

- *Passport / Visa / National ID Card*
- *Several passport-sized photos (35 × 45 mm)*
- *International driving license or a German translation of your driving license (optional)*

Documents

- *Letter of Admission from the BMS*
- *Proof of financial support*
- *EHIC / other foreign health insurance*
- *Travel Health Insurance (optional)*
- *Original or certified copies of all certificates/ diplomas and transcripts from your university, including English or German translations*
- *Language certificates*

Money

- *€ 1500 for initial expenses*
- *Debit and/or credit card (recommended)*
- *Statements of income/assets from your parents*



Studentendorf Schlachtensee

Shared bathrooms and kitchens are fully equipped. Available on-site is a free gym, study rooms, a launderette, a supermarket and a student club. The rental period is fixed for one year and starts on 1 September and ends on 31 August. This offer is available on a "first come, first serve" basis, so if you are interested in applying for one of the rooms, contact the BMS One-Stop Office without delay.

➔ www.studentendorf-berlin.com/schlachtensee?lang=en

➔ www.studentendorf.berlin/housing/adlershof/

5.6 Accommodation

Due to various factors, including the increasing number of immigrants, international students, as well as the increase in mobility of the population in general, the housing situation in Berlin has become very competitive. Since there is no campus accommodation in Berlin, we recommend beginning your search for private accommodation as early as possible!

Affordable accommodation will relieve the strain on your student budget enormously (see 5.7 Cost of Living). Rent is the largest monthly expense for students (on average about € 500 per month for a single room). However, the amount of rent depends mainly on the type of accommodation and where it is located.

Student Accommodation for BMS Students

Each year, ten rooms in the student village "Studentendorf Schlachtensee" and five rooms in the "Studentendorf Adlershof" are offered exclusively to new BMS students. Each room is fully furnished with a bed, bedlinen, cupboards, shelves, a desk and a chair.

Other Offers for Students

Students who receive DAAD scholarships can apply for student housing via the DAAD. Please visit their website for further information:

➔ www.daad.de/en/

The BMS and HU Berlin offer useful advice about finding accommodation in Berlin here:

➔ www.math-berlin.de/students/faq-life-in-berlin/accommodation

➔ www.hu-berlin.de/en/about/campus/adlershof/service/structure/living

The TU Berlin also has an extensive list of accommodation websites here:

➔ www.auslandsamt.tu-berlin.de/international_office/betreuung_internationaler_austauschstudierender/wohnen/parameter/en/

Home in Berlin

➔ home-in-berlin.de/en/

Studierendenwerk Berlin: Housing

➔ www.stw.berlin/en/housing/



IBZ

→ www.ibz-berlin.org/en/

For singles and families

- www.berlinovo.de/en/apartments (singles)
- www.berlinovo.de/en (families)
- www.vondereurope.com
- www.spotahome.com

Student Hotels and Youth Hostels

In student hotels or youth/backpackers' hostels you can find reasonably priced accommodation for a few days, usually in a dormitory or shared room.

→ www.berlin.de/en/hostels/



YMCA youth hostel Berlin

→ www.cvjm-jugendgaestehaus.de/website/en/yh

Wohnheim Berlin

→ wohnheim-berlin.de/index.php/home_en.html

St. Christopher's Inn Berlin Mitte

→ www.baxpax-downtown-hostel-hotel.hotel-in-berlin.org/en/

Youth Hostel Networks

- www.hostelworld.com/hostels/
- german-hostels.de

Spreepolis

→ www.boarding-spreepolis.berlin/en/

Shared Flats

Shared flats (Wohngemeinschaften / WGs) are a popular alternative to student residences. Several people live together in a flat they have rented privately and share the kitchen and bathroom. Everybody has their own bedroom, while the other rooms are shared. The

advantage is that all flatmates share all costs (rent, telephone, internet, and utilities like electricity and water), which means that living in a WG is cheaper than living alone. You can find and/or offer a WG room here:

- www.housinganywhere.com
- www.wg-gesucht.de/en/wg-zimmer-in-Berlin.8.0.0.0.html
- www.immowelt.de/suche/wg/mieten (in German)
- wohnheim-berlin.de/index.php/flats.html
- www.wgcompany.de (in German)
- www.uniplaces.com
- urban-base.eu/berlin/
- www.vondereurope.com

Private Accommodation

It is possible to find affordable private accommodation in Berlin. If you rent an apartment independently, you are normally the main tenant and as such you have greater rights, but also greater responsibility. If you only rent a room, you are a sub-tenant. Please always read any rental agreement (Mietvertrag) very carefully and do not sign anything until you have understood your contractual obligations and rights.

Almost all available apartments (be it from private landlords or public housing agencies) are posted on at least one of the following websites:

- www.immobilienscout24.de (in German)
- www.immowelt.de (in German)

Using the apps of these companies is usually quicker and easier.

To find an apartment this way you will usually need the following documents:

- proof of income (salary statements of past three months or e.g. scholarship contract)
- SCHUFA (credit score system in Germany)
- proof that you do not have rental debt from previous landlord (Mietschuldenfreiheitsbestätigung)
- copy of passport (and visa/residence permit)

You can find more info about this on various unofficial guides for English-speaking immigrants in Berlin such as:

- allaboutberlin.com/guides/find-a-flat-in-berlin
- www.exberliner.com

Rental Contracts

When renting a room, regardless of whether it is in a student residence, a shared flat, or private accommodation, you will have to sign a rental contract (Mietvertrag). Please read the contract carefully! We recommend that you take advantage of the free legal advice service offered by the student council (see 3.3). You must check the condition of your room before you move in. Make a note of any damage or other shortcomings, such as carpet stains, and inform your landlord or landlady in writing before signing the contract. This will protect you from any possible claims for damages later.

You can download a template of a so-called “hand-over report” (Übergabeprotokoll) here:

➔ www.mieterbund.de/service/uebergabeprotokoll.html (in German)

Valuable Tips

Valuable and helpful tips about accommodation and the Landlord-Tenant Law can be found on the following website:

➔ www.berliner-mieterverein.de/sprachen/englisch.htm

Utility Costs

Costs for utilities like electricity, gas, heating and water are generally not included in the rent. As a tenant, you have to pay these separately, but not to your landlord or landlady. In most cases, you pay the electricity, gas and water companies directly.

As a tenant, you are entitled to choose your own gas and electricity supplier. The following websites provide information about this:

➔ allaboutberlin.com/guides/electric-bill-berlin
➔ www.check24.net/stromanbieter-wechseln (in German)

As soon as you move into your flat, it is advisable to record the reading on your water, electricity, and/or gas meter immediately. It will help you keep track of how much you have consumed. An additional utility cost is the German TV tax, also known as GEZ/Rundfunkbeitrag, which is mandatory for every household in Germany. The GEZ monthly fee is € 18.36.

5.7 Cost of Living

What will my monthly expenses be?

The cost of living depends on your lifestyle, but this cannot influence the cost of rent or health insurance. The table below shows only an average sum for each expense. The actual cost may differ.

Average monthly expenses

Rent	€ 500.00
Food, clothing, household expenses	€ 250.00
University fees/Semester ticket	€ 55.00
Health insurance	€ 130.00
Telephone/internet	€ 25.00
Public broadcasting license (GEZ)	€ 20.00
Work/study materials	€ 40.00
Total	€ 1,020.00

Please note: the university fees and the semester ticket are paid at the end of the previous semester and not on a monthly basis.

Try to have around € 1,500 at your disposal when you arrive in Berlin for various initial expenses including rent (ca. € 500), room rental deposit (ca. € 500), semester fees (ca. € 315) and basic household goods such as bedding, etc. A debit and/or credit card is recommended instead of a large amount of cash.





6. Upon Arrival

Arriving in Berlin at the beginning of September should give you plenty of time to find housing, register with various authorities, attend a German language course offered by the BMS (see 2.6), and prepare for your studies.

Orientation meetings at university departments and institutes are usually held the week before lectures begin as well.

*The BMS Orientation events will take place from **1 to 8 October 2025**, before lectures begin. Attendance is compulsory, so please make sure that you are in Berlin by that time!*

The International Office at the three participating universities also offers centrally organized introductory events for all international students.

@ FU Berlin

→ www.fu-berlin.de/en/studium/beratung/veranstaltungen/orientierungsveranstaltungen/

@ HU Berlin

→ www.international.hu-berlin.de/en

@ TU Berlin

→ www.tu.berlin/en/international/students-1/international-students

6.1 Residence Registration and Residence Permit

Within the first two weeks of arriving in Germany, all students must register their new address (Anmeldung einer Wohnung) at the Residents' Registration Office (Einwohnermeldeamt or Bürgeramt). As soon as you register you will immediately receive a registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung). You will not be able to open a bank account, get health insurance, apply for a public library card or enroll at university until you have registered and received your registration certificate. Your registration certificate will be one of the most important documents for your stay in Berlin. Take good care of it!

Each district in Berlin has a Residents' Registration Office, but to register your address, you can make an appointment at any office in Berlin either by calling the Bürgeramt directly on 030-115 or via the online portal: → service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/120686 (in German)

The necessary registration forms are available at each registration office or here as pdf files:

Anmeldung einer Wohnung

→ www.berlin.de/formularserver/formular.php?402608 (in German)

Wohnungsgeberbestätigung

→ www.berlin.de/formularserver/formular.php?402544 (in German)

Please note: due to the increasing number of newcomers to Berlin, the Residents' Registration Offices are no longer able to offer assistance without an appointment. It is therefore essential that you make an appointment online as soon as you know the date of your arrival in Berlin. Please contact the BMS One-Stop Office if you need assistance with the online appointment system which is in German only.

Mini Checklist:

Residence Registration

- *Make an appointment online with any Residents' Registration Office in Berlin.*
- *Take the following documents to your appointment:*
 - *the "Anmeldung" form completed by you*
 - *the "Wohnungsgeberbestätigung" form completed by the person renting you the room/flat*
 - *your passport/national ID card*
- *If you change address later, you must notify the registration office of your new address (Ummeldung) immediately*
- *You must also notify the BMS One-Stop Office and the Student Office of the university at which you are enrolled of your new address.*

Residence Permit Exemption (EU and EFTA Countries)

The EU freedom of movement law exempts citizens of all EU and EFTA countries from all visa and residence permit requirements. These students only have to register their new address at the Residents' Registration Office as explained above. A valid form of identification (passport or national ID card) together with the completed registration form are the only documents required for this procedure.

Residence Permit Requirements (All Other Countries)

All international students, except students from EU and EFTA countries, *must apply* at the Berlin Immigration Office (Landesamt für Einwanderung) for a residence permit (Aufenthaltstitel) within three

months of entering Germany. Since the waiting time for an appointment can be up to three months, **we strongly advise you to make your appointment online before you leave your home country**, and for a date six weeks after your arrival in Berlin.

Berlin Immigration Office

The Berlin Immigration Office will issue you with a Residence Permit for Study Purposes once you present your letter of admission to study, together with other necessary documents listed on the following page. The residence permit is restricted to the course of study and the chosen university and is generally valid for two years.

Please note: the BMS One-Stop Office staff can help you to prepare your application for a residence permit, but cannot take your application to the Berlin Immigration Office for you.

Here are three ways to apply for your residence permit:

1. Personal Appointment

To avoid long waiting periods, a personal appointment is highly recommended. You can make an appointment via this link:

➔ www.berlin.de/einwanderung/en/services/appointments/

Please note: if you do not find an appointment slot immediately, please check again early in the morning, because the system is updated on a daily basis with new time slots.

2. First-come-first-served System

(check on their website if this is possible)

Go to the Berlin Immigration Office (Landesamt für Einwanderung), get your numbered ticket and wait for your turn. This may sound simple, but due to the ever increasing number of newcomers to Berlin, it means a long wait in a long line. It is therefore essential that you get there several hours before the opening time, although the process is usually completed on the same day. You can expect to get your actual residence permit card up to three weeks after your



appointment. In the meantime, you should always bring with you a written confirmation of your visa issuance that you are given at the end of your appointment.

Contact Details

Landesamt für Einwanderung

Keplerstraße 2, 10589 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 90269 4000

Fax: +49 30 90269 4099

→ www.berlin.de/einwanderung/en/

How to get there:

U7 to Mierendorffplatz or Bus M27 to Keplerstraße.

3. Visa Services for Students

Once you are officially enrolled, you are eligible to make use of the visa services offered to all students at each of the three participating universities.

@ FU Berlin

→ www.fu-berlin.de/en/studium/international/studium_fu/einreise_aufenthalt/aufenthaltserlaubnis/

@ HU Berlin

→ www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/coming-to-humboldt-universitat/services-informations/visa-services

@ TU Berlin

→ www.tu.berlin/en/international/getting-started-at-tu-berlin/right-of-residence/residence-permit

When a residence permit is issued, there is a mandatory fee. In general, students pay between €60 and €110 for the first issuance of a residence permit for study purposes. If a student receives financial support from a publicly funded source in Germany (e.g. BMS scholarship), they may not need to pay this charge.

Please note: you must renew your permit before it expires. To avoid the risk of residing in Germany with an expired residence permit, start the renewal process at least three months before its expiry date.

To apply for a Residence Permit for Study Purposes you will need the following documents:

- Valid Passport
- Completed application form available from the BMS One-Stop Office or here as a pdf: www.berlin.de/formularserver/formular.php?72301
- Your original registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung from the Residents' Registration Office)
- Proof of valid health insurance
- Proof of financial support (see 5.3)
- One current biometric photo (35mm x 45mm)

And one of the following:

- For students with 'Visa Exemption due to Citizenship' (see 5.2) take proof of enrollment at one of the three Berlin universities and your BMS Letter of Admission (photocopy)
- For students with 'Visa Requirement due to Citizenship' (see 5.2) take your entrance/student visa for Germany, proof of enrollment at one of the three Berlin universities and your BMS Letter of Admission (photocopy)

6.2 Health Insurance

In Germany, health insurance is compulsory for all students. Proof of health insurance is a necessary condition of enrollment, and without it you will be prohibited from studying. Therefore, immediately after your arrival, please apply for health insurance if you don't already have any (see 5.4).



Choosing Health Insurance

There are two kinds of health insurance in Germany: public and private. Public health insurance is valid for all students, but certain conditions apply for students. Phase I students under 30 years old can apply for a special student rate. Phase I students over 30 and all Phase II students must pay the normal rate. Phase II students from non-EU/EFTA countries are eligible for public health insurance only if their residence permit is valid for at least 12 months. Any student can apply for private health insurance, but there is no fixed student rate. If you decide to take out private health insurance, you will need to obtain an exemption certificate (Befreiung von der Krankenversicherungspflicht) from the German public health insurance for your university enrollment. In order to do so, simply take your private insurance certificate to any public health insurance company in Berlin and ask for an exemption certificate.

Please note: once you take out private health insurance you cannot change to public health insurance for the duration of your studies. Please refer to the following websites for further information about public and private health insurance in Germany:

→ allaboutberlin.com/guides/german-health-insurance

→ www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/coming-to-humboldt-universitat/services-informations/krankenversicherung

Phase II students with an employment contract (PhD position) must choose a public health insurance provider. The health insurance fee is automatically deducted from your salary.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The European Health Insurance Card is part of a health service agreement between the 27 EU countries and the EFTA countries of Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It gives the citizens of those countries access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 31 countries. Germany is part of this agreement and as long as you have public health insurance in your home country, you must apply for the EHIC at your national health insurance provider. You must then obtain the exemption certificate (Befreiung von der Krankenversicherungspflicht) by taking your EHIC card to any public health insurance company in Berlin for the purpose of enrollment.

Health Insurance Options

Student's Origin	Age	Phase I				Phase II			
		German Public Health Insurance	German Private Health Insurance	EHIC	Other Foreign Health Insurance	German Public Health Insurance	German Private Health Insurance	EHIC	Other Foreign Health Insurance
Germany	< 25	Family insurance is sufficient	Opt.	–	–	Opt.	Rec.	–	–
	25–29	Rec.	Opt.	–	–	Opt.	Rec.	–	–
	≥ 30	Opt.	Rec.	–	–	Opt.	Rec.	–	–
EU/EFTA Country	N/A	Opt.	Opt.	Rec.	Opt.	Opt.	Opt.	Rec.	Opt.
Non-EU/EFTA Country	< 30	Rec.	Opt.	N/A	Opt.	Poss.	Rec.	N/A	Opt.
	≥ 30	Opt.	Rec.	N/A	Opt.	Poss.	Rec.	N/A	Opt.

Please note: if you take out private health insurance, you cannot change to public health insurance during your studies!

Rec. = is recommended, because it offers possibly the most economical rate for you.

Opt. = is optional. You may choose this if you prefer, but it may not offer you the most economical rate.

Poss. = possible only with a min. 12-month residence permit.

N/A = not applicable.



Please note: it is important to apply for the EHIC before you come to Berlin. The EHIC is issued by your national health insurance provider. You must check with the provider whether or not the EHIC will be valid for the entire duration of your study program. Please see this website for further information:

→ www.ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559&langId=en

Other Foreign Health Insurance

Private health insurance from other countries is valid in Germany only if it is recognized by the German authorities as being equivalent to German public health insurance. **It is therefore essential that you check this with your insurance company before you leave your home country, and bring official proof that your policy is equivalent.**

See here for further information:

→ www.berlin.de/formularserver/formular.php?400721

If your insurance is valid for the purpose of studying in Germany, make sure you know exactly what services you are entitled to, as it might not cover all costs. If your private health insurance is recognized in Germany, then you must obtain a certificate of confirmation (Versicherungsbescheinigung) from any German public health insurance company (Krankenkasse) that you are exempt from taking out public health insurance (Befreiung von der Krankenversicherungspflicht). This certificate is necessary for university enrollment. Please be aware that for the duration of your studies you cannot change to public health insurance!

Necessary documents to take out health insurance in Germany or to apply for exemption:

- BMS Letter of Admission
- Valid Passport
- Registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung)
- EHIC (if applicable)
- Certificate of German-approved Foreign Health Insurance (if applicable)

Please note: for the purpose of university enrollment all students must obtain a certificate of health insurance (Versicherungsbescheinigung) or the aforementioned exemption certificate from a German health insurance company.

6.3 Phase II students with employment

If you have been admitted for Phase II and your PhD studies are funded through a PhD position, you will receive an employment contract from the university (FU, HU, TU) or institute (WIAS, ZIB) your PhD supervisor is affiliated with. Your contract will be based on the TVL and your salary determined by this union contract.

→ www.math-berlin.de/students/faq-university/information-about-phd-employment-contracts

The human resources department (German: Personalabteilung) of the hiring institution will request several documents from you, such as your birth certificate, your master's degree certificate and personal data necessary for your salary payment (German bank account, German tax ID, health insurance provider). You must provide the required information and documents as soon as possible as setting up the contract often takes many weeks. You must also have a valid residence permit for scientists before you can start your employment.

Employees may find advice and representation regarding issues with their employment in the "employee council" (German: Personalrat).

Legal council is often offered by unions (German: Gewerkschaften). Here are the two unions for public sector employees which negotiate the TVL (Please note that you must become a member to use their services):

→ www.verdi.de (in German)

→ www.gew.de/tv-l (in German)

6.4 Paying Standard Charges

In some German states students pay tuition fees, but Berlin's universities are still tuition-free. Students only pay semester fees and contributions before the start of the semester, which are made up of the following:

- *Enrollment/re-registration fee (Immatrikulationsgebühr/Rückmeldegebühr)*
- *Social contribution (Sozialbeitrag) to the student union (Studierendenwerk)*
- *Contribution to the student government (Studentenschaft)*
- *Semester ticket transportation pass for Berlin Zones ABC (Semesterticket).*

The TU currently does not offer a semester ticket. TU students are recommended to get a Deutschlandticket (monthly pass for all of Germany):

➔ www.bvg.de/en/subscriptions-and-tickets/subscriptions/deutschland-ticket

To give you an idea of how much the semester fees and contributions are, here are the rates for the winter semester 2024/25 at the three Berlin universities:

@ **FU Berlin:** € 304,40

@ **HU Berlin:** € 299,90

@ **TU Berlin:** € 299,35

Some recipients of German scholarships are entitled to a small reduction of the registration fee. For further information, please ask the BMS One-Stop Office.

Fees can be paid via bank transfer. As the reason for payment (Verwendungszweck), please write your matriculation number, if you already know it, or else your full name, date of birth and the relevant semester. At the bank, you will be given a receipt of payment (Beleg), which you must take to the university when enrolling as proof of payment. If you pay via online banking, take a printout of your statement showing your payment. Once enrolled, all students receive a student ID card, which also functions as a Semester Ticket (see 6.4 Enrollment).

Registration Renewal

Every semester, all students who wish to continue their studies in the next semester must re-register (Rückmeldung). This is a simple process. Halfway through the current semester you will receive notification from the student office, either by e-mail or by postal mail, with instructions on how to pay the fees for the following semester. Please read the instructions carefully to make sure that there are no other requirements you need to fulfill, e.g. submission of proof of valid health insurance or scholarship contract extension. Once the fees have been paid, your registration will be renewed and you will receive your student ID / Semester Ticket and certificate of registration (Immatrikulationsbescheinigung) before the beginning of the new semester.

The payment deadline for registration renewal is mid-July for the winter semester and mid-February for the summer semester. Your university will notify you through an e-mail of the exact dates and deadlines regarding the payment.

Please note: if you forget to renew your registration on time, you will be removed from the university register (Exmatrikulation), which will render your visa status and health insurance invalid! Furthermore, you will be liable to pay additional administrative fees. Bank transfers can take up to three working days to process, and the payment deadline for fees refers to the date by which the university must receive the funds and not the day the transfer was made.

6.5 Enrollment

The BMS admits students to its PhD program on the basis of an online application and digital documents. Nevertheless, all students are required to officially enroll at one of the three participating Berlin universities. The BMS One-Stop Office staff can help you with this process by first going through the necessary documents with you and informing you of where to go to enroll. You might then have to go personally to the relevant university admissions office in order to complete your enrollment.



Please note: the universities require all academic certificates and transcripts either in their original format or as certified copies. Therefore, please remember to **bring all of your academic documents to Berlin** with you. If they are not in English or German, they must be **accompanied by a certified English or German translation**. The BMS can also certify copies of university transcripts and degrees as long as they are presented in original form.

Enrollment procedures can vary depending on the student's individual situation. The information given in the following box is meant only as a general guide.

You must take the following documents to the Admissions Office with you:

- Completed application forms for admission
- BMS Letter of Admission and Scholarship Contract (if applicable)
- Original and certified copies of all certificates and transcripts received in your previous university education. If they are not in English or German they must be accompanied by certified English or German translations (www.gerichtsdolmetscherverzeichnis.de/Recherche/en/)
- Certificate of valid health insurance or exemption certificate (see 6.2)
- Bank statement or receipt verifying payment of semester fees and contributions (see 6.3).
- EU and EFTA citizens must take their valid passport and registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung)
- Citizens of all other countries must take their valid passport with residency permit and registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung).

A downloadable version of the BMS Guidebook containing active hyperlinks can be found here:

➔ www.math-berlin.de/images/guidebook.pdf

Admissions Offices Responsible for the Enrollment of all BMS Students

@ FU Berlin



Admissions Office (FU)

Student Records and Registration Office
(Studierendenverwaltung)

Ilthisstraße 1, 14195 Berlin

➔ www.fu-berlin.de/en/einrichtungen/verwaltung/abt-5/5a-studang/studverw/

Please note: German students must send their enrollment documents by postal mail to the FU Berlin Student Records and Registration Office at the address given on the previous page.

@ HU Berlin



Main Building (HU)

Admission Office for International Students (Zulassungsbüro für internationale Studierende)

Student Service Center (SSC)

Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin

➔ www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/admission/admission-for-foreign-applicants-en

Please note: all BMS students enrolling at the HU must contact the BMS One-Stop Office for guidance. German students must not enroll via the HU online portal.

@ TU Berlin

View of the main building (TU)

Office of Student Affairs

Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623 Berlin

Main Building TU Berlin, Room H 30

➔ www.tu.berlin/en/studierendensekretariat

Please note: all BMS students enrolling at the TU must first contact the BMS One-Stop Office for guidance.

Student ID / Campus Card

After enrolling at the admissions office, it can take up to ten days before you receive your enrollment certificate by postal mail (Immatrikulationsbescheinigung). The "Campus Card" is the official student ID card and can be obtained only after enrollment. If you enroll on or after the first day of the semester, you may ask the admissions office for a temporary certificate of enrollment valid until you receive the official one by postal mail. Once you have registered with one of the three participating universities, you must re-register before the start of every new semester (see 6.4).

➔ campuscard.berlin**Semester Ticket**

The student ID card (Campus Card) that is available only after enrollment also functions as your Semester Ticket. Valid for the duration of the semester, the Semester Ticket is your travel pass for all public transport in Berlin's ABC zones, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It also allows you to take children up to 6 years of age, a stroller, a bicycle, luggage and a dog free of charge (see 8.4). The Semester Ticket is not transferable and must be accompanied by photographic ID if you opt for a student ID card without your photo on it.

Please note: while waiting for your enrollment confirmation and a valid Semester Ticket, your university may provide you with a temporary semester ticket. If this is not the case at your university, consider using the 4-trip ticket (4-Fahrten-Karte) or the 24-hour ticket offered by the VBB, which are more economical options than buying single tickets (see 8.4).

➔ www.vbb.de/en/tickets/single-fare-tickets/4-trip-ticket/➔ www.bvg.de/en/tickets-tariffs/all-tickets/24h-tickets/24h-ticket**6.6 Bank Account**

We recommend that you open a current account (Girokonto) because only holders of a German (i.e. euro) account can make bank transfers to other German accounts without incurring any charges. You will receive a bank card with which you can withdraw money from cash machines and get printouts of your bank statements. Bank checks are no longer common in Germany and most banks now offer online banking. Generally, the conditions for student accounts are similar at different banks. Moreover, various mobile banks offer both a bank account and a physical debit card free of charge, together with online banking and customer service in several languages. To open an account, your passport may be enough.

On another note, be aware that Germans still frequently use cash and usually small stores such as bakeries or ice cream shops do not accept cards.

To open an account you will need your passport, your registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung), your Letter of Admission or proof of enrollment at one of the three Berlin universities, and your residence permit.

Please note: when withdrawing money from a bank that differs from the one that you have an account with, you may be charged a fee. Some banks are associated with other banks (aka "cash group") and you can withdraw money for free from any of the associated banks. Learn more about these and other features directly from your bank.



6.7 Computer Accounts

For guides on how to use the universities websites, please check here:

→ www.math-berlin.de/students/faq-university/university-websites

Account at FU Berlin

Together with their enrollment certificate/student ID, all students enrolled at FU Berlin will receive a user guide from ZEDAT (IT Service Center at FU) in order to activate their FU account. This account enables them to use all computer services offered at the FU.

Zentraleinrichtung für Datenverarbeitung (ZEDAT)

Fabeckstraße 32, 14195 Berlin
E-mail: hilfe@zedat.fu-berlin.de

IT Service Center @ FU Berlin

→ www.zedat.fu-berlin.de/Kontakt (in German)

WLAN

→ www.zedat.fu-berlin.de/WLAN (in German)

User Service

Silberlaube JK27, Rooms 121a & 133
Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin
Phone: +49 30 838 77777

Any BMS student who would like to have a computer account at the Mathematics Institute of the FU is requested to contact the FU Liaison officer at the BMS

One-Stop Office (fu-liaison@math-berlin.de). This account will enable you to use the computer and WLAN services offered at the Mathematics Institute as well as at the central computer pools.

Account at HU Berlin

Together with their enrollment certificate and instructions on how to obtain a student ID card (Campus Card), students enrolled at HU Berlin will receive a PIN code to activate their HU account. The PIN code appears on the enrollment certificate in the field "Wichtige Hinweise zur Rückmeldung". With the PIN code students can create an account by following the instructions on this website:

→ www3.hu-berlin.de/dl/beratung/antrag/index.php?gelesen=0&lang=en

For any questions concerning HU accounts, please contact the CMS at Campus Adlershof.

Computer and Media Service (CMS)

User help desk:

→ www.cms.hu-berlin.de/en/dl-en/beratung-en/user-support?set_language=en

Students from all the Berlin universities are allowed to use the computer pools at the HU. For further information, please refer to:

→ www.cms.hu-berlin.de/en/dl-en/beratung-en/antrag-hu-account-benutzeranmeldung

IT Service Center @ HU Berlin

→ www.cms.hu-berlin.de/en/portale-en/studierende-en



WLAN

➔ www.cms.hu-berlin.de/dl/netze/wlan (in German)

Any BMS student who would like to have a computer account at the HU Math Institute should contact the HU Liaison officer at the BMS One-Stop Office (hu-liaison@math-berlin.de). This account will enable you to use the computer and WLAN services offered there.

Account at TU Berlin

After enrollment, TU students will receive an e-mail containing:

- a TUB Account and temporary password
- a personal e-mail account
- authorization for student ID (Campus Card)

A TUB Account allows students access to various university IT services such as e-mail, TUB computer pools and WLAN services.

Follow the instructions on the following website to activate your account and apply for a Campus Card.

➔ www.tu.berlin/campusmanagement/angebot/tub-account/campuskarte-1

IT Service Center @ TU Berlin

➔ www.tubit.tu-berlin.de/menue/help_consultation/parameter/en/

TUB user account

➔ www.tubit.tu-berlin.de/menue/dienste/konto_karte/parameter/en/

StApps

➔ www.campusmanagement.tu-berlin.de/menue/dienste/weitere_dienste/tub2go/ (in German)

WLAN

➔ www.tubit.tu-berlin.de/wlan/parameter/en/

All BMS students can apply for a computer account at the TU Mathematics Institute by contacting the TU Liaison officer at the BMS One-Stop Office (tu-liaison@math-berlin.de). With this account, students are able to use the computer pool at the BMS Lounge as well as the computer and WLAN services offered throughout the institute.

WLAN Connection at the Three Universities

After getting a computer account at one of the three universities, students are able to gain access to the WLAN services at each university by using the roaming service and the same username and password from their home institution.

Eduroam

An acronym for roaming in the area of education and research, eduroam provides internet connectivity to users at participating institutions. Students of these institutions can access this roaming service in order to connect to the internet at the FU, HU and TU.

eduroam @ FU

➔ www.zedat.fu-berlin.de/WLANeduroam (in German)

eduroam @ HU

➔ www.cms.hu-berlin.de/de/dl/netze/wlan/config/eduroam (in German)

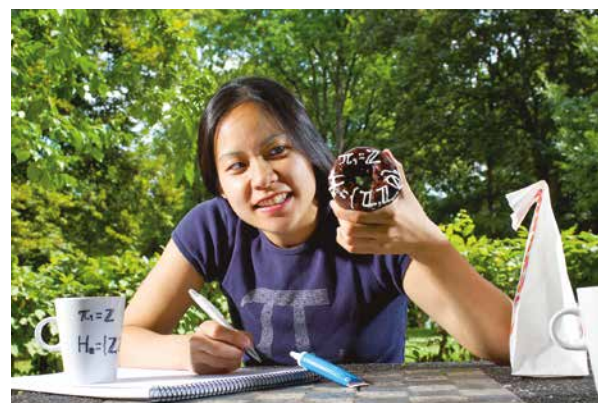
eduroam @ TU

➔ www.tu.berlin/campusmanagement/angebot/wlan-zugang-mit-eduroam (in German)

6.8 Mensa Card

“Mensa” is German for “dining hall”, and in Berlin the student dining halls are run by the Berlin Studierendenwerk (see 3.4).

The Mensa Card is used at the dining halls and cafés run by the Studierendenwerk. To obtain a Mensa Card you need to show your student ID card (Campus





Card) at the cash desk at any of the dining halls. In order to make purchases, you first have to add credit to your Mensa Card at the special cash machines, which can be found in all of the dining halls. Alternatively, you can activate the “Mensa Card App” already integrated into the Campus Card.

- ➔ www.stw.berlin/en/student-canteens/
- ➔ www.stw.berlin/en/student-canteens/faq-canteens/mensacard.html

Kids-MensaCard

The Berlin Studierendenwerk provides free cafeteria meals for students' children aged six and under. For more information, read “Do students' children have to pay for the food?” here:

- ➔ www.stw.berlin/en/dining-facilities.html#jump_faq

6.9 Libraries and Library Cards

To use the libraries of all three participating universities you only need your student ID (FU & HU) or Campus Card (TU).

Libraries of the Mathematics Institutes

FU Campus Library

Fabeckstraße 23 – 25, 14195 Berlin

- ➔ www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/campusbib/

HU Library for Natural Sciences

Erwin-Schrödinger-Zentrum

Rudower Chaussee 26, 12489 Berlin

- ➔ www.ub.hu-berlin.de/en/locations/erwin-schroedinger-zentrum

TU Mathematics Library

Straße des 17. Juni 136, 10623 Berlin

Rooms 162 – 169, MA 1-1

- ➔ www.math.tu-berlin.de/mfb/mfb_homepage/parameter/en/

Main University Libraries

FU University Library

Garystraße 39, 14195 Berlin (U-Thielplatz)

- ➔ www.ub.fu-berlin.de/en/



HU University Library

Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum

Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 1/3, 10117 Berlin

- ➔ tinyurl.com/2p9f5w2z

TU University Library

Fasanenstraße 88, 10623 Berlin

- ➔ www.ub.tu-berlin.de/en/home/

Other Libraries

To use other libraries in Berlin, you must apply at the specific library for a membership card.

Staatsbibliothek, Haus Unter den Linden

Dorotheenstraße 27, 10117 Berlin

- ➔ staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/

Staatsbibliothek, Haus Potsdamer Straße

Potsdamer Straße 33, 10785 Berlin

- ➔ staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/

Amerika-Gedenkbibliothek (AGB)

Blücherplatz 1, 10961 Berlin

- ➔ www.zlb.de/en/

Berliner Stadtbibliothek

Breite Straße 30 – 36, 10178 Berlin

- ➔ www.zlb.de/en/

Public Libraries in Berlin

- ➔ [www.voebb.de/aDISWeb/app?service=direct/0/Home/\\$DirectLink&sp=SPROD00](http://www.voebb.de/aDISWeb/app?service=direct/0/Home/$DirectLink&sp=SPROD00)

For Berlin's public library network (VÖBB), one library card gives you access to the entire network.

7. General Facts About Germany



Map of Germany showing the 16 Federal States

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was founded on 23 May 1949 and lies in the heart of central Europe. At the end of the Cold War, the border between the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the FRG was opened. On 3 October 1990, after 41 years of separation, the reunification of Germany took place.

Official Name: Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland)

Government: Federal, parliamentary, representative democratic republic

Area: 357,386 km²

Population: Approximately 83 million

16 Federal States: Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Thüringen (Names in German)

Capital: Berlin

Neighboring Countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland

Official Language: German

Inhabitants: Germany has the largest population of any EU member state. Over 21 million people (around 26 % of the total population) have a migration background and over 10 million people (12.4 %) are foreign residents.

Religion: There is no national religion in Germany. Around 39 million people are Christian (24.5 % Catholic, 22.4 % Protestant); over 5.5 million are Muslim; around 300,000 are Buddhist; 100,000 are Jewish; and another 100,000 people are Hindu. Around 40 % of the population is unaffiliated with any religion. Basic Law guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Currency: €/Euro (€ 1 = 100 cents)

Time Zone: UTC + 01:00 (winter), UTC + 02:00 (summer)

Climate: Germany's climate is mostly temperate. Extreme lows or highs in temperature are rare. Winter temperatures vary from east to west, with freezing temperatures in the west and below freezing in the east. Summer temperatures in Germany are typically between 20 °C and 30 °C.

A downloadable version of the BMS Guidebook containing active hyperlinks can be found here:
➔ www.math-berlin.de/images/guidebook.pdf



Potsdamer Platz

8. Berlin at a Glance

Berlin is Germany's capital city and a major center of European politics, culture, media and science. It also serves as a continental hub for air and rail transport. The city's economy is primarily based on the service sector, which encompasses a diverse range of creative industries, media corporations, environmental services, congress, and convention venues.

Berlin is home to world-renowned universities, research institutes, sporting events, orchestras, museums and media personalities. Its urban landscape and historical legacy has also made it a popular setting for international film productions. Recognized for its festivals, contemporary architecture, nightlife and avant-garde arts, Berlin has evolved into a focal point for individuals attracted by its liberal lifestyle, modern "zeitgeist" and low-cost living. It is home to more than 3.7 million people from over 190 countries.

8.1 Brief History of Berlin

First documented in the 13th century, Berlin was successively the capital of the Kingdom of Prussia (1701–1918), the German Empire (1871–1918), the Weimar Republic (1919–1932) and the Third Reich

(1933–1945). After World War II the city was divided: East Berlin became the capital of the GDR (East Germany) while West Berlin remained a West German enclave surrounded by the Berlin Wall from 1961–1989. It was possible for people from the west to go to the east, but only through strictly controlled checkpoints. For most East Germans, travel to West Berlin or West Germany was no longer possible. In 1971, the "Four Power Agreement on Berlin" (drawn up by the war-time allies France, UK, USA and USSR) re-established ties between the two parts of Berlin, improved travel and communications, and brought numerous improvements for the residents of the Western Sectors.

In 1989, pressure from the East German population brought the transition to a parliamentary democracy in East Germany. When the Berlin Wall fell on 9 November 1989, its citizens gained free access to the west. In Friedrichshain a 1.3 km stretch of the Berlin Wall, known as the East Side Gallery, has been preserved as an international memorial for freedom. On 3 October 1990, East and West Germany reunited and became the Federal Republic of Germany. Berlin became the German capital in accordance with the unification treaty. The German parliament and government moved from Bonn back to Berlin in 1999.

8.2 Berlin's 12 Districts

Berlin is divided into twelve districts (Bezirke), each district is subdivided into a number of sub-districts (Ortsteile), and Berlin consists of 95 such sub-districts. In the past these areas were independent towns, villages and rural communities, and some of the sub-districts in Berlin are now known as a "Kiez". A term with a positive connotation, the word is of Slavonic origin and refers to a settlement. Its inhabitants often identify with the "Kiez" they live in. A Berliner "Kiez" usually consists mainly of pre-war buildings and upholds its own commercial and cultural infrastructure. Some of the more well known ones are the "Akazienkiez" in Schöneberg, the "Körnerkiez" in Neukölln and the "Kollwitzkiez" in Prenzlauer Berg.



Map of Berlin and its 12 districts

morial (Neue Wache), the Museum of German History (Zeughaus) and the Berlin State Opera (Staatsoper).

The Fernsehturm (TV tower) at Alexanderplatz in Mitte is not only the tallest building in the city (368 m), but also in Germany. Completed in 1969, it is visible throughout the central districts of Berlin. From the observation deck 203 metres above the ground, visibility can reach up to 40 kilometres on a clear day. Heading east from Alexanderplatz is Karl-Marx-Allee, an avenue lined with monumental residential buildings, designed in the Socialist Classicism style of the Stalin era. Adjacent to Alexanderplatz is the City Hall (Rotes Rathaus), with its characteristic red brick architecture. The fountain in front of it is the Neptunbrunnen featuring the Roman god Neptune.

Gendarmenmarkt is a beautiful square in Berlin, the name of which dates back to the Napoleonic occupation of Berlin. It is bordered by two similarly designed cathedrals: the French Cathedral (Französischer Dom) and the German Cathedral (Deutscher Dom). In between both cathedrals stands the Concert Hall (Konzerthaus), home of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra.

The Berliner Dom, a Protestant cathedral and the third church in this area, is located on the Spree Island across from the site of the Berliner Stadtschloss and adjacent to the Lustgarten. A large crypt houses the remains of some of the earlier Prussian royal family. Like many other buildings, it suffered extensive damage during World War II. The Cathedral of St. Hedwig is Berlin's Roman Catholic cathedral.

8.3 Tourism and Sightseeing

Brandenburger Tor (Brandenburg Gate) is probably the most distinctive monument in Berlin. Located directly on the former East-West Berlin border, it was a focal point during the Cold War and became the main gathering place for celebrations following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. This famous monument is at the western end of Unter den Linden, a boulevard lined with linden trees. One block to the north is the Reichstag, the house of the German parliament. At the eastern end of the boulevard, there are many notable buildings, such as the State Library (Staatsbibliothek), Humboldt-Universität, the National Me-

Potsdamer Platz began as a trading post where several country roads converged just outside of Berlin's old customs wall. Destroyed during World War II and left desolate when the Berlin Wall cut through it, Potsdamer Platz was redeveloped after German reunification. Home to the Mall of Berlin with over 130 shops and restaurants, four major hotels, Germany's largest casino (the "Spielbank Berlin") and two cinemas, Potsdamer Platz attracts up to 70,000 visitors a day.

Hackescher Markt is home to high fashion and culture with countless boutiques, clubs, bars and galleries. The Hackesche Höfe, a cluster of buildings lo-



View of the Fernsehturm and Berliner Dom from Neues Museum

cated around several courtyards, were reconstructed around 1996. Formerly a centre of Jewish life in Berlin, the nearby Oranienburger Straße contains the restored New Synagogue (Neue Synagoge).

Straße des 17. Juni, connecting Brandenburg Gate and Ernst-Reuter-Platz, serves as the central East-West axis. Its name commemorates the uprisings of east Berlin workers on 17th June 1953. At its halfway point is the Great Star (Großer Stern), a circular traffic island on which the Victory Column (Siegessäule) is situated. This monument, built to commemorate the Prussian victory in the Danish-Prussian War, was relocated in 1939 from its previous position in front of the Reichstag.

Kurfürstendamm is home to some of Berlin's most luxurious shops and the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church is situated at its eastern end on Breitscheidplatz. The church was destroyed in World War II and left in ruins. Nearby on Tauentzienstraße is KaDeWe, the largest department store in continental Europe.

Schloss Charlottenburg is the largest surviving historical palace in Berlin. It was badly damaged dur-

ing World War II, but has since been reconstructed. Schloss Bellevue, west of the city center, is the residence of the German president.

Berlin Tourist Information

➔ www.visitberlin.de/en

8.4 Public Transport

Getting around Berlin is easy with the S-Bahn (city train) and U-Bahn (Underground). Visitors to the BMS commonly use the U2 as it connects Ernst-Reuter-Platz, Zoologischer Garten, Potsdamer Platz, the Friedrichstraße shopping boulevard and the popular district of Prenzlauer Berg. Free transport maps are available at most stations, hotels, and airports or a printable version can be downloaded here:

➔ www.bvg.de/en

Please note: before your official enrollment confirmation, you may have to spend a period of time in Berlin without holding your student ID card. In this case, consider using the 4-trip ticket (4-Fahrten-Karte) or the 24-hour ticket (24-Stunden-Karte) offered by



Oberbaumbrücke

the VBB, which might be more economical options than buying single tickets.

➔ www.vbb.de/en/tickets/single-fare-tickets/4-trip-ticket/

➔ www.bvg.de/en/tickets-tariffs/all-tickets/24h-tickets/24h-ticket

Night Transportation

Public transportation runs up to 24 hours a day in Berlin. The S-Bahn system runs until 1.30 am on weeknights and all night on weekends. U-Bahn trains run until 00.30 am on week nights, and most lines run all night on weekends. Berlin also has an extensive and reliable network of night buses and trams, so you should not get stranded if you stay out late even during the week. As for the night services, look for routes designated with the letter "N" followed by a number (e.g. N10) at bus and tram stops.

Berlin for the Disabled

The companies that manage the Berlin public transportation service (BVG and S-Bahn) have gone to great efforts in recent years to make the transportation service more accessible to wheelchair users. To provide easy access to the platforms, over 50 underground stations and 119 suburban train stations have

been equipped with elevators or ramps. City maps and Berlin BVG and S-Bahn transport network maps show all stations accessible to wheelchair users.

Tickets and Fares

Berlin has three fare zones. Zone A is delineated by the S-Bahn ring and encompasses the city center, Zone B ends at the city limits. Zone C includes Berlin's immediate surroundings (e.g. Potsdam, Oranienburg). Tickets can be purchased with the zone combinations AB, BC or ABC, and a supplementary ticket is available for A and C respectively. Standard fares apply to adults, reduced fares for children aged 6–14 and children under six years of age ride for free. Tickets can be purchased at any of the BVG and S-Bahn Berlin ticket counters and at ticket machines located at the stations. The machines are equipped with a convenient on-screen menu and are available 24 hours a day in various languages, including German, English, French, Spanish, Turkish and Polish.

Journey Planner

➔ fahrinfo.bvg.de/Fahrinfo/bin/query.bin/en

Tickets and Fares

➔ www.bvg.de/en/tickets-tariffs/all-tickets



Semester Ticket

Your student ID card also functions as your semester ticket if you are enrolled at FU or HU. If you are enrolled at TU and have the Deutschlandsticket you can access transport zones ABC as well (see 6.4). If you opted for an ID card with your photo on it, then it becomes a valid public transport pass for the local transport zones ABC too. Without a photo means you have to carry official photo ID with your student ID. Managed by the Berlin-Brandenburg transport consortium (VBB), the Semester Ticket is valid for an unlimited number of journeys every day of the week.

Bicycles

Having a bicycle is a very good alternative to using public transportation. If you don't want to buy a new one, you can either rent a bicycle or buy one second-hand. For bicycles for rent see for example:

→ www.settle-in-berlin.com/bike-in-berlin/

If you are looking for a bike rental service for longer periods, see here:

→ swapfiets.de/en-DE

8.5 Shopping

For information about a great variety of shopping facilities, such as shopping centers, outlets, malls, fruit and vegetable markets and bookshops, please check:

→ www.visitberlin.de/en/experience/shopping?tid=841

On Sundays and public holidays, most shops and supermarkets in Germany are closed. Please find here a list of the main supermarkets around Berlin that stay open on Sundays:

→ www.berlin.de/en/tourism/travel-information/1740536-2862820-shopping-hours-sunday-shopping.en.html

Therefore, Sundays in Berlin are a good time for brunch and bargain-hunting at flea markets. More information about Berlin's flea markets can be found here:

→ www.berlin.de/en/shopping/markets-and-flea-markets/

8.6 Post Offices and Communications

Post office counters can be found in small convenience stores or official "Deutsche Post" offices. There you can buy stamps, post letters, send registered mail and access some other basic postal services.

→ www.postdirekt.de/plzserver/PlzSearchServlet?lang=en_GB

Cell/Mobile Phones

A cell phone or mobile phone is called a "Handy" in Germany. There are a range of phone providers.

Since 2017, roaming charges have been banned within the EU. This means that a mobile phone from Europe normally works in Germany without incurring any additional phone bills, as long as it supports the 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands. If you are from North America or parts of Asia, you will probably have a CDMA phone, which may not be compatible with the German network. Please ask your phone provider before you leave your home country.

8.7 Bookshops

Bookshops Near the Universities

@ FU Berlin

Schleichers Buchhandlung Dahlem-Dorf
Königin-Luise-Straße 41, 14195 Berlin
(U Dahlem-Dorf)

→ www.schleichersbuch.de

@ TU Berlin

U & R Kiepert
Hardenbergstraße 9a, 10623 Berlin
(U Ernst-Reuter-Platz)

→ www.kiepert.de

Other Bookshops

Dussmann – das KulturKaufhaus

Friedrichstraße 90, 10117 Berlin
(U+S Friedrichstraße)

→ www.kulturkaufhaus.de/en/start

Hugendubel

KADEWE, Tauentzienstraße 21–24, 10789 Berlin

(U Kurfürstendamm)

Schloßstraße 110, 12163 Berlin

(U Schloßstraße)

→ www.hugendubel.de**Kohlhaas & Company**

Fasanenstraße 23, 10719 Berlin

(U Uhlandstraße, Kurfürstendamm)

→ www.kohlhaasbuch.de→ www.literaturhaus-berlin.de**Marga Schoeller Bücherstube**

Knesebeckstraße 33, 10623 Berlin

(S Savignyplatz)

→ www.margaschoeller.de**Another Country Kreuzberg**

Riemannstraße 7, 10961 Berlin

(U Gneisenaustraße)

→ www.anothercountry.de/about.htm**8.8 Recreation****Public Parks**

Berlin enjoys a great national and international reputation as one of Europe's metropolitan centers, thanks in part to its great wealth of green urban space. More



than 2,500 public parks, covering a surface of around 6,500 hectares, provide Berliners and visitors with a huge variety of recreational opportunities. The protection, care, maintenance and development of these green spaces are the tasks of the Senate Department for Urban Development and the parks departments of each Berlin district. Information about the various parks and gardens can be found here:

→ www.berlin.de/en/parks-and-gardens/**Museums and Galleries**

Berlin is home to around 180 museums. The ensemble of the Bode Museum, the Neues Museum, the Alte Nationalgalerie, the Pergamon Museum and the Altes Museum on Museum Island (Museumsinsel) is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is situated in the northern part of Spree Island between the river Spree and Kupfergraben. The Neues Museum houses the Egyptian Museum where the iconic bust of Nefertiti is currently on display. The Deutsches Historisches Museum, which offers an overview of 2000 years of German history, is located in the Zeughaus (former armoury) on Unter den Linden. There is also a Museum of Natural History, a Museum of Medical History, and the list goes on and on ...

An abundance of state museums, as well as private collections (e.g. the Ramones Museum in Mitte) is bound to satisfy every taste. In Dahlem there are several museums of world art and culture, such as the Museum of Indian Art, the Museum of East Asian Art, the Ethnological Museum, the Museum of European Cultures, as well as the Allied Museum. Daniel Libeskind built the extension to the Jewish Museum in Kreuzberg. In Lichtenberg, the Stasi Museum can be found on the grounds of the former East German Ministry for State Security (Stasi). In Karlshorst, you can visit one of the sites where the surrender of the German military was signed in 1945 bringing an end to World War II. Checkpoint Charlie has become a popular tourist site and there is also a museum about Berlin's most famous border crossing point situated there.

Students can buy the very popular three-day Museum Pass for half the normal price.

→ www.visitberlin.de/en/museum-pass-berlin



Concert at Treptow Arena

Cultural Events, Theater, Opera and Classical Music

Berlin is well known for its numerous cultural institutions, many of which enjoy an international reputation. The ClassicCard for the under-30s offers opera, ballet and classical music fans tickets at reduced prices.

→ www.classiccard.de/de/offer/

The Arts

The city has a very diverse art scene and is home to over 400 galleries. Berlin has established itself as a center of youth and popular culture in Europe as young German and international artists continue to settle in the city.

Theaters and Cinemas

Theater in Berlin:

→ www.berlin-buehnen.de/en/

Cinema in Berlin:

→ www.visitberlin.de/en/cinemas

Opera and Classical Music

Deutsche Oper Berlin

Famous operas such as Mozart's "Magic Flute" or Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande", Wagner's "Ring" or

Rossini's "Barber of Seville" feature regularly at the Deutsche Oper Berlin in Charlottenburg.

→ www.deutscheoperberlin.de/en_EN/home

Staatsoper Berlin

Under the musical direction of Daniel Barenboim, the opera has a varied repertoire with focus on operas from the pre-Mozart era and contemporary operas.

→ www.staatsoper-berlin.org/en_EN

Komische Oper Berlin

This opera house, with its lovely, neo-baroque interior built in 1892, features modern musical theater.

→ www.komische-oper-berlin.de/en/

Konzerthaus

Home to the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, it is regarded as one of the most exciting centers of classical music in Berlin.

→ www.konzerthaus.de/en/

Philharmonie

The Philharmonie at the Culture Forum is home to the world famous Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

→ www.berliner-philharmoniker.de/en/

Staatsballett Berlin

Formed in 2004 through a merger of the ballet companies of Berlin's three opera houses, this is one of the largest ballet companies in Western Europe.

→ www.staatsballett-berlin.de/en/

Other Links**English Language Magazine**

→ www.exberliner.com

City Information in English

→ www.berlin.de/en/

Berlin Tourist Information

→ www.visitberlin.de/en

Berlin Free Tours

→ www.newberlintours.com

English-language Community Website

→ www.toytowngermany.com/berlin/

Events & Festivals in Berlin

→ www.berlin.de/en/events/

Online Ticket Service

→ www.visitberlin.de/en/book/

8.9 Places of Worship

Whether you are looking for a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other place of worship, you can easily find a place in Berlin to meet your spiritual needs.

Churches**Protestant (Lutheran) Church**

→ www.ekbo.de/sprachnavigation/english-website.html

→ www.ekd.de/english/

Catholic Church

→ www.erzbistumberlin.de (in German)

Services in other languages are also offered.

→ www.english-mission-berlin.de

Christians in Berlin

→ bibelgemeinde-berlin.de (in German)

Synagogues**Jewish Community of Berlin**

→ www.jg-berlin.org/en/about-us.html

Synagogues in Berlin

→ www.jg-berlin.org/en/service/religious-affairs/synagogues-in-berlin.html

Mosques**Muslim Community in Berlin**

→ www.dmzberlin.de (in German)

Mosques in Berlin

→ www.berlin.de/tourismus/insidertipps/1856770-2339440-moscheen-in-berlin-ein-hauch-orient-im-s.html (in German)

Buddhist Centers**Buddhist Centres in Berlin**

→ buddhistisches-tor-berlin.de

Hindu Centers**Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple**

→ hindutempleberlin.de

Humanism**Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands**

→ www.hvd-bb.de (in German)

The following website provides further information and links to these and other religious communities in Berlin:

→ akr-berlin.de (in German)



9. Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Emergency Numbers	Phone	Website
Police Emergency	110	
Accident/Fire Brigade	112	
Berlin Police Hotline (general information)	+49 30 46644664	
Medical Emergency/Accident Service Charité Hospital, Luisenstraße 65/66		
<i>For accident, emergency and first aid services</i>	+49 30 450531000	
<i>Charité Switchboard</i>	+49 30 45050	
On-call Doctor Service (nights and weekends)	116117	→ www.116117.de/de/index.php (in German)
Poison Hotline	+49 30 19240	
Emergency Dental Service	+49 30 89004333	→ www.kzv-berlin.de/fuer-patienten/notdienst (in German)
Berliner Krisendienst – Crisis service	+49 30 3906310	→ www.berliner-krisendienst.de/en/
Utility Services	Phone	
Vattenfall for electricity failure	+49 800 2112525	
GASAG for gas failure	+49 30 787272	
Berliner Wasserbetriebe for water failure	+49 800 2927587	
In case of an emergency, such as a strong smell of gas in your building or danger of a fire, you can also contact the fire brigade. Your building manager is also an emergency contact.		
Other Important Telephone Numbers	Phone	Website
National Directory Enquiries	11833	
International Directory Enquiries	11834	
Enquiries in English	11837	
Mental Health Hotline for Students	+49 30 209370666	→ berlin.nightlines.eu
BVG Customer Services	+49 30 19449	
Central Lost and Found Office	+49 30 902773101	
Database of Doctors and Psychotherapists	Website	
Kassenärztliche Vereinigung Berlin (Doctors in the public health insurance provider system)	→ www.kvberlin.de/fuer-patienten/arzt-und-psychotherapeutensuche (in German)	
Psychotherapeutinnen und -therapeuten Datenbank	→ www.psych-info.de (in German) → www.kvberlin.de/fuer-patienten/arzt-und-psychotherapeutensuche (in German)	
Settle in Berlin English speaking doctors	→ www.settle-in-berlin.com/find-english-speaking-doctor-berlin-near/	
All about Berlin English speaking doctors and GPs in Berlin	→ allaboutberlin.com/guides/english-speaking-doctors-berlin → allaboutberlin.com/guides/english-speaking-psychiatrists-psychotherapists-berlin	



Publishing Information

Editor

Berlin Mathematical School
Schr. MA 2 – 2
Straße des 17. Juni 136
TU Berlin
10623 Berlin, Germany

www.math-berlin.de

Design, Layout and Image Editing

Weinert & Partner Werbeagentur GmbH
www.weinert-wa.com

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p. 37, inner back cover

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➔ www.math-berlin.de/images/guidebook.pdf





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