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Willkommen in DEUTSCHLAND

Kofinanziert von der Europäischen Union

EUROPA FÜR NIEDERSACHSEN

NICE TO HAVE YOU HERE!

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Hallo und moin!

A warm welcome to the Wachstumsregion Ems-Achse!

By deciding to live and work in Germany and in our region, you are starting a new chapter in your life. Moving to another country brings many opportunities – but also many questions and challenges. Meeting new people, learning a new language, getting familiar with different processes and completing various administrative steps are all part of the first period after your arrival.

At the same time, international skilled workers are more important than ever for the economic development of our region. Many companies in the Emsland, Grafschaft Bentheim and Ostfriesland areas depend on committed and qualified employees. With your knowledge, experience and skills, you make a valuable contribution to our companies and our society.

To help you settle into your new environment as easily as possible, we have created this welcome guide for you. It is designed to provide you with orientation and support you during your first steps in Germany. You will find important information on topics such as authorities and administrative procedures, housing, mobility, healthcare, language, work and leisure activities.

Use this guide as a companion during your first weeks in our region. It cannot answer every question you may have, but it is designed to help you find your way around and connect you with the right contacts and support services.

We are happy that you are here and wish you a successful start, many positive experiences and a great arrival in the Wachstumsregion Ems-Achse.

Dr. Dirk Lüerßen
Geschäftsführer
Wachstumsregion Ems-Achse e. V.

COOPERATION

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The Wachstumsregion Ems-Achse e. V. has developed this welcome guide specifically for international students at Hochschule Emden/Leer. The aim is to support students during their first steps in Germany and the region and to provide them with important information for everyday life, their studies and their career orientation.

The welcome guide was developed in close cooperation with Hochschule Emden/Leer, particularly with the Career Service, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and the ISE-FiT Nordwest project. Through this joint effort, the content could be specifically tailored to the needs of international students while taking existing services and points of contact into account.

The ISE-FiT Nordwest project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space.

CAREER SERVICE
HOCHSCHULE EMDEN·LEER

DAAD
Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

ISE-FiT
Nordwest

Gefördert durch:

Bundesministerium
für Forschung, Technologie
und Raumfahrt

Mail: careerservice@hs-emden-leer.de; Tel.: +494921/807-1136

YOUR FIRST WEEKS IN GERMANY

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In this welcome pack, you will find all the important information you need to get started in Germany.

You can find more information here:

Welcome

Note: Regulations, contact details and other information may change over time, and individual requirements may vary depending on your personal circumstances. Therefore, please always check the current information with the relevant authorities or institutions. Despite careful preparation, we cannot guarantee that all information is complete, accurate or up to date. The information in this guide is provided for general guidance only and without guarantee.

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HOME & LIVING

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A new home is more than just a place to sleep – it is the center of your daily life. It is the place where you arrive, make yourself comfortable and gradually build a new home for yourself.

In Germany, there are different housing options – from rental apartments and shared flats to owning your own home. At the same time, there are some important things to consider, such as rental agreements, additional costs, registering your address and communicating with landlords.

This information will help you understand the most important basics and find your way around everyday life in Germany.

All important information about your apartment is included in your rental agreement/tenancy agreement

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The tenancy agreement:

In Germany, tenancy agreements must be concluded in writing. Landlords usually provide you with the tenancy agreement. Always read this important document carefully!
The tenancy agreement contains the following key points:

Duration of the tenancy: There are fixed-term and open-ended tenancy agreements – however, fixed-term tenancy agreements are only permitted if the landlord intends to use the property for their own purposes or if major renovations are planned. The reason for the fixed term must be stated in the tenancy agreement.

Notice period: If you have a tenancy agreement of indefinite duration, you must give three months' written notice before your planned move-out date. Your landlord must also observe the three-month notice period – if you have been living in the flat for a long time, this is extended to six or nine months. If you breach the tenancy agreement (e.g. by failing to pay rent), termination without notice is possible.

Basic rent and inclusive rent: When it comes to rent, a distinction is made between basic rent and inclusive rent. **Basic rent** covers the cost of using the property each month. **Inclusive rent** also includes service charges such as water, heating, waste collection and caretaker services. You usually pay an advance or a flat-rate amount for these service charges, as it is unclear how much you will use over the course of the year. At the end of the year, you will receive a statement showing your exact consumption figures and will either be refunded or required to pay a balance.

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Electricity and/or gas usually need to be registered separatel and are often **not** included in the rent. You will then need to take out an electricity and/or gas contract. In some tenancy agreements, gas costs are included in the service charges. Check with your landlord to find out. **Tip!** Use comparison websites such as Check24!

Security deposit: When you sign the tenancy agreement, the landlord may ask you to pay a **security deposit** of up to three months' rent as a guarantee. You will get this money back once you move out, unless, for example, you have damaged something in the flat or failed to pay the rent.

Handover report: A handover report is strongly recommended. This may be included in the tenancy agreement and is signed by you and the landlord when you move in. The handover report records the **condition of the flat when you move in** and notes whether, for example, there is any minor damage already present. You cannot then be charged for this when you move out. It is best to take photos when you move into the flat. You should also note down and photograph the meter readings (electricity, water, gas) when you move in!

Graduated rent/index-linked rent: In Germany, in addition to fixed-term and open-ended tenancy agreements, there are other specific features: for example, tenancy agreements may already include a provision for rent increases. Check with your landlord and contact the Tenants' Association if you have any questions.

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Tips for finding a flat:
The search for a flat can take longer, particularly in large cities. You should therefore send out as many enquiries as possible to increase your chances of securing a viewing. Speed is also important: flats are often only listed online for one or two days. Abbreviations are frequently used in property adverts. Here you will find an overview with explanations, as well as the websites of the Tenants' Protection Association and the Consumer Advice Centre.

What documents do I need to rent a flat?
Landlords usually require you to provide recent **pay slips** and your passport or proof of **residence status** (no originals, copies only). Many landlords also want proof that you have no outstanding debts. In Germany, they often ask for a so-called "**Schufa report**". This records all debts and income, i.e. your credit rating. In addition, many landlords require a so-called **tenant self-declaration**. This asks for personal details such as marital status, children or employment. However, there are also questions that are inadmissible and which you do not have to answer truthfully.
It is best to ask which documents are required before viewing the flat.

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Moving into a flat
Registering with the registration office: Everyone living in Germany must be registered. You should do this at the registration office for your place of residence no later than two weeks after moving in. You will need a valid ID for this. If you are renting, you must also submit a completed landlord's confirmation. This is a document in which the landlord confirms when and where you are moving in. You can usually find the form and the address of the relevant registration office on the city's website. Appointments are often booked online.

Registering with your energy and water supplier: If electricity, hot water or heating gas are not included in your service charges, you will need to find a supplier yourself and sign a contract with them. But don't worry: you won't be left without these services on the first day you move in. When you move into a new flat, you will automatically be supplied with electricity, water and gas by the local default supplier on their terms. You can use free comparison websites online to help you with this.

Signing up for telephone, internet and (cable) TV: There are various providers in Germany. It's worth comparing them – online comparison sites can help with this. A tip: Setting up your telephone, TV and internet connections can take several weeks. So make sure you allow plenty of time!

Broadcasting licence fees: In Germany, you are required to pay a fee (approx. 18 euros per month) for radio and television to the public service organisation "Beitragsservice ARD, ZDF und Deutschlandradio", known as the "GEZ fee". All residents of a household must register individually. The fee is charged **per household**, regardless of the number of people living there.

INSURANCE & HOUSING

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When moving into a new flat, as well as the tenancy agreement, having the **right insurance cover** is also vital. Whilst some insurance policies are optional, they are highly recommended to protect you from unexpected costs. Good insurance cover ensures that you are not left to deal with things on your own if something goes wrong, allowing you to settle into your new home with peace of mind.

Home contents insurance is one of the most important types of cover. It protects your personal belongings in your home – such as furniture, clothing or electrical appliances – against damage caused by fire, water damage, burglary, storm or hail. Depending on the policy, cover may also extend to bicycles or damage caused by natural disasters.

Personal liability insurance is particularly important because it covers damage you unintentionally cause to others – for example, if water leaks into a neighbour's flat, or if you damage something in the stairwell. As such incidents can quickly become costly, it is one of the most important types of everyday insurance.

In addition, **glass insurance** may be a good idea in certain cases, such as where there are large windows or glass doors. For tenants of houses, buildings Insurance is also relevant – although this is usually taken out by the owner. So you **don't** need to take this out yourself!

You can find further information here:

HEATING AND VENTILATION

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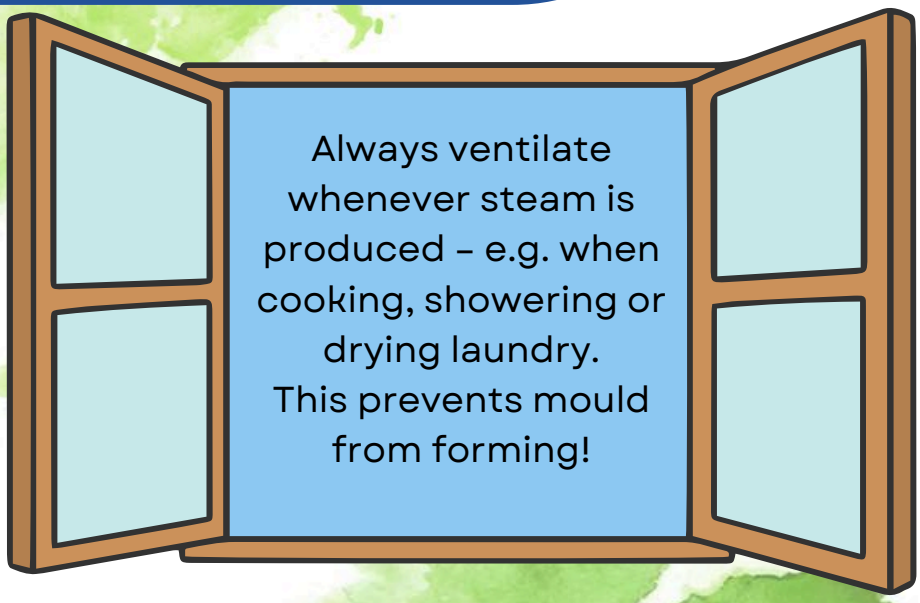
Ventilation is very important in Germany!
Open the windows wide several times a day – ideally to create a draught.
For 20–30 minutes in summer, and 5–10 minutes in winter.
Important: Turn off the heating for the duration!



Maintain a minimum temperature of 17 °C in living areas (hallway: 15 °C) and ensure temperatures remain constant. Heat rooms evenly and close doors to cooler rooms. Only turn the heating down at night – do not switch it off! Avoid leaving windows tilted open permanently, heating with windows open, and rooms that are too cold. The ideal room temperature is 18–22°C, with humidity at 40–60%.

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PETS & HOME

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Many people in Germany keep **pets** such as dogs, cats, small animals or birds. Animals are regarded as **family members**, and their welfare is a top priority. That is why there are **clear rules** designed to ensure that pets are well cared for and kept in a manner appropriate to their species.

In many local authorities, dogs must be **registered** and **licensed**; in some cases, a **dog owner's licence or certificate of competence** is required. Dogs must often be **kept on a lead**, and in some areas they must also **wear a muzzle**. Cats and small animals must be kept in such a way that they have sufficient space, care and stimulation.

It is also important that pets do not endanger or disturb other people. In rented accommodation, the **landlord** decides whether pets are allowed. Small pets such as hamsters or fish are usually not a problem, but for **dogs** and **cats**, **explicit permission** is often required.

Veterinary care, **vaccinations** and **proper care** are, of course, essential. Many towns and local authorities also provide dog parks, animal shelters and advice centres to help with any queries.

WASTE SEPARATION

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In Germany, rubbish is carefully sorted to promote recycling and environmental protection.
Where you live, you will usually find several coloured bins:

- **Yellow bin**: for plastic, metal and packaging
- **Blue bin**: for paper and cardboard
- **Black bin**: for general waste
- **Brown/green bin**: for organic waste such as food scraps or leaves

The exact rules for waste separation may vary depending on the district. Collection dates are listed in the waste collection calendar. **Important**: Put the bins out by the roadside in good time and bring them back in after they have been emptied. In the **Emsland district**, for example, there are **bins**, and in the **Leer district** there are **bin bags**!

Glass must be disposed of in **glass recycling bins**.

Clothes can be donated, for example, in a **clothing bank.**

Electrical waste, garden waste or large quantities of paper can be disposed of at the **recycling centre.**

WASTE SEPARATION: BINS & BAGS

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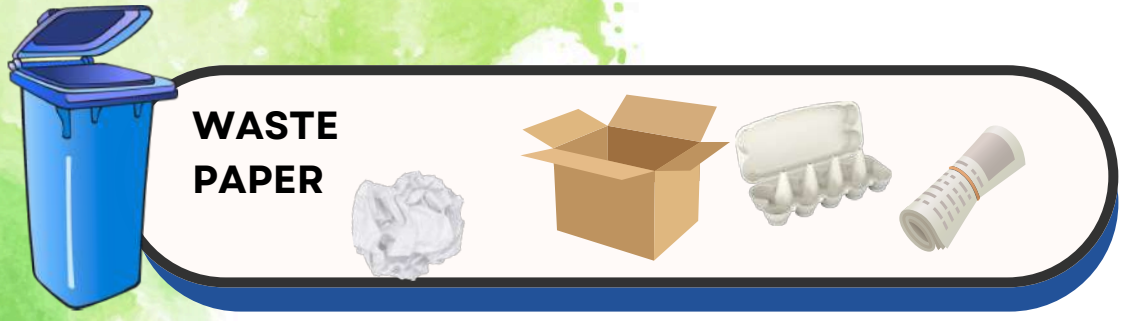

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WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

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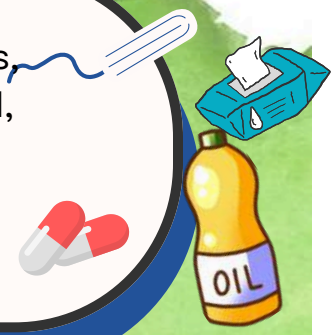
In Germany, wastewater is channelled through a pipe network to a sewage treatment plant, where it is treated. To ensure the system works properly and the environment is protected, medicines, chemicals and fats should not be poured down the drain.
Tap water is safe and can be drunk without any worries!

Urine, faeces and toilet paper can be disposed of in the toilet as normal. Water from washing up, showering or the washing machine can also be safely drained away.

Nappies, wet wipes, cotton wool pads, sanitary products, food waste and oil, as well as medicines, paint, varnish, solvents and chemicals must not be disposed of via the sewage system!



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NEIGHBOURHOOD

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In Germany, treating others with respect and consideration in your neighbourhood is particularly important. This includes **politeness, mutual consideration and adhering to shared rules**. A friendly greeting in the stairwell is just as much a part of daily life as observing quiet hours – usually between 10 pm and 6 am, as well as on Sundays and public holidays. During these times, you should refrain from playing loud music, carrying out DIY work or using a vacuum cleaner. Keeping communal areas such as the stairwell and garden tidy and clean goes without saying. If you have any questions or problems, please feel free to speak to your neighbours – a good relationship makes living together more pleasant for everyone.

SOCIAL NORMS

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In Germany, politeness, punctuality, reliability and consideration are important. People usually greet one another with “Hallo”, “Guten Tag” or a handshake. In a professional setting, people often use surnames; in private, they switch to the informal “du” once permission has been given. “Bitte”, “Danke” and “Entschuldigung” are considered good manners. Punctuality shows respect, and commitments are taken seriously. Privacy is important – physical closeness and personal questions are more common amongst close friends and family.

Being considerate of your neighbours is very important in Germany. Respect quiet hours, help out with tasks such as recycling and cleaning, and greet your neighbours in a friendly manner – this helps create a good atmosphere.

WORKPLACE

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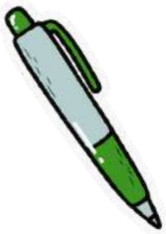
For many international professionals, the workplace is a key place for settling into life in Germany. As well as your day-to-day work, you'll get to know your colleagues, gain an insight into the working culture and have the chance to improve your language skills.
In Germany, there are clear rules and rights for employees.

Employment contract:
Before you start work, you will be given an employment contract. This sets out important information about your employment, such as:

- your duties and responsibilities
- your working hours
- your salary
- your holiday entitlement
- the terms regarding termination



Important to know:
Many employment contracts include a **probationary period**, which usually lasts between three and six months. During this time, both the employer and the employee can terminate the employment relationship more easily.
In Germany, employees are entitled to **paid holiday**. The statutory minimum holiday entitlement for a full-time position is **at least 20 working days per year** (based on a five-day week). However, many companies grant more days of holiday.

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WORKPLACE

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Works Council – Representing Employees' Interests within the Company

Many companies have a works council. The works council is an elected body representing employees and works to promote their interests.

For example, the works council can provide support with:

- Questions regarding working conditions
- Conflicts in the workplace
- Working hours or holiday arrangements
- Changes within the company

Members of the works council are bound by a duty of confidentiality. This means that discussions are treated as confidential.

Equality and Inclusion Officers

Many companies and public institutions have equality or inclusion officers. They work to ensure that all employees are treated fairly, regardless of their background, gender, religion or other personal characteristics.

They can be an important point of contact if you have any questions or need support.

Protection against discrimination

In Germany, the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) applies. This law protects people against discrimination on grounds such as: origin or nationality, gender, religion or belief, age, disability, or sexual identity

If you feel you are being treated unfairly at work, you can contact your HR department, the works council or an advice centre.

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MINIMUM WAGE AND WORKERS' RIGHTS

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In Germany, there is a statutory **minimum wage**. This sets the minimum amount that employees must earn per hour.
In addition to the minimum wage, **German labour law** protects employees in many areas, for example through:

- regulated working hours
- protection against unfair dismissal
- continued pay in the event of illness
- maternity leave and parental leave
- health and safety at work

These regulations ensure that employees are treated fairly and have safe working conditions

Very important: gross does not equal net!
Remuneration is usually agreed on a gross basis. Taxes and social security contributions – such as health, nursing care, pension and unemployment insurance – are deducted from these amounts.

Advice on questions regarding your rights and obligations in an employment relationship is available, for example, from the Faire Integration advice centre:

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AUTHORITIES & FORMALITIES

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Dealing with the authorities and completing the necessary paperwork are crucial when settling in Germany. In this chapter, you'll find all the relevant information!

- [ ] Registering with the Residents' Registration Office
- [ ] Registering with a health insurance provider
- [ ] Registering with the Immigration Office
- [ ] Opening a bank account
- [ ] German mobile phone number

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RESIDENTS' REGISTRATION OFFICE

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Citizens' Advice Bureau/Residents' Registration Office– What is it?
The Citizens' Advice Bureau is often your first port of call after arriving in Germany. It is part of the city or local council administration and handles many important administrative tasks relating to your place of residence. There you can:

- register or change your address
- obtain certificates of residence
- apply for or amend personal documents

How does the registration process work?
Many services are available by appointment only. You should therefore check online in advance on your local authority's website or ask your employer for assistance.
You must register **in person**, which means you must go to the registration office yourself. The relevant office is the citizens' advice bureau of your local authority, i.e. the town hall or local council office in your place of residence. Once you have successfully registered, you will receive a **certificate of registration**. Please **keep this document safe – you will need to present it on many occasions**. A few days later, you will also receive your **tax identification number** (also known as a **tax ID**) by post. This number consists of 11 digits and is valid for life.

What is a tax identification number?
Your tax identification number is required so that your employer can calculate and deduct income tax correctly. Income tax is important for funding public services in Germany – such as schools, transport, the environment, culture and security. Please pass on your tax identification number to your contact person at the company as soon as you have received it.

Keep in mind: If your situation in Germany changes – for example, if you start working after completing your studies – you may need to change or extend your residence permit.

REGISTERING WITH THE HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME

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Health insurance is mandatory in Germany and is an essential requirement for students. You must provide proof of valid health insurance for enrolment at a German university.
Students can be covered by statutory or private health insurance, depending on their age, previous insurance status and individual circumstances.
Before enrolling, contact a German health insurance provider to clarify which type of insurance is suitable for you and how your insurance status must be reported to the university.

This is how the registration works:

1. Choose a health insurance provider
2. Find out about the different health insurance providers and choose one that fits your needs.
3. Apply for membership: You can usually register online, by mail or in person at a local office.
4. Submit your documents. You will usually need: passport or identification document, residence permit or visa (if available), registration certificate from the local authorities, employment contract or employer information
5. Receive your health insurance card
6. After your registration has been completed, you will receive your health insurance card. You show this card when visiting a doctor. It is your proof that you are insured.

Good to know:
If you become ill or need medical help, you usually do not have to pay the treatment costs yourself. The doctor's practice will settle the costs directly with your health insurance provider.

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REGISTRATION WITH THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE

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What is the Foreigners' Registration Office?
The Foreigners' Registration Office is responsible for all matters relating to your **residence** in Germany. This is where your **residence permit** is issued, renewed or amended. Even if your personal circumstances change – for example, due to a change of job, finishing your studies, a move or family reunification – the Foreigners' Registration Office is your point of contact. If you come from a non-EU country, you will usually need a **residence permit** to live and work in Germany.

How do I apply for a residence permit?
You apply for this residence permit at the Foreigners' Registration Office in the town or district where you live. Your documents will be checked and you will be issued with a residence permit or be able to renew it. If your circumstances change – for example, if you change jobs or move to another town – you must inform the Foreigners' Registration Office and, if necessary, apply to update your residence permit.

Notes:

- Book appointments well in advance, as there may be waiting times.
- Inform the authorities in good time if your residence permit is due to expire soon.
- Keep all letters and documents in a safe place.

You will need:

- Your passport with a visa
- Your registration confirmation from the Residents' Registration Office
- Proof of your employment/Certificate of enrolment
- Proof of your health insurance
- A passport photo

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REGISTRATION: THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE

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WHERE SHOULD I REPORT TO?

If you live in the **Emsland district**, the Emsland Foreigners' Registration Office in Meppen is the relevant authority:
Landkreis Emsland | Fachbereich Sicherheit und Ordnung - Ausländerwesen

Ordeniederung 1, 49716 Meppen
abh@emsland.de
+495931443030

If you live in the **Grafschaft Bentheim district**, the Grafschaft Bentheim Foreigners' Registration Office in Nordhorn is responsible:
Landkreis Grafschaft Bentheim | Ausländerwesen und Ordnung:

van-Delden-Straße 1-7, 48529 Nordhorn
auslaenderbehoerde@grafschaft.de
+495931443030

If you live in the **Leer district**, the Foreigners' Registration Office in Leer is responsible:
Landkreis Leer: Ordnungs- und Straßenverkehrsamt - Ausländerbehörde:

Bavinkstraße 23, 26789 Leer (Ostfriesland)
+494919261640

REGISTRATION: THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE

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WHERE SHOULD I REPORT TO?

If you live in the **Aurich district**, the Foreigners' Registration Office in Aurich is responsible:
Landkreis Aurich: Ordnung & Veterinär - Ausländerbehörde:

Fischteichweg 7 - 13, 26603 Aurich
Auslaenderbehoerde@landkreis-aurich.de
+494941160

If you live in **Emden**, the Foreigners' Registration Office in Emden is responsible:
Stadt Emden: Öffentliche Sicherheit & Bürgerservice - Ausländerbehörde:

Frickensteinplatz 2, 26721 Emden
abh@emden.de

If you live in the **Wittmund district**, the Foreigners' Registration Office in Wittmund is responsible:
Wittmund: Öffentliche Sicherheit & Bürgerservice - Ausländerbehörde:

Schlossstraße 11, 26409 Wittmund
+494462 861080

SUPPORT SERVICES

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There are a wide range of support services in our region to help you settle in and guide you along the way. **Integration officers** and the **Migration Advisory Service** can help with any questions you may have about settling in, everyday life and dealing with the authorities. The **Youth Migration Services** are there to support young people and help with school, training and personal matters

Numerous charitable organizations such as **Caritas, Diakonie, the German Red Cross, AWO, and Malteser** offer counseling, language support, social assistance, and opportunities to meet others. If you experience discrimination or are unsure where to turn, specialized counseling centers are available to advocate for your rights in a confidential and impartial manner.

In all three regions, numerous volunteers serve as **refugee and integration guides**. They provide support in everyday life, help build connections, and assist newcomers in settling in quickly. Together, they form a strong network that supports you along the way.

Counseling Center Ostfriesland:

Counseling Center Emsland:

Counseling Center Emden:

Counseling CenterGrafschaft Bentheim

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

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To receive your salary and make payments such as rent in Germany, you'll need your own bank account. You can open an account at a bank as soon as you've received your tax ID. Be sure to keep all your bank documents and keep your login credentials safe.

You will need:

- Passport and visa
- Tax ID
- Employment contract/Certificate of enrolment
- Certificate of residence

To manage your cash flow and make regular payments, you'll need a German bank account. If you prefer, you can switch to an online bank.
To open an account, you'll generally need the documents listed above.
Once the identity verification process is complete, your account will be set up.
You will receive your account details, a debit card, and access to online banking by mail.
Be sure to keep all bank documents in a safe place and carefully protect your online banking login credentials.

If you enter Germany to study, you may need to prove that you have sufficient funds to cover your living expenses. For this purpose, you may be required to open a blocked bank account (Sperrkonto). A specific amount of money is deposited into the blocked account.

GERMAN CELL PHONE NUMBER

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A German cell phone number is very helpful for staying reachable in Germany, using local services, and making affordable domestic calls!

A German cell phone number is very useful in everyday life. It allows you to receive important calls (e.g., from employers or government agencies), use online services such as online banking and appointment booking, and stay in touch with friends and family.
You can choose between prepaid (flexible, no contract) and a contract plan (12–24-month commitment).
Keep your SIM card and PIN in a safe place. If you switch providers later, you can usually keep your German phone number.

Important: To activate your SIM card, you will need to provide proof of identity, such as a passport or ID card. If you do not yet have German documents such as a registration certificate (Meldebescheinigung) or residence permit, some providers may not be able to complete the registration process immediately.

TAX OFFICE - TAXES, TAX ID, AND INCOME TAX BRACKETS

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Tax Office - What is it and what do I need to know?
The Tax Office is the government agency responsible for taxes in Germany. For you as a student, most processes are handled automatically, so you rarely have to deal with them yourself in your daily life. After registering with the Residents' Registration Office, you will receive your personal tax identification number (**Tax ID**) by mail. This number is valid for life and will accompany you throughout your entire stay in Germany. Please provide your Tax ID to your employer as soon as possible so that your salary can be calculated correctly.

Some important terms:

- Income tax: Is automatically deducted from your paycheck.
- Tax bracket: Determines how much income tax is withheld each month. It is based, for example, on your marital status.
- Tax return: Many employees voluntarily file a tax return once a year and may receive a refund.

You can find more information about the German tax system and filing tax returns here:

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TAX OFFICE - TAXES, TAX ID, AND INCOME TAX BRACKETS

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Tax Identification Number (Tax ID): What is it?
When you move to Germany and register your address with the local registration office, you will automatically receive a Tax Identification Number (Tax ID). The Tax ID consists of 11 digits and must be provided to your employer so that income tax can be correctly deducted from your salary. You keep the same Tax ID for your entire life, even if you move to a different city within Germany.

The letter containing your Tax Identification Number (Tax ID) will look similar to this:

Adresse

Persönliche Identifikationsnummer:

99 999 999 999

Allgemeine Informationen:
www.identifikationsmerkmal.de

TT.MM.JJJJ

Zuteilung der Identifikationsnummer nach § 139b der Abgabenordnung (AO)

Sehr geehrte Dame, sehr geehrter Herr,

das Bundeszentralamt für Steuern hat Ihnen die Identifikationsnummer 99 999 999 999 zugeteilt. Sie wird für steuerliche Zwecke verwendet und ist lebenslang gültig. Sie werden daher gebeten, dieses **Schreiben aufzubewahren**, auch wenn Sie derzeit steuerlich nicht geführt werden sollten.

Bitte geben Sie Ihre Identifikationsnummer bei Anträgen, Erklärungen und

How much tax will I pay on my salary?
The amount of income tax you pay depends on several factors. For example, it can make a difference whether you are married, have children or can claim certain tax deductions. In Germany, income tax is progressive: People with higher incomes generally pay a higher percentage of tax than people with lower incomes.
Depending on your income, the income tax rate ranges from approximately 14% to 45%. Your employer automatically deducts income tax from your salary and transfers it to the tax authorities.

AT A GLANCE: TAXES

WELCOME CENTER 2.0
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Very important: Gross does not equal net
Your gross salary is the amount listed in your employment contract–the amount you earn before taxes and social security contributions are deducted.
Your net salary is the amount that actually ends up in your bank account.
Deducted from this are: taxes (e.g., income tax, solidarity surcharge, church tax if applicable) and social security contributions (pension, long-term care, unemployment, and health insurance)
How much you receive net depends on your gross salary, your tax bracket, and other factors.

Entgeltabrechnung

Im Dezember 2024

Datum: 29.11.2024
Seite: 1/1

Silver Robotics GmbH / Siemensstraße 14 / 49770 Herzlake

Herrn
Max Mustermann
Musterstr. 1
48480 Spelle

Persönliche / Organisatorische Daten

Personalnr.:	66217	Geburtsdatum:	01.01.2000
Kostenstelle:	3000		
Arbeitsstunden:	174.00	Konzerneintritt:	01.12.2024
Tarifgr./-stufe:	KEINE/	Austritt:	
Steuerklasse:	1	Befr.-Datum:	30.11.2025
Faktor:	0,000	Kinderfreibetr.:	0,0
Konfession AN/EG:	–/	Jahresfreibetr.:	0,00
Steuertage:	30,00	Monatsfreibetr.:	0,00
Basistarif Priv. SV:	0,00	Jahreshinzbetr.:	0,00
SteuerID:	00000000000	Monatshinzbetr.:	0,00
RV-Nr.:		KV-Prozentsatz:	8,050 %
Krankenkasse:	AOK NDS	RV-Prozentsatz:	9,30 %
DEÜV-Schlüssel:	1111	AV-Prozentsatz:	1,30 %
SV-Tage:	30,00	PV-Prozentsatz:	2,3000 %
PV-Zu./-Kl./Midi/Mfb.:	Z///		

Für den Zeitraum 01.12. bis 31.12.2024:

Lohnart	Kennz.	Für	Anzahl	Betrag/E.	Zusatz	Betrag	Jahreswert
Basisbezüge							
Monatsbezüge	LSG					2.784,00	
Bruttoentgelt							
Gesamtbrutto (EBeschV)						2.784,00	2.784,00
Steuerbrutto, lfd.					2.784,00		2.784,00
KV-Brutto, lfd.					2.784,00		2.784,00
RV-Brutto, lfd.					2.784,00		2.784,00
AV-Brutto, lfd.					2.784,00		2.784,00
Gesetzliche Abzüge							
Lohnsteuer, lfd.						270,00	270,00
Krankenversicherung, lfd.						224,11	224,11
Rentenversicherung, lfd.						258,91	258,91
Arbeitslosenvers., lfd.						36,19	36,19
Pflegeversicherung, lfd.						64,03	64,03
Netto							
Gesetzl. Netto (EBeschV)						1.930,76	

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AT A GLANCE: TAXES DURING YOUR STUDIES

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Note: Regulations concerning studies, employment and residence may vary depending on your individual circumstances, particularly your nationality and residence permit. Please always check which regulations apply to you personally. The information provided in this guide is intended for general guidance only and is provided without guarantee.

Further information can be found here:

Many students work alongside their studies – for example, in a mini-job, as a working student or in another part-time job.
Important: Depending on the type and scope of your employment, different rules apply to taxes and social security contributions.

Taxes: Do I have to pay taxes on my part-time job?

In general, income from a part-time job may be subject to income tax. Whether you actually have to pay income tax depends, among other things, on the amount of your income and your personal circumstances.

If applicable, your employer will deduct income tax directly from your salary and pay it to the tax authorities on your behalf.
If your total income during the year is relatively low, you may be able to get some or all of the income tax you have paid back by filing a tax return.

Good to know:
The tax-free allowance and tax rules may change from year to year. If you have questions about your individual tax situation, contact the tax office (Finanzamt) or a tax advisor.

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WORKING STUDENT

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Note: Regulations concerning studies, employment and residence may vary depending on your individual circumstances, particularly your nationality and residence permit. Please always check which regulations apply to you personally. The information provided in this guide is intended for general guidance only and is provided without guarantee.

Further information can be found here:

Up to 20 hours per week:
If your studies remain your main focus, you are generally exempt from contributions to health, long-term care and unemployment insurance. However, you are generally required to pay pension insurance contributions.

More than 20 hours per week:
Working more than 20 hours per week may also be possible under certain conditions, for example during semester breaks or if you work in the evenings or at weekends.

Important: If you have several jobs at the same time, your employment may need to be considered together when determining your tax and social security obligations. Therefore, make sure to inform your employer about any other jobs you have.

If you have any questions, you can contact the German Pension Insurance:

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MINI-JOB OR SHORT-TERM EMPLOYMENT

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Note: Regulations concerning studies, employment and residence may vary depending on your individual circumstances, particularly your nationality and residence permit. Please always check which regulations apply to you personally. The information provided in this guide is intended for general guidance only and is provided without guarantee.

Mini-job:
A mini-job is a type of employment with a regular monthly income of no more than 603€ in 2026. Special rules apply to students.
In principle, mini-jobs are subject to pension insurance contributions. However, you can apply for an exemption from this requirement.

Holiday job / short-term employment:
If you work for only a short period of time, your job may qualify as short-term employment. Such employment is generally exempt from social security contributions if it is limited from the outset to a maximum of three months or 70 working days per calendar year. In principle, the amount you earn does not affect this classification.

What does this mean for you?
1. What type of employment do I have?
   Mini-job, working student position, short-term employment or regular employment?
2. How many hours do I work per week?
3. How much do I earn?
   The amount of your income can be relevant for taxes and, in the case of a mini-job, also for determining your social security obligations.
4. Do I have another job?
5. How am I covered by health insurance?

Important note: International students from non-EU countries may work up to 140 full days or 280 half-days per calendar year.

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SOCIAL SECURITY & PENSION INSURANCE

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The regulations for students are explained in more detail on pages 33–35!

Social Security
Germany has a comprehensive social security system. This system ensures that people are financially protected in various life situations–for example, in the event of illness, in old age, or if they are temporarily unemployed. A portion of your gross salary is automatically deducted each month for various social insurance programs. These contributions are paid directly by your employer, so you don't have to worry about making the payments yourself.
These include, among others:

- Health insurance
- Pension insurance (for your retirement)
- Unemployment insurance
- Long-term care insurance

At first, your take-home pay will be lower than in some other countries. However, you'll have comprehensive coverage and access to many benefits–such as medical care, parental benefits, and future pension entitlements.

Pension Insurance:
Pension insurance contributions are deducted directly from your salary and transferred to the pension insurance fund along with your employer's share. This system ensures that people have financial security in old age. If you work in Germany for many years and pay contributions, you will later be entitled to a monthly old-age pension. All contributions you've paid are recorded in your personal pension account.

Good to know: Even if you return to another country later, your contributions are generally not lost. Under certain conditions, you can still receive a pension from Germany later on.

SOCIAL SECURITY: EXPLANATIONS

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As an employee in Germany, you are automatically covered by the social security system in several areas. Your employer handles the registration process, and the contributions are deducted directly from your paycheck. You don't have to do anything!

PENSION INSURANCE
This insurance ensures that you receive a monthly pension in your old age.

LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE
This helps if you need long-term care or become ill as you get older.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
If you lose your job, you will receive financial support and assistance in finding a new job.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE
You're covered in the event of accidents at work/ accidents occuring on your way to work.

EMPLOYMENT AGENCY & JOB CENTER

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The **Employment Agency** and the **Job Centers** are government agencies that assist people with all matters related to employment, continuing education, and career development.

For example, the **Employment Agency** offers:

- Career counseling
- Opportunities for continuing education
- Job search assistance

The **Jobcenter** primarily assists people who currently do not have sufficient income and need financial support. For you, the Jobcenter is usually only relevant if your personal situation changes. Many of its services are free of charge. Counseling sessions can often be conducted online or in person.

FAMILY BENEFITS OFFICE AND FAMILY BENEFITS

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Family Benefits Office – Child Allowance and Family Benefits
If you live in Germany with your family or if your children are joining you, you may be eligible for government assistance under certain conditions. The Familienkasse is responsible for this. A key benefit is child benefit—a monthly payment for parents that helps cover the costs of childcare, education, and daily living expenses.
Important information about the application:

- You must actively submit the application to the Familienkasse.
- You will need your tax ID and those of your children.
- A residence permit and registration certificate may also be required.
- Processing often takes several weeks—so be sure to submit your application early.

In addition, depending on their income, families can apply for **child allowance** or **housing allowance**. Expectant parents are also eligible for **parental leave benefits**, which partially offset the loss of income following the birth.

Throughout the region, numerous **advice centers** assist families with questions regarding applications, deadlines, and additional support—including **family centers, local government offices, Caritas, Diakonie, and child welfare offices**. Many municipalities also offer their own programs, such as parent cafés, classes, or support for single parents.

Benefits such as advance **child support**, the **education and participation package**, or **assistance in special circumstances** can also be applied for at local authorities. The districts and cities in East Frisia, Emsland, and the County of Bentheim provide clear information on their websites about regional services and contact points.

ENTITLEMENT DURING PREGNANCY

WELCOME CENTER 2.0
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Pregnancy is well protected in Germany. From early on, expectant mothers are entitled to **regular medical care** from gynecologists or midwives, the costs of **which are covered by health insurance**. **Six weeks before the birth, maternity leave begins**, during which pregnant women are not required to work and receive financial support. **Eight weeks after the birth, there is an additional leave period with maternity benefits** and an employer contribution.
After the birth, parents can apply for **parental allowance**, which compensates for lost income. In addition, counseling centers provide information on further financial assistance and support services. Pregnant women are also entitled to a safe workplace free of heavy or hazardous tasks.

You can find more information here!

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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In an emergency, you should have the most important emergency numbers handy – preferably saved directly in your cell phone.

110 Police
112 Fire Department/Emergency Medical Services
116117 Medical On-Call Service (for non-emergencies)

The following key questions will help you if you need to call emergency services or the police. It's important to act quickly and stay calm. The person on the phone will guide you through the call:

- **What exactly happened?**
- **Where did it happen?**
- **How many people are involved?**
- **What kind of emergency or injury is it?**

Always stay on the line until the person on the phone confirms that the call can be ended. This ensures that all important information is conveyed and help is dispatched as quickly as possible.

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FIRST AID

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In Germany, you are required to provide first aid in an emergency, to the extent that it is reasonable to do so. You are not required to perform medical procedures, but you must not turn a blind eye if someone needs help. This includes simple steps such as securing the accident scene, calling 112, caring for the injured, or performing CPR. You can hardly go wrong–doing nothing would be worse. It's worth refreshing your first aid skills regularly, because they can save lives.

KINDERGARTEN

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Daycare centers (KiTas) care for and support children from age one until they start school. They support families and provide children with a safe place to play and learn.
In East Frisia, the Emsland, and the County of Bentheim, there are many daycare centers run by different organizations and with different focuses, such as nature-based, physical activity, or language development programs. Nursery spots are often available for children under three years of age. Registration is usually handled through city hall or an online portal. Since spots are in high demand, it's advisable to apply early. Costs vary depending on the municipality, income, and the scope of care; for children aged three and older, kindergarten in Lower Saxony is often free of charge.
KiTas are also important places for integration: children and parents make connections, and many facilities offer parties or parent cafés for socializing. Feel free to ask your company for recommendations or tips!

SCHOOL

WELCOME CENTER 2.0
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In Germany, **compulsory education applies.**
The German school system is clearly structured: After elementary school (grades 1–4), children move on–depending on recommendations–to a Hauptschule, Realschule, Gymnasium, or Gesamtschule. There are also special education centers and vocational schools.
In East Frisia, the Emsland, and the County of Bentheim, there is a diverse range of schools run by municipal and church-based organizations. Many schools offer all-day care, homework help, and language support. County counseling centers assist families who are new to the region. The vast majority of schools in Germany are operated by the state. **Your children can therefore attend these schools for free.**

Enrollment is typically handled through the local elementary school or the local education authority. Especially for children who are new to Germany, there are often special language classes or additional support to help them get started.

You can find more information **here:**

PARENTAL ADVICE & SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

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Parenting counseling and school social work support families in their daily lives–for example, with **parenting issues, school problems, language support, conflicts, or organizational matters** such as **enrollment** and changing schools. These services are confidential, free of charge, and open to all families, regardless of background or language.

Parenting and Family Counseling Centers in the following districts: Aurich, Leer, Wittmund, Emsland, and Grafschaft Bentheim. These centers provide counseling to parents, children, and adolescents on parenting issues, family stress, or developmental problems.

School social workers:
Almost all schools in the region have designated staff members who support children in their daily school life, help resolve conflicts, and advise parents. They work closely with teachers and counseling services.

Family centers and youth welfare offices:
Many municipalities–such as Emden, Leer, Aurich, Lingen, Meppen, Papenburg, and Nordhorn–operate family centers that offer open consultation hours, parent cafés, language courses, or support services for families.

HOLIDAYS & SCHOOL BREAKS

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In Germany, there are several public holidays on which most people have the day off and many institutions, such as schools, doctors' offices, and supermarkets, are closed. Some holidays—such as New Year's Day, Easter, Christmas, and German Unity Day—are observed nationwide, while others are determined by the individual states. Many holidays have religious roots, and a quiet, contemplative atmosphere is particularly cherished during Christmas and Easter.

Holidays marked with (*) fall on the same date every year; all others change annually:

- New Year's Day (*): 01.01.
- Good Friday: 03.04.26, 26.03.27, 14.04.28
- Easter Monday: 06.04.26, 29.03.27, 17.04.28
- Labor Day (*): 01.05.
- Ascension Day: 14.05.26, 06.05.27, 25.05.28
- Whit Monday: 25.05.26, 17.05.27, 05.06.28
- German Unity Day(*): 03.10.
- Reformation Day (*): 31.10.
- Christmas Day (*): 25.12.
- Boxing Day (*): 26.12.

School holidays in Lower Saxony. Important: Semester breaks may be different!

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HEALTH

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In general: Healthcare in Germany is very well organized and provides professional assistance for health issues. If you study in Germany, you are required to provide proof of health insurance when enrolling at a university! If you work in Germany, you are generally automatically covered by health insurance through your employer. Statutory health insurance covers the costs of most medical services–including doctor's visits, hospital stays, medications, and many preventive screenings. However, there may be small copayments for certain services or medications.

Statutory Health Insurance:
Many students in Germany are covered by statutory health insurance.
It generally covers medically necessary treatment, including doctor visits, hospital treatment, prescription medication, preventive check-ups and vaccinations. Co-payments may apply to certain services or medications.

Private Health Insurance:
Depending on your age, previous insurance status and individual circumstances, private health insurance may also be an option or may apply to you. Coverage and costs depend on the individual insurance plan.

Family doctor: Your first point of contact for health issues is your family doctor. If your **family doctor** determines that a specialized examination is necessary, they will refer you to a **specialist**. Many doctors operate on an appointment basis. You can schedule an appointment by phone or online.

HEALTH

WELCOME CENTER 2.0
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Finding a doctor:
It can be difficult to find the right doctor's office, especially at first. Here are some helpful ways to find a primary care physician:

- Your health insurance provider's website
- Online portals such as Doctolib or Jameda
- Recommendations from colleagues

Many search portals also allow you to filter for English-speaking doctors.

Reporting Sickness:
If you are sick and unable to work, you should notify your employer **as soon as possible**. In many cases, you will also need to obtain a doctor's note (**certificate of incapacity for work**). This officially confirms that you are unable to work. Today, this certificate is usually sent **digitally** to your employer, so you **do not** have to submit it yourself.
Note: If in doubt, check with your HR department about the specific rules in your company.

Hospitals and medical emergencies:
In Germany, hospitals are primarily responsible for emergencies and inpatient care. In life-threatening situations, you can contact emergency services at any time.

Find your doctor or psychotherapist:

PHARMACIES

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You can get medications at a pharmacy. For prescription medications, you'll need a doctor's prescription, which is accessed via your electronic health card. Many medications are also available over the counter–the pharmacy staff can advise you on this. If you need something urgently outside of business hours, the pharmacy emergency service can help. At least one pharmacy in your area is open 24 hours a day. You can find information about this in the pharmacy window, at www.aponet.de, or by calling **0800 00 22 8 33**.

You can recognize pharmacies in Germany by the red "A."

PSYCHOSOCIAL COUNSELING & SUPPORT

WELCOME CENTER 2.0
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Moving to a new country can be a major change. During this time, some people experience stress, homesickness, or uncertainty.
In Germany, there are numerous **counseling centers** that offer free and confidential support. There, you can talk about personal, family, or work-related challenges.
Many counseling centers also offer consultations in English or with interpreters.

Here you can find counseling centers in Ostfriesland:

Here you can find counseling centers in Emsland:

Here you can find counseling centers in Grafschaft Bentheim:

Hier findest du Beratungsstellen in Emden:

MOBILITY

WELCOME CENTER 2.0
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You can easily cover shorter distances on **foot** or by **bike**– there are plenty of well-maintained bike paths in the region! For longer distances, we recommend taking a **car**, **bus**, or **train**. The **DB Navigator app** provides a good overview of schedules–it's best to check these in advance.

Our tip:

Always allow a little extra time for important appointments– especially in rural areas, where buses may run less frequently.

Public Transportation - Bus Routes, Train Stations, and Tickets:

Germany Ticket: €63 per month, valid on all regional trains and buses (not valid on IC or ICE trains). For students, the Deutschlandticket is included in the semester ticket

Lower Saxony Ticket: starting at €29 for up to 5 people, a day pass for regional trains and buses–valid only during specific times!

Important! Never travel without a valid ticket! The fine is at least €60.

BIKE PATHS, TRAFFIC RULES & SAFETY

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The **bicycle** is a very popular mode of transportation in Germany–even for everyday use. Many places have well-developed bike lanes that make cycling safer.

Some important rules:

- Use bike lanes when they are available.
- Ride on the right side of the street or bike lane.
- Obey traffic lights and signs.
- Always use your bike lights when it's dark.
- Do not use a cell phone while riding

Wearing a bike helmet is not mandatory for adults, but it is highly recommended for safety reasons.

Typical of Germany:

Crosswalks ("zebra crossings") are taken very seriously. Cars usually stop there when someone wants to cross the street.

Extreme Weather Conditions – Snow, Storms, and Heavy Rain

The weather in northern Germany can change quickly. Especially in the fall and winter, storms, heavy rain, or snow can affect travel.

Important Information:

- Check for weather warnings before taking long trips.
- During storms, bus or train service may be canceled on short notice.
- In winter, roads can be slippery–drive carefully and allow extra time.

ROAD TRAFFIC

WELCOME CENTER 2.0
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In Germany, there are **clear traffic rules** that everyone must follow–including pedestrians and cyclists. These rules ensure safety and promote harmonious coexistence.

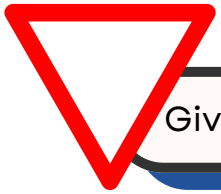
Pedestrians should use sidewalks, stop at red lights, and be clearly visible in the dark.

Cyclists ride on the right, use bike lanes, signal when changing direction, and must have working lights. A helmet is not required, but it is advisable.
Traffic rules are strictly enforced. Therefore, be sure to follow all signs and speed limits. Traffic violations can be costly. Using the car: Speed cameras are widespread in Germany.

Stop and don't move on until you've looked around.

Cyclists must use this path

No stopping zone!



Give way to others.

Pedestraian crossing

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DRIVER'S LICENSE

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If you come to Germany with a foreign driver's license, you are generally permitted to drive vehicles in Germany for up to **six months** from the date you establish your residence here—and this applies to all vehicle classes listed on your license.

After this period expires, you must **exchange your driver's license for a German one**. This process must be completed in person at the relevant driver's license office. Sufficient knowledge of German or the assistance of a translator is required to submit the application correctly.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS
Class B Driver's License (Passenger Cars):
- Original foreign driver's license
- Passport and residence permit
- Confirmation of registration of residence in Germany
- Biometric passport photo
- Proof of first aid training (required for third-country nationals)

O Translation of the driver's license if not in German or English
O Fee of approx. €51.50

For Class C and CE driver's licenses (trucks and trailers), additionally:
O General medical examination report
O Ophthalmological examination report

for more information

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VEHICLE REGISTRATION & ANNUAL INSPECTION

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Vehicle Registration:
If you buy your own car, you must register it with the registration office. To do so, you will need the following, among other things:

- ID card or passport
- Certificate of residence
- Proof of insurance (eVB number)
- Vehicle documents

After registration, you will receive a German license plate.
Here is an **explanatory video:**

General Inspection:
In addition to registration, every car in Germany must pass the so-called General Inspection (HU) every two years. A sticker on your license plate indicates the date of the next HU. During this inspection, an inspector from an officially recognized inspection organization (e.g., DEKRA) or technical inspection agency (e.g., TÜV) checks the vehicle's roadworthiness as well as its exhaust and emissions performance. You are responsible for scheduling and paying for this inspection. If your vehicle has any defects, they must be repaired before you receive a new sticker for your car.
There is also an **explanatory video** on this topic:

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INSURANCE AND VEHICLE TAXES

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Insurance:

- Every car in Germany must have liability insurance. This insurance covers damages if you cause an accident or injure someone while driving. It does not cover repairs to your own car.
- If you want your own car to be covered for damages as well, you can purchase comprehensive insurance.
- With roadside assistance coverage, the provider covers the costs if, for example, you have a breakdown or an accident and therefore need a tow truck or a rental car. Membership in an automobile club is slightly more expensive than roadside assistance coverage.

Vehicle Tax

If you own a vehicle in Germany, you are required to pay the so-called vehicle tax (Kfz-Steuer). You must register for vehicle tax payment with the relevant registration authority as part of the vehicle registration process.

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CARSHARING

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Even if you don't own a car, you can still get around with ease. Many regions offer car-sharing programs or rental car services that allow you to book vehicles on short notice.

Typical process:

- Sign up with a provider (online or via app).
- Select a vehicle near you.
- Book for a specific time or distance.
- Unlock the car, usually via a smartphone app.

Car sharing can be especially convenient for:

- large shopping trips
- weekend getaways
- doctor's appointments or trips outside of bus hours

Note: Check with your company to see if there are any internal carpooling arrangements or shared vehicles available.

Our tip:
Car-sharing can be a good option, especially at first, until you decide whether you need your own car in the long run.

Example from the city of Emden:

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GROCERY SHOPPING

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FOOD: You can shop at **supermarkets** (e.g., REWE, Edeka, or Kaufland) or at **discount stores** (e.g., Aldi, Lidl, Netto, or Penny). Discount stores have lower prices but don't carry as many products as supermarkets.

Supermarkets are usually open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
BUT don't forget:
Everything is closed on Sundays!

DEPOSIT

In Germany, a deposit is charged on most bottles, cans, and beverage crates ("Kiste"). You usually pay an additional **€0.25 or €0.08**, which you get back when you return the empty bottle. There is also a deposit on the *Kiste*. Most supermarkets have reverse vending machines where you can return the bottles. The machine counts the bottles and prints out a deposit receipt.
Tap water is still safe and healthy to drink!

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DRUGSTORES

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You can find toiletries and make-up in supermarkets, but chemists have a much wider range of products.
Some chemists have their own apps that give you at least a 10% discount on all products.

Some chemists also offer a wide selection of non-perishable food.

POST

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Letters and parcels are usually delivered within three working days in Germany.

International shipments are available – prices depend on the destination country, size and weight.

In Germany, you can post letters in yellow postboxes and send parcels at post offices or to parcel collection points. Post offices are usually open until the evening on weekdays and until midday on Saturdays. Express delivery and parcel collection points offer flexible, fast delivery options – both domestically and internationally.

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SAVING AND HOUSEHOLD BUDGETING

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Keep track of your **finances:**
Draw up a budget with fixed income and expenditure, use apps such as Finanzguru or Mein Haushaltsbuch, and set money aside regularly for savings.

Shop using a shopping list, compare prices, and make the most of discounts and second-hand bargains.
You can find lots of things at low prices or even for free in charity shops or on *Kleinanzeigen*.

If you live with others, split the bills fairly and keep track of them – for example, using apps like Tricount or Splitwise. That way, everything stays fair.
Also, check your mobile phone, electricity and internet contracts regularly – switching providers can often save you a lot of money.
Comparison websites like Check24 or Verivox can help you find affordable deals.
Being mindful with money ensures financial security and reduces everyday stress.

GERMAN LANGUAGE COURSE

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A German language course is an important step towards integration and helps you feel more confident in everyday life, at work and when dealing with the authorities. There are many language courses available in Germany – both in person and online.

As you already know, speaking German is very important in Germany, as English isn't understood everywhere.

Here are some reliable online resources to help you improve your German:

- Goethe-Institut: https://www.goethe.de/
- AnkommenApp: https://www.ankommenapp.de/APP/DE/
- Welle: https://learngerman.dw.com/de
- VHS:https://www.vhs-lernportal.de/

Please speak to your support worker if you are looking for further resources in your area.

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INTEGREAT-APP

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The Integreat app helps you settle in and find your way around the Emsland region. It is also useful if you live in other regions!
It's free, multilingual and provides reliable information on all key areas of life:
language courses, health, work, education, leisure, childcare and legal matters.
Everything is easy to understand, tailored specifically to the Emsland region and available in 14 languages.
Nice to know: The app also works offline.
You can find it in the App Store, Google Play Store or as a web app.

👉 A Must-Have for your start!

Download Google Play Store

Download Apple App Store

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LEISURE & EXCURSIONS

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The Ems-Achse region offers a wide range of nature experiences, cultural highlights and exciting places to visit. Here are a few:

LEISURE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

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The regions of East Frisia, Emsland and the County of Bentheim offer plenty of leisure activities for children. Almost everywhere, there are well-equipped **playgrounds, sports clubs, swimming pools and youth centres** with regular activities. Football, gymnastics and horse-riding clubs are particularly popular, as they encourage physical activity and a sense of community.

Particularly useful are:

Websites of towns and local authorities (e.g. Emden, Leer, Aurich, Lingen, Meppen, Papenburg, Nordhorn, Bad Bentheim) – these feature calendars of events, holiday activities and lists of local clubs.

District websites – Aurich District, Leer District, Wittmund District (East Frisia) – Emsland District – Grafschaft Bentheim District. These provide information on youth centres, holiday programmes, and sports and cultural activities.

Tourism portals for regions such as East Frisia Tourism, Emsland Tourism or Grafschaft Bentheim Tourism – these offer tips on day-out destinations, wildlife parks, museums and nature experiences.

Local clubs and sports associations: Many clubs publish their activities on their own websites or social media channels.

Libraries and adult education centres often offer creative courses, readings or children's programmes and provide information about dates online.

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LEISURE & EXCURSIONS

USEFUL WEBSITES & APPS

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Free activities
Hiking, walking and cycling are free – and there are plenty of opportunities!
Free events and concerts take place all year round!

Tourist information
Every town and village provides information online – just Google the name plus 'Tourist Information'.

KOMOOT
An app – perfect for planning your next hike, walk or cycle ride

komoot

die_heimatabenteurer
A lovely Instagram account with lots of recommendations for the region.

For Free and Outside
Free Festivals in Deutschland

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CLUBS

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Many people in Germany do voluntary work – either in so-called clubs or in their local neighbourhood. Many are also happy to help out in everyday life if you ask them politely. A club is a great way to meet new people and get involved.

SPORTS CLUBS
You can join a club to play sports such as football, handball, table tennis, swimming and much more.

VOLUNTEERING
There are many opportunities to volunteer – for example, with the fire brigade, at concerts or cultural events.

PARISHES
In parishes, you can meet people, take part in events or get involved.

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RELIGION

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Germany is an open and diverse country where people of different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds live together.
Freedom of religion is enshrined in the Basic Law. This means:
You are free to practise your religion – or not to belong to any religion at all. People have different ways of life, opinions and religious beliefs.
This means:

- Respect other religions and cultures
- Be open to different perspectives

Religious life in the region
There are various religious communities and institutions in the region, for example:

- Christian churches (Catholic and Protestant)
- Muslim communities and mosques
- other religious communities

In addition to religious services, many communities also offer social activities, language courses or opportunities to meet others.

Our tip:
If your faith is important to you in your daily life, find out early on about suitable congregations or meeting places in your area. You'll often quickly make friends and find support in your new surroundings.

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INTERNATIONAL TEAM: EMS-ACHSE

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JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

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We want to continue supporting you even after you arrive in the region.
Through our WhatsApp channel, you'll receive regular updates on important topics, such as:

- Events and recreational activities
- Important information about government agencies or deadlines
- Tips on living and working in the region
- Opportunities for international professionals

Participation is free and non-binding. You can leave the channel at any time.

Simply scan the QR code or use the link below to join!