

# **Information for Master Students coming to and staying at the University of Bremen**

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# **Information for Foreign Students coming to and staying at the University of Bremen**

## **Before leaving your Home Country...**

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

Please make sure you have with you:

- a valid passport containing your student visa to Germany (NOT a tourist visa!)
- your notification of admission to the University of Bremen, or the letter of acceptance to the Master programme of your choice.
- proof of financial security, financial resources, or financial support (see chapter 6.)
- the original AND certified (!) English translations of your birth certificate, your secondary school diploma, your academic diploma(s) and transcripts, your academic degrees and awards, and your language certificates and diploma(s)

You may wish to bring with you:

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

Affordable housing is limited in the city of Bremen. Please consider applying for a room in a bed & breakfast establishment, because rooms in students' residences are basically not available (see chapter 4.2.).

## **1. Visa and Residence Permit**

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

- **Language course visa:** a language course visa cannot be changed into a student visa.
- **Student applicant visa:** a student applicant visa is valid for three months only. The German diplomatic representation in your home country issues this type of visa only to students who have not yet received notification of admission to the institution of higher education to which they have applied. After admission, the student applicant visa has to be changed into a student visa.
- **Student visa:** a student visa is valid for one year. This type is the only one valid for a course of study other than a short-term language course in Germany.

To obtain a student visa, please visit the German diplomatic representation in your home country. To apply you will have to present a valid passport, your letter of acceptance at the University of Bremen, and proof of your financial resources or support. Please contact the German diplomatic representation in your home country for more details concerning the application requirements and procedure.

## **2. General Information concerning Bremen and the University of Bremen**

Bremen is a lovely, interesting, historical and at the same time picturesque modern city. It definitely is worthwhile exploring it. We recommend that you pay a visit to the tourist information early during your time in Bremen, to learn about the most interesting attractions. To get around on campus you will find the campus map (see chapter 3.1.) useful; it is available for free from the Internet. Similarly, a proper map of the city of Bremen is very valuable to get around, to find places where there are flats to rent, the homes of new friends, doctors' surgeries etc. A street map may appear to you to be an unnecessary investment, however, it will turn out to be worthwhile and beneficial for your time in Bremen.

### **2.1. The City of Bremen**

The City of Bremen lies on the lower reaches of the River Weser in the middle of the North German Plain. Just a short distance downstream, the river estuary flows into the North Sea, passing the string of East Friesian Islands which enclose the Wattenmeer, a unique biosphere nature reserve and national park within the State of Lower Saxony. The capital of Lower Saxony, Hanover, the Hanseatic Town of Hamburg and the neighbouring Netherlands are all just an hour's train journey away. Nowadays, almost 550,000 people live in the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen which, together with its sister town of Bremerhaven, makes up the smallest state in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Bremen can look back over a long tradition of commerce and maritime trade, a proud history which has also left its mark on the town of today. The ports which have had such an impact on the development of the town made Bremen famous as a marketplace for goods from all over the world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Bremen and Bremerhaven were also important as a gateway for passenger traffic. All told, more than seven million people left the country via the ports of the two-town state. Bremerhaven became the largest port of departure on the European mainland for adventurous emigrants seeking a new life in the new lands. Whereas, until

recently, shipbuilding was of the utmost importance for the economic development of the State of Bremen, this has since been superseded by other industries and now it is the automotive branch and car manufacturing, the aviation industry, space technology and the foodstuffs industry which have been choosing Bremen as their preferred location.

To residents and visitors alike, the town is known as a town steeped in tradition, a green and friendly place, full of cultural activity and offering a high quality of life. The seven theatres located here regularly host opera, drama, music and dancing ensembles and Bremen is home to several smaller private theatre companies. The visitor will also find a large number of cultural collections of scientific repute, including **Schloß Schönebeck** in the suburb of Vegesack, which holds a collection documenting the maritime history of this part of the town; the **Focke Museum**, where many artifacts concerning the artistic and cultural history of Bremen are on display; and the **Übersee Museum**, a veritable showcase depicting various ways of life from Alaska to Africa, not to forget several cultural museums and art galleries. An absolute must is the latest attraction in Bremen: the **Universum** right on the campus. A museum focused on the themes: the human body, nature, and the cosmos, to challenge your senses: feel, hear, see and touch what life is all about.

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

Beside this abundance of cultural opportunities, Bremen can offer a lot by way of leisure time attractions. For instance, there are plenty of opportunities for long walks along the **Weser Dyke**, built alongside the river to protect the town from floods: Then there is the huge park known as the **Bürgerpark**, the gardens on the site of the old city wall called the **Wallanlagen**, or the magnificent botanical garden called the **Rhododendronpark**. Many people simply prefer to take it easy in some of the numerous cafés which can be found not only in the parks, but also in the city itself. The 'alternative' district, known in Bremen as the **Viertel**, literally vibrates with life, especially at night. There are pubs and restaurants to suit everyone and catering for all culinary desires, where you can spend a "gemütlichen" evening. The newly built promenade along the River Weser, called **Schlachte**, offers a wide range of international bars and restaurants. If you want to be more active, Bremen can offer almost every kind of **sporting activity**, from rowing in the Bürgerpark, to a serious workout in the fitness gym - something for everyone. Very near to the university you can bathe in the lake called the **Unisee**. The quality of the water in the River **Weser** is so good nowadays that one can bathe in the river, too.

### **Flea markets in Bremen**

Bremen is renowned for its flea markets. The Bremer 'Kajenmarkt' takes place from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month, May through October, on the promenade alongside the River Weser near the Bürgermeister-Smidt-Bridge. The flea market on the Bürgerweide can be visited every Sunday between 8.00 am and 3.00 pm. On Saturday mornings there is a private flea market on the Weser promenade near Wilhelm-Kaisen-Bridge.

### **Information on current events**

'Mix' is a publication which gives a monthly overview of all the cultural events taking place in Bremen. This brochure is obtainable at the end of each month free of charge and can be found in most pubs and bookshops. In addition there are the magazines 'Bremer' and 'Prinz', which can be bought at all newsagents.

This short description is by no means complete. In spite of its compactness and intimate atmosphere, Bremen has something to offer everyone. Come and see for yourself. You're in for a pleasant surprise.

## **2.2. The University of Bremen**

### **The History of the University**

Bremen is a fairly new university town. The university was opened in 1971. Like many other German universities which were set up in the seventies, Bremen regarded itself as a 'reform university'. People were searching for new ways of teaching and research. This reform concept - known as the 'Bremen Model' - has now matured into an attractive and widely accepted education concept whose distinguishing features include inter-disciplinary and practice-oriented project studies. Today over 22,000 students are enrolled at the university. It is also a place of research for 1,600 researchers.

The University of Bremen presents itself on the Internet (<http://www.uni-bremen.de/>), introducing the university facilities available to students and researchers on campus, and providing information concerning study options and ongoing research, among others. Please contact the university web site to search for specific and/or detailed information on your particular area of interest. To reach the English version, click 'Campus' on the top right menu and change to the English web pages. You will find, for example, the Master programmes on a list of faculties, institutes, and programmes, which is accessible through the main menu chapter 'Campus' and the submenu chapter 'Faculties & Institutes'.

## **2.3. The Faculties at the University of Bremen**

The university is subdivided into 12 faculties:

Faculty 1: Physics/Electrical Engineering

Faculty 2: Biology/Chemistry

Faculty 3: Mathematics/Computer Science

Faculty 4: Production Technology

Faculty 5: Geo Sciences

Faculty 6: Law

Faculty 7: Business Studies and Economics

Faculty 8: Social Sciences

Faculty 9: Cultural Studies

Faculty 10: Linguistics and Literary Studies

Faculty 11: Human and Health Sciences

Faculty 12: Educational Sciences and Social Sciences

The faculties offer courses and study programmes in over 50 subjects. Courses are components of the regular teaching programme within faculties, or may be part of special programmes, for example, the summer university, or international Master programmes designed to provide intense training on selected subjects. For detailed information on courses and programmes offered, please visit the Internet presentation of the University of Bremen ([www.uni-bremen.de](http://www.uni-bremen.de)) and find the web site of the faculty representing your special field of interest.

### 3. Campus facilities

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

#### 3.1. Campus map

Please consult the ‘**campus map**’ (<http://www.uni-bremen.de/uniplan>) to learn about the available facilities, and the codes and names assigned to buildings and administrative units. During your initial time at the University of Bremen you will find it useful to carry a hard copy of the campus map in your pocket.

#### 3.2. ‘Studentenwerk’ (Student Welfare Service)

On the campus map you will find the major catering facility, the ‘Mensa’, located pretty centrally on campus. The Mensa menu is published weekly on the Internet ([http://www.studentenwerk.bremen.de/files/main\\_info/essen/plaene/uniessen.htm](http://www.studentenwerk.bremen.de/files/main_info/essen/plaene/uniessen.htm)). Upon presentation of the student ID card, students may benefit from cheaper prices, available as a result of the subsidization policies of the city of Bremen. The Studentenwerk Bremen has introduced a ‘Mensa card’, a rechargeable chip card which facilitates the fast, cashless purchase of food and beverages. Mensa cards are available through an information booth in the Mensa building. Besides the Mensa, students will find, for example, small restaurants, a Chinese take-away and cafés on campus.

The ‘Studentenwerk’ is also responsible for student accommodation. Please refer to chapter 4.2.

Ms Glinka,  
Studentenwerk Bremen  
Wohnungs- & Wohnheimwesen  
Bibliothekstraße 3; (Studentenhaus, second floor)  
28359 Bremen Germany  
Phone: ++49 – 421 – 2201 – 116,  
[www.bremen.de/info/studentenwerk](http://www.bremen.de/info/studentenwerk),

Office hours: Monday 10:00 – 13:00  
Wednesday 14:00 – 17:30  
Thursday 10:00 – 13:00

### 3.3. ‘Zentrum für Netze (ZfN)’ (Computer Network Centre)

The *Computer Network Centre* (‘Zentrum für Netze’, ZfN on the campus map) provides access to computer facilities and the INTERNET for students, faculty and the administration of the University of Bremen free of charge. After matriculation you can obtain a free e-mail account through the ZfN. The ZfN is located on the 4th floor of the ‘Mehrzweckhochhaus’ building (MZH on the campus map), Bibliothekstrasse 1.

Office hours: Mon to Fri 10:00 to 12:00.

Phone: ++49 421 218 47 10

Fax ++49 421 218 28 83

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

([www.zfn.uni-Bremen.de/zfn/](http://www.zfn.uni-Bremen.de/zfn/)).

To apply, visit the ZfN facility and find the desk located in the hall, opposite room 4320. Application forms are available at the desk. Fill in the form and present your matriculation card at the desk, to receive a user ID and your new e-mail address at the University of Bremen. Students who do not possess their own computer may use public terminals and Internet access, available on campus in a number of buildings, among them the ZfN. Please ask for room numbers.

Currently the University of Bremen is establishing an 11 Mbit **WLAN (WireLess Access Network)**, which will allow students and university staff possessing a notebook with WLAN card to access the Internet from anywhere on campus. This network is operational in parts of the campus area and is progressing rapidly towards completion.

### 3.4. ‘Staats- und Universitäts Bibliothek (SuUB)’ (State and University library)

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

The main library is located in the Bibliothekstrasse (see campus map). Public hours:

Mon to Fri 9:00 to 22:00

Sat 10:00 to 18:00

Phone: ++49 421 218 2615

Fax: ++49 421 218 2614

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



To sign up for an SuUB user card, students have to fill in the application card, which is available at the front desk in the library, and present this together with their student ID, passport and the confirmation of registration (on white paper copy) which they obtained from the Residents' Registration Office ('Meldebestätigung', see chapter 5.2.). User cards are issued.

Mon, Tue, Thu and Fri 9:00 to 19:00

Wed 11:00 to 19:00

Sat 11:00 to 16:00.

Each Thursday at 9:00 a.m. the SuUB gives an introduction to the use of the library, on how to search the catalogues and how to borrow books and journals. These introductions are given in German. However, upon special request, appointments can be made for an English introduction to the SuUB. Users who wish to work in the library will find that the available facilities suit their needs. In addition, photocopiers are available to copy papers of interest for your homework. Copy cards are available at the front desk.

### **3.5. 'Allgemeiner Studierenden Ausschuss' (AStA) (General Students' Council)**

The 'Allgemeiner Studierenden Ausschuss' (AStA) is the official organization of students at German universities. Its mission is the representation of students in their relations with the university and the public, and to provide information to students concerning university affairs. Accordingly they chose the motto: by students for students. Through the AStA Internet site students may reach the **Autonomous International Student Association (AISA)** in Bremen, as well as the **Autonomous Feminist Section ('Autonomes Feministisches Referat' (FemRef))**, and a number of working groups dealing with different topics of general or special interest. The AStA offers support to students dealing with various kinds of every-day problems, such as information concerning the semester ticket, and advises students on social and financial matters. The AStA office issues international student ID cards (ISIC). It prints and presents information and announcements in pamphlets and on pin-boards on campus. AStA services include the comparatively cheap rental of bikes, cars and small pickups to students, and it can also help arrange accommodation, jobs, sports courses etc. At the AStA office students may make use of the office equipment, such as fax and photocopiers. Please visit the Internet pages of the AStA Bremen at <http://www.asta.uni-bremen.de> for more detailed information.

At the University of Bremen the AStA office is located in the student house or glass hall (StH on the campus map)

Bibliothekstrasse 3

'Studentenhaus, Glashalle, Zentralbereich A'

Office hours: Mon to Wed 10:00 to 16:00

Thu to Fri 10:00 to 14:00

Phone: ++49 421 218 2511

Fax ++49 421 218 2514

### **3.6. 'Zentrale Studienberatung' (Central Student Advice Office)**

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

A special booklet is available for physically challenged students, giving lots of useful tips and the names of contact persons. You can obtain this booklet from the Central Student Advice Office ('Zentrale Studienberatung') located on the ground floor of the main administration building. 'IG Handicap' is the action group for physically challenged and chronically ill students. For information call: ++49 421 218 7252

The representative for issues concerning the physically challenged is Professor Dr. Hans Joachim Breunig Phone: ++49 421 218 2266

Counselling is available from:

Central Student Advice Office Phone: ++49 421 218 2798

#### **Options for women**

There is a whole range of special options available for female students. More details of these and other facilities can be obtained from the Central Commission for Women's Issues. This is the main representative body for female students and researchers (Phone: ++49 421 218 2418 / 3413)

The contact address for matters pertaining to discrimination and violence against women is the 'Arbeitsstelle gegen sexuelle Diskriminierung und Gewalt am Ausbildungs- und Erwerbsarbeitsplatz', Phone: ++49 421 218 2474

#### **Useful Internet links**

DAAD - German Academic Exchange Service <http://www.daad.de>

GOETHE Institute, cultural affairs, language courses <http://www.goethe.de>

HRK Hochschulkompass, information about universities in Germany  
<http://www.hochschulkompass.hrk.de>

Virtual library catalogue <http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/kvk.html>

University calendar of UB <http://www.uni-bremen.de/veranstaltungen>

Map of University of Bremen <http://www.uni-bremen.de/uniplan>

## **4. Information for Incoming Students**

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

### **4.1. Learning German/learning English (individually)**

The University of Bremen (UB) is becoming more and more international, with its number of foreign students increasing every year. For this reason, foreign languages have become an integral component of studies at UB. The **Modern Languages Centre (Fremdsprachenzentrum, FZHB** on the campus map) in cooperation with the Goethe Institute, Bremen, Institut Français de Brême, Instituto Cervantes offers language courses for

Master students in German, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and many other languages. Intensive German courses are offered during the summertime (please have a look at “summer courses” at [http://www.io.uni-bremen.de/englishhome/summercourses\\_start.php3](http://www.io.uni-bremen.de/englishhome/summercourses_start.php3) ). Additionally, you can practice foreign languages by visiting “Selbstlernzentrum” (the self-learning center) which is located in the GW2, room A 3070. You have the chance to improve a foreign language in the center by reading newspapers or listening to radio or TV broadcasts in original language or by using electronic dictionaries or electronic learning programs. For more details check out: [http://www.fzhb.uni-bremen.de/selbstlernen/uni\\_bremen.html](http://www.fzhb.uni-bremen.de/selbstlernen/uni_bremen.html)

Opening hours are:

Mo - Thu: 9:00 to 20:00

Fri: 9:00 to 17:00

Further information is available at the Modern Languages Centre (Fremdsprachenzentrum)

Bibliothekstr. 1 28359 Bremen

Phone: ++49 421 218 7563 and ++49 421 218 9620

Fax: ++49 421 218 7563

<http://www.fzhb.uni-bremen.de>

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

## 4.2. Searching for an Apartment

It would be perfect if you could arrive in Bremen and a room or an apartment were awaiting you. Unfortunately, German public institutions of higher education generally do not offer student residences on campus. Students have to find a place to live by themselves. Since at the beginning of the term all the new students of Bremen University are looking for a nice and low-priced apartment to rent, the hunt for housing may turn out to be a quite exhausting activity. If you want to bring your family, we strongly advise you to find accommodation before you move your family to Bremen. Preferably you start looking for an apartment before you even leave home. The University of Bremen maintains a limited number of affordable, furnished rooms and apartments off campus. To obtain accommodation in one of these student residences, you have to apply directly to the ‘Studentenwerk’ using their application form. But do not count on this option.

These student houses are located within walking distance of the university campus and of students’ clubs. The latter promote social interaction with other students and an international flair. Apartments may be single or shared by up to eight persons, depending upon the number of rooms. Some residences offer accommodation for families, too. All rooms and apartments are furnished and include a small kitchen and bathroom; however, the ‘Studentenwerk’ does not provide bed linen, towels, tableware or cooking utensils. The rent is between 180 and 230 euro per month, including costs for heating, water and electricity.

To apply for accommodation at a student residence, you are required to use the official application form. Please download the form here (pdf Datei unterlegen). Fill in your personal information, and mark the appropriate check-boxes (tick-boxes) to indicate your preference for a particular type of accommodation and a specific house. Living outside of Germany, you are not available for a personal interview, limiting your choice to the houses listed in **points 3.6 to 3.9 of the application form**. Please check-mark (tick) the option "Ein-Zimmer-Appartment" (‘one-room apartment’) for each of these points and sign the form. Attach your passport photo to the application form. Then send it together with a copy of your proof of financial resources, and a

copy of your acceptance to your Master programme directly to Ms Glinka at the Student Welfare Service (see chapter 3.3. for the address). Once Ms Glinka has received your application form, she can try to arrange accommodation for the duration of your studies at the University of Bremen. **However, it is important to understand that currently available student residences offer accommodation for less than 10% of all students in Bremen . Therefore do not rely on your chance of obtaining one of these highly preferred rooms!!! Also note that you will only be informed if Ms Glinka succeeds. If you do not hear from her, you are still without accommodation.**

*Private student residences* also let furnished rooms at reasonable prices. The ‘Studentenwerk’ keeps a record of the addresses of private student residences . Please contact Ms Ferber for the most up-to-date availabilities. **You** have to contact the landlord yourself, obtain detailed information concerning the room and the rent, and arrange to see the accommodation.

Ms Ferber  
Zimmer- & Wohnungsvermittlung  
Bibliothekstraße 3  
28359 Bremen  
Germany  
Phone: ++49 421 2201 122  
Fax: ++49 421 2201 201  
E-mail: [bferber@studenten-werk.bremen.de](mailto:bferber@studenten-werk.bremen.de)  
Office hours Monday 10:00 – 13:00  
Wednesday 14:00 – 17:30  
Thursday 10:00 – 13:00

If you have to *look for a room after you have arrived in Bremen*, we strongly recommend that you arrive in Germany well before the semester begins. Once lectures have started, most rooms will be rented. The earlier you come before the semester starts, the better your chances are of finding a room. If you have no accommodation just before your arrival in Bremen, try to arrange for interim housing (list of short-term accommodation, [click here](#)).

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

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

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

### **Where to live?**

To get an impression of the city layout and where the university is situated you can browse the online city map at <http://www.bremen.de/stadtplan.html>. In order to start you have to fill in one address you look for. Try with Bibliothekstr 3. This is the address of the university centre. From here you can move around with the navigation buttons. The names in large bold type in the map denote different districts of the city (such as Horn or Riensberg).

Although the University of Bremen is organized as a campus (not common in Germany!) there are no accommodation facilities in the vicinity (except one overfilled dorm called 'Mensa!'). The nearest available facilities are situated in the neighbouring city districts of **Schwachhausen**, **Riensberg** and **Horn** at about 30min walking distance. Although only these districts are in walking distance of the university, they are not the places where students predominantly live. (Most of the Studentenwerk-run halls are situated in Horn.)

Along with your Student ID you will receive a "Semester Ticket" which allows you to use the public transport free of charge during the whole semester. This will cost you approximately 160 EUR. With your Semester Ticket you can also use trains for travelling around Bremen and up to 50km away. The university campus itself is easily reachable by different means of public transport (bus, tram, regional buses) practically from every single part of the city and its surroundings. Changing buses not more than twice, you can reach every single corner of Bremen. It enables students to be more flexible in their choice of accommodation. Local public transport is run by BSAG and functions rather well. BSAG offers an online timetable at their web page <http://www.bsag.de>, which helps you to find a route even between two addresses (including walking distances).

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

In the vicinity of the university is the town of Lilliental (which is not officially part of Bremen). Although it is an independent town, but very close to the district of Horn, it is well connected by public transport with the university and with the city centre. As in other parts of the city there are small private houses or buildings where flats of different sizes can be rented.

### **Rental terms and conditions:**

According to local regulations, on signing a contract for a flat, single room or room in a shared apartment you have to pay a guaranty deposit for the room which will be returned when you leave. The guaranty deposit amount is usually equal to two months' rent. The guaranty amount can be paid directly to the landlord or landlady or deposited on a special sub account at the bank.

All local banks offer a special service for such deposits (15 EUR fee).

The landlord/landlady him-/herself decides on who can move in. Usually the owner prefers to get to know the future resident before he/she decides to sign the contract. That means that you can start your flat search only after you have arrived here if you are looking for a private flat.

After signing the contract you will have to pay the rent for the first month immediately. Together with the rent you have to pay a guaranty deposit and, if applicable, other fees such as for estate agents. Also you have to consider the money needed to furnish the flat with at least one mattress. Altogether you will need money for up to five (5) months' rent prior to signing the contract.

**Obtaining the room:**

If you decide to try your luck with GEWOBA, the procedure for obtaining a flat is as follows: at first you have to fill in an enquiry form stating the desired size of the flat, where it should be, and how many persons will live there. Thereafter the GEWOBA will offer you a couple of flats to have a look at which will become vacant within one or two months. After you have decided that one of the flats is ok for you, the contract can be signed. According to the current regulations, the existing tenant has to leave the flat by the end of the current month. Thereafter you can move in. Most of the flats offered can also be seen at their web page at <http://www.gewoba.de> (unfortunately only in German). After you have arrived in Bremen, you can go directly to GEWOBA's office at Rembertiring 27 (opposite to main railway station) or to their shop in the city centre called GEWOBA inforum in the Obernstrasse (opposite to Karstadt department store). You can get in contact with inforum at

inforum Bremen  
Phone: + +49 421 36 72 500  
E-Mail [hagemeier@gewoba.de](mailto:hagemeier@gewoba.de)

If you think the northern part of Bremen is the right place to live in, you can get in contact with Gewosie. The procedure is similar if not identical to that of GEWOBA. By contrast, there is a good chance that GEWOSIE will have vacant apartments immediately. The address of Gewosie is

Gewosie eG  
Hammersbecker Straße 173  
28755 Bremen

They also run a website at <http://www.gewosie.de/> where you can browse current availabilities.

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

**Notice boards:** Student Services and the AStA (students' union; see chapter 3.6.) have installed large notice boards (so-called "Schwarze Bretter") at different locations on the university campus. Here people post notices searching for, or offering accommodation, selling items etc. Upon finding an interesting offer, copy the information and the phone number given on the notice, and contact the person for more details and for an appointment to see the place.

**Newspapers:** Once or twice a week local newspapers print advertisements for accommodation. Try to get hold of a copy as early as possible, check the offers, and phone potential landlords for more detailed information and to make an appointment to view the accommodation. Most landlords are interested in the duration of your stay in Germany, and request guarantees for rent payments (e.g. documentation of your scholarship). Before signing a rent contract, feel free to come to the office of your Master programme and let your coordinator check the conditions offered to you.

*The ABC of small ads:*

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

**Accommodation agencies:** Please be aware that if you find your apartment through an agent, this person is allowed to charge 1 to 2.5 times the monthly rent for his or her services. When dealing with a professional agent, you may wish to be accompanied by a German student who has previous experience with accommodation agencies. There are many ‘Immobilien’ agencies in Bremen, mostly interested in long term rental contracts. An agency that deals with short term rentals also is:

Home Company Bremen

Humboldt Straße 28

28203 Bremen

Phone: ++49 421 19445

Fax: ++49 421 703403

[www.HomeCompany.de](http://www.HomeCompany.de)

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

Please be aware that most rooms and apartments that are available on the free market are unfurnished. There are, however, several possibilities to obtain very cheap second-hand furniture. Again, the small ads in the local newspapers are useful sources. At the ‘Umtauschbörse’ you can even find stuff for free ([www.umsonstladen.de](http://www.umsonstladen.de)). For the transport of large items students may rent a van through the AStA car rental service (see chapter 3.6.).

### 4.3. Medical treatment and emergencies

**Doctors:** Apart from general medical practitioners, there is a huge number of specialist doctors (eye specialists, dermatologists etc.). Usually you will have to make an appointment to see a doctor. If you are in acute pain and you have to be treated immediately or, at least, on the same day, you can go to a doctor’s surgery without an appointment or at short notice. You will find the names and addresses of doctors, listed according to their field of specialization, in the telephone

directory. You have the right to choose your own doctor. However, you should ask friends and your tutor for recommendations. If you do not want to ask local people for advice you can turn to AStA (see chapter 3.6.) or the International Office (see chapter 3.2.). Also, as a student of an international Master's programme at the University of Bremen, you could check with your Master's programme office for English speaking doctors. If you have private health insurance and are not in acute pain we recommend contacting your insurance before undergoing major treatment and check how much you will have to contribute to the costs. If you go to the dentist and you get dentures, you will always have to pay a part of the costs yourself. You should always take your health insurance chip card and your identity card along to your doctor's appointments. If you are privately insured you will get an invoice from your doctor that you first of all need to pay. You then submit this invoice to your insurance company and the amount will be refunded.

**Practice/surgery charge:** Any person insured in a statutory health insurance aged 18 or over will be required to pay a practice/surgery charge of 10 Euros per quarter for visiting a general practitioner/family doctor, specialist doctor, dentist or psychotherapist. The practice/surgery charge does not need to be paid when the general practitioner/family doctor refers the patient to a specialist. No charge needs to be paid for preventive medical check-ups, vaccinations or the annual dental check-up.

**Medicines/drugs, dressing/bandaging, health aids:** persons insured in a statutory health insurance requiring prescriptions (medicines/drugs, dressing/bandages, health aids) will have to pay 10 % of the costs themselves. The minimum extra charge is 5 Euros, the maximum 10 Euros.

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

**Emergency services & emergency calls:** If you need urgent medical treatment at night or over the weekend you can either go to the outpatients' department at a hospital or ring the doctor on call. You will find the addresses of these doctors in the daily newspaper under the heading "Ärztlicher Notdienst". You can also ring any doctor's number; the answering machine will tell you the number of the doctor currently on call.

**Emergency call: 112** is the free-phone number to ring in order to get an ambulance, the fire brigade, the police or any other assistance in a real emergency. Do not dial this number for fun or trivial reasons. If you make an emergency call, state clearly what happened and where it happened and wait on the line for further questions.

#### **4.4. "Find your way through every day"**

This section includes miscellaneous topics which may be of interest for incoming students. Especially if you have spent most of your life in a country with a very different cultural background from the European culture, you may wish to spend some time and familiarize yourself with the mélange of topics presented below. You may find it useful to avoid unpleasant surprises when living in Germany.



### **Eating habits in Germany**

The classic German breakfast is hearty and comprised of bread, cheese, cold meats, jam, and coffee or tea. Traditionally, the main hot meal in Germany is lunch, eaten between 12 and 1 p.m.. As the name in German suggests, the evening meal or “Abendbrot” is essentially composed, once again, of bread and butter with cold meats and cheese. Traditionally it is served earlier than in many other countries, around 7 p.m.. However, these traditional habits are no longer observed by everyone. Lots of Germans eat different things for breakfast or nothing at all, only have a snack at lunchtime, or eat a hot meal sometime in the evening. Even though eating habits are becoming increasingly varied, before starting to eat people still wish each other “Guten Appetit”.

### **Groceries shopping**

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

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

Shops are open between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays and from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Saturdays. Some supermarkets stay open until 8 p.m. on weekdays and 4 p.m. on Saturdays. All shops are closed on Sundays except for those selling flowers and cakes, which are allowed to open for a few hours to ensure that everyone can have a piece of fresh cream cake for Sunday tea. What would Northern Germany be without its “kiosks”? Here, or at the next filling station, you will find “essential” items such as drinks, magazines, chocolate, and many other necessities of life till 11 p.m., including Sundays. Note that these shops are quite expensive.

### **Eating out**

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

*Tipping:* the prices quoted actually include 16% value added tax and a service charge.

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

### **Mail & telephone**

**Post offices:** You can recognize a post-office and letterbox by the yellow sign with a black post-horn. Within Europe you currently pay 0.55 euro for a standard letter up to 20 grams and 0.43 euro for a standard postcard. Overseas post is sent by airmail, a standard letter costs 1.53 euro. You can find out what other letters and parcels cost by asking at the post office or reading the brochures available there. The postal code ("Postleitzahl" = ZIP code) of even the smallest German village can be found in the directory of postal codes.

**Telephones - public call boxes:** You can ring any number you like in Germany and nearly every number abroad from any telephone booth. The international code starts with 00 then the country code. There are only very few countries for which you have to first ring 0010 to get the operator and ask to be connected. Costs for calls within Germany and abroad vary according to distance and time of day. You have the option to by-pass the normal tariff structure of German Telekom (Call by Call) by dialling a pre-code before dialling the actual number you wish to connect to. On the Internet at [www.billiger-telefonieren.de](http://www.billiger-telefonieren.de) you will find more information on how this works and which telecommunication companies offer the most competitive rates.

In Germany, coin-operated payphones have become fairly rare; in most public call boxes now, card-phones are installed. You can buy a telephone card at kiosks or the post-office. The Telekom's "Weltkarte" (T-card) or the post-bank cards with integrated telephone chips enable you to ring within Germany and to many other countries without the need for coins. In most public telephone boxes it is also possible to be called; there should be a sign stating the phone number of the booth you are using, and the phone should have a bell.

You find two different phone books in Germany. The regular phone book holds the phone numbers of individuals who wish to have their number made public. In the Yellow Pages you can find the numbers of doctors and other occupational groups. Emergency: 110 (police), fire brigade: 112 (emergency medical services and ambulance).

### **Waste separation**

Germans are very ecologically conscious. They enthusiastically separate waste paper, bottles, cans, corks, batteries, bio-degradable waste, and everything you can collect and recycle. Paper, glass, and cans are put in special containers. Many bottles and cans are returnable bottles/cans that are taken back to the shop where the initial deposit (10-50 cents) is refunded. Anything with a specific green-white symbol on it goes into the "yellow bags" to be recycled. In order to reduce the number of plastic bags used, many shops charge 10-20 cents for a plastic carrier bag.

## **4.5. A LITTLE GUIDE TO GERMAN HABITS AND OTHER PECULIARITIES**

### **Etiquette & attitudes**

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

### **Greeting and introducing people**

Students who know each other usually greet each other at all times of the day and night by saying “Hallo” or “Grüß dich”. They do not usually shake hands. Otherwise, it is polite and common to say “Guten Morgen” until about midday, “Guten Tag” until about 6 p.m. and “Guten Abend” later on. In Northern Germany many people use the simple greeting “Moin” all day long; the word is derived from the local dialect and stands for ‘Have a nice day’. You usually say “Auf Wiedersehen” if you leave; students just say “Tschüs”.

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

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

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

### **Dress code**

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

### **Punctuality**

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

### **Invitations**

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

### **Relations between the sexes**

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

*A general piece of advice:* dealing with the German authorities is not always easy (as it is with bureaucracy in many countries...). If civil servants send you from one place to another or are unfriendly, do not despair. Just stay calm and polite. And going to the next person presumably in charge you may say "Herr/Frau ... sent me to you" so you won't be blamed for ending up in a wrong office.

### **USEFUL INTERNET LINKS**

GOETHE Institute, cultural affairs, language courses <http://www.goethe.de> German Foreign Ministry <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de>

Trains, connections and prices <http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de>

Lufthansa, German airlines <http://www.lufthansa.de>

Deutsche Welle, international radio and TV schedule <http://www.dwelle.de>

Inter-Nationes, media and information about Germany <http://www.inter-nationes.de>

Telephone directory of Germany <http://www.telefonbuch.de>

Travelcenter, city maps and interactive routing <http://www.falk-online.de/travelcenter>

Accommodation, notice board and news about Bremen <http://www.bremen.de/> Link "Marktplatz"

Timetable of bus and tram network Bremen <http://www.bsag.de>

Cinema schedule Bremen <http://de.search.movies.yahoo.com>

Personal liability insurance <http://www.debeka.de>

Free furniture and clothes to give away <http://www.umsonstladen.de>

## **5. Registration**

There are quite a number of issues which you need to take care of within your first few days in Bremen. Since they are all interdependent, we recommend you follow the order below. Students accepted to one of the international Master's programmes at the University of Bremen are asked to check with the office of their particular Master's course to learn about possible deviations from the procedure described below, and for additional services offered to their new students.

During the first few days after your arrival in Bremen, you have to register at the Residents' Registration Office ('Meldebehörde'). For your convenience you will find a branch of the Residents' Registration Office (and of the Alien's registration office) on campus: the

'bremen\_service Universität' (bsu). The bsu office on university campus is located in Klagenfurter Str. Get off at tram stop "Universität Zentralbereich" and walk in the same direction as the tram. The bsu is located on your left hand side, just next to/underneath the university kindergarden.

**Office hours:** Tuesday 9:00 to 13:00

Wednesday 10:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 16:00

Thursday 9:00 to 13:00

You may wish to register during the Orientation Week, which usually is organized by the International Office (see chapter 3.2.) or by the office of your Master's programme before classes start. This way you could take advantage of the presence of a German tutor. Avoiding communication problems will help to make your visit to this office stress-free for you and for the officers. For further information about the bsu, please check out as well the following internet page: <http://www.bsu.uni-bremen.de>

## **5.1. Residents' Registration**

For registration you have to fill in a registration form and present your passport and visa. Registration forms are available from both the municipal authorities located in Bremen city centre and the office on campus. You can as well download the respective form as a Pdf-version from the following internet page: <http://www.bsu.uni-bremen.de/engl-formulare.html> You will have to fill in your own personal information and your new address in Bremen or your interim address, as applicable. In addition, the registration form requests the name and residence information of your new landlord or the renting organization/company. Make sure you have that information on hand when registering. Upon completion of your registration you will receive a confirmation of registration ('Meldebestätigung'), which is printed on very thin, white copy paper. Please keep this paper in a safe place. You will need it on different occasions, e.g. when applying for a library card (see chapter 3.5.). Please note that every time you change your place of residence you have to inform the Registration Office within the first week.

## **5.2. The Aliens' Registration Authority**

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

- your passport and visa
- your confirmation of registration ('Meldebestätigung')
- your notification of admission to the University of Bremen
- proof of financial resources or the letter documenting your scholarship award
- a passport photograph and 40 EUR to cover service charges.

## **5.3. Visa Renewal**

Your visa, which was issued by the German diplomatic representation in your home country, usually is valid for three months, and has the status of a temporary residence permit. Before these three months have elapsed you will have to extend the visa for 12 or 24 months. If your initial visa is valid for the whole time of your study in Bremen, you simply have to report to the authority at the beginning of your stay. The Aliens' Registration Authority is responsible for renewing visas, and may amend your visa if you are accepted to switch to a different study programme. If you move to a different town you will have to cancel your registration with the Aliens' Registration Authority in the town you are leaving, and re-register with the office in your new town of residence. If you move within the same city, simply update your resident's registration within a week.

### **Important moving information**

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

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

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

## **5.4. Opening a Bank Account**

In Germany all banks, even private ones, are subject to state control. The major banks are the Commerzbank, the Deutsche Bank, and the Dresdner Bank, as well as the Sparkasse Bremen, and the Postbank. Opening times differ from one bank to another but are usually weekdays from 9:00 to 16:00 and to 18:00 on Thursdays. They often shut at lunchtime from 12:00 or 13:00 to 14:30.

In order to open a bank account you need to present a valid passport. Non-EU citizens have to produce a valid visa, or a residence permit that will last at least 6 months longer. Some banks might ask for your confirmation of registration, too (see chapter 5.1). You may wish to open a 'Giro-Konto' (current or checking account), which allows money deposits and withdrawals, as well as money transfer transactions and automated deduction of regular payments such as rent and insurance contributions. Please note that a 'Giro' account does not pay interest on your money. In addition you may consider opening a savings account.

Many banks offer bank accounts for students which are free of service charges. Compare the different offers before opening the account. Present your student card ('Immatrikulationsbescheinigung') to prove your status when opening your bank account. If at the time you cannot prove your enrolment, just sign up as a regular client. You may change your status upon availability of your student card. Monthly the bank charges basic service fees from regular clients, and additional fees for every financial transaction.

If you wish to use cash dispensers (automatic teller machines - ATMs), sign up for an ECcard

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

## **5.5. Health Insurance**

To enrol at the University of Bremen you need valid health insurance. In Germany you may choose between several health insurance providers. When you sign up with the provider of your choice, they immediately issue the certificate of insurance that is required at the registrar's office. As a member of a recognized foreign health insurance provider, you are exempt from the obligatory German health insurance requirements. Please check with your home health insurance provider. Only a few companies from some EU countries are recognized in Germany. Whichever system you use, for registration you have to produce a confirmation letter or certificate which indicates the recognized identification number of your health insurance provider.

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

### ***Eligibility for health insurance for students:***

In order to be insured with a statutory health insurance with students status the following conditions must be met:

- You have not reached the 14th semester (in one field of study) and/or
- You have not reached the age of 30. If you do **not** meet these requirements, you cannot be insured by statutory health insurance. In this case you have to sign up with a private health insurance company.

### ***Contributions:***

For the winter semester of 2003 the monthly health insurance contribution amounts to € 55,00 including the nursing care insurance.

## **5.6. Enrolment Requirements and Semester Contribution**

To get an idea about the enrolment procedure please read the following information. Note that some Master programmes handle it differently. So take a look on the web side of your particular programme to find out how to enrol. Or contact your Master's programme office.

To enrol at the University of Bremen you have to appear in person at the registrar's office for international students, located in room 0090 on the ground floor of the administration building ('VWG' on the campus map; see chapter 3.1.).

Opening hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9:00 to 13:00 .

Wednesday 14:00 to 16:00

**International students who wish to enrol for one of the international Master's programmes**

**at the University of Bremen have to register with Mr Plöger in room 0090 of the VWG building.**

At the registrar's office you will receive an English version of the admission form, together with an invoice which you have to use for the transfer of the mandatory semester contribution (see below) to the University's account. To enrol you have to present the completed application form, your passport, the notification of admission to your study programme, your original education certificates together with the certified English translations, your health insurance certificate, or the proof of exemption (see chapter 5.5.), and two passport photographs. The registrar's office will transfer your information to your new, personal file. However, your application will be considered 'complete' only after the mandatory semester contribution has been transferred. At that point your enrolment documents (e.g. student ID card, public transport card) are printed automatically, and mailed to the address you provided on the application form. If you used an interim address for registration, make sure to inform the registrar's office immediately about any change of address. They request students to give notice about a change of address using the green form 'Adressenänderung', which is available at the registrar's office.

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

### **Semester contribution**

The semester contribution is mandatory for students of the University of Bremen. Currently the semester contribution amounts to exactly 165.50 euros (January 2005). Of this sum, 66 euros pay for the student's **semester ticket** (see below), which is issued by the local public transport association. The General Students' Board (i.e. the 'Allgemeine Studierenden-Ausschuss'; AStA; see chapter 3.6.) receive 9.50 euros of the semester contribution, 40 euros will be transferred to the Student Welfare Service ('Studentenwerk'; see chapter 3.3.) of the University of Bremen and the remaining 50 euros is for administration fee.

For the payment of the semester contribution students have to use the pre-printed invoice slip ('Überweisung/Zahlschein'). This form is specific to the German banking system and not valid in other countries. To transfer the semester contribution, use your own, newly opened German bank account (see chapter 5.4.). Among other information, the invoice slip bears a 12-digit number, which is essential in the automated payment and matriculation process. If your payment does not include this number, the transfer can not be identified, consequently your enrolment procedure will be put on hold. The University of Bremen does not accept cash payment of the semester contribution. If you prefer electronic payment, or as a re-registering student your personal, pre-printed invoice slip is not at hand, make sure that the following information complements your money transfer:

**Receiver ('Empfänger'):** Landeshauptkasse Bremen **Account number (Konto-Nummer):** 1070 500 997 **Credit institution ('Kreditinstitut'):** Bremer Landesbank **Bank code:** 290 500 00



**Purpose ('Verwendungszweck'):** \_\_\_\_\_ (enter the 12 digit number described above)

Re-registering students find the first five digits (indicating the university code, the semester and the year) on the Internet at <http://www.sfs.uni-bremen.de/ueberweisung.htm>, and complete the 12-digit number using their own 7-digit matriculation number.

### **The 'semester ticket':**

The semester ticket is issued through the 'Verkehrsverbund Bremen Niedersachsen' (VBN), a collaboration between the 'Bremer Strassenbahn AG' (BSAG), the rail company 'Deutsche Bahn' (DB), and numerous local public transport companies. The semester ticket grants access to the VBN services and the public transport network. Using the semester ticket students may travel without extra costs within the city of Bremen and the immediate surroundings of the city. Also, students may travel quite a distance into the region of Lower Saxony, e.g. from Bremen to Hamburg and back. However, they are restricted in their choice of connections. Students have to pay additional fares if they are using the modern, fast methods of transport like the ICE, or on some specific routes and connections that are excluded from the semester ticket. For information concerning routes, feasible connections, travel schedules, additional fares, please visit the appropriate Internet sites: [www.bsag.de](http://www.bsag.de); [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de); [www.vbn.de](http://www.vbn.de); or consult the Internet presence of the AstA Bremen (<http://www.asta.uni-bremen.de>; also see chapter 3.6.). The AstA also provides a rough map showing the validity range of the semester ticket (<http://www.asta.uni-bremen.de/dienste/semneu.htm>).

## **5.7. General Liability Insurance**

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

An insurance against those kind of claims is not really expensive. That is why we strongly advise you to get yourself protected. To give you an idea, one of the low-price insurance policies is the 'Debeka'. They offer to insure students at 3.04 euros per month, covering up to 4 million euros of the costs incurred when you accidentally caused injury to persons and damage to property. However, with this policy you have to pay the first 250 euros of any claim. Without such an excess, your option would be a payment of 5.89 euros per month for cover of 50 million euros. Please contact one of the many insurance companies for detailed information. Since they offer quite a variety of options to clients, please shop around for the option most suitable to you, and sign up. But, please, take notice of our serious advice: make sure that you know and understand the policy you are going to sign! You may look for help at the International Office or at the office of your Master's programme.

## **6. Money and Finances**

## **Cash & Currency**

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

## **Money transfer**

In Germany, in contrast to many other countries, it is not common to send cheques to people by regular mail (e.g. sending the rent cheque to your landlord)! There are various ways of conducting monetary transactions: A *transfer form* enables you to move money from your account to another. *Standing order*: you empower the bank to transfer a set sum (such as the rent) regularly and automatically on an agreed date (e.g. the first of the month); this is recommended for paying your rent. *Direct debit*: this is a practical method of payment if you have recurring sums that vary in size (such as the telephone bill). A direct debit given to the recipient empowers him to deduct the respective amounts from your account. You don't have to worry about abuse: you can always reclaim wrongly transferred amounts, cancel the authorization and stop the direct debit. *Eurocheques*: with Eurocheques you can pay anywhere in Europe in the currency of the respective country. However, their use has now largely been replaced by the use of charge cards (Eurocheque cards or credit cards). In order to use Eurocheques you have to apply for a Eurocheque (EC) card. A PIN-number (Personal Identification Number) issued with this card also enables you to withdraw money at cash points or pay directly with this card. In case of loss, the card can be blocked by a phone call 24 hours a day. The Eurocheque card should not be confused with the Eurocard, which is a globally valid credit card. *Overdraft facilities/credit cards*: overdraft facilities allow you to overdraw your account to a certain agreed limit. However, interest on overdrafts is not exactly modest. If you need a credit card your bank will give you advice. *Home banking*: many banks now offer their clients the opportunity to carry out their personal monetary transactions from their own computer. Ask the bank for advice but bear in mind that your personal data are protected much better if you go to the bank in person. There have been a number of security breaches with online-banking recently. Also, many home banking web sites are available only in German.

## **6.1. Cost of Living**

Many foreign students coming to Germany do not possess scholarships. They have to present proof that they can finance the entire period of their stay in Germany (so-called proof of financial resources) to a German diplomatic representation and to the Aliens' Registration Authority. Be aware that you will incur a lot of expenses during the first few days of your stay in Bremen: a deposit on accommodation, the first instalment of the rent, health insurance contributions, semester contribution, enrolment etc. We recommend you reserve at least 500 EURO for these initial expenses. You are allowed to import as much foreign currency into Germany as you wish, but you should check on currency regulations in your own country.

At present you need about 700 EURO per month to lead a modest life:

- Accommodation: 240 EURO per month on average. Deposit: one to two months' rent (returned on expiry of the lease – if there is no cause for complaint).
- Medical insurance: approximately 50 EURO per month.
- Lunch at the University: 3 EURO each day, on average.
- The amount required for other expenses (food, books, stationery, travel, clothes, sport/leisure etc.) vary from person to person, but are unlikely to be less than 200 EURO per month.
- Tuition fees: students at Bremen University are required to pay a small contribution for university services (approx. 110 EURO per semester).
- An additional budget of approximately 20 EURO per month should be calculated to cover costs of excursions, books and other necessary study materials or copy cards.

## 6.2. Working at the University of Bremen

A student visa usually allows students to work during 90 days of each year, as long as their study will not be affected negatively through these extra activities. Student assistantships are available at most faculties, some may even be offered in the administration section. These jobs are either advertised on pin-boards within the faculty, lecturers may choose to announce the availability of an assistantship at their lectures, or you may learn about a job option through personal contacts (e.g. friends, faculty members, tutor). Thus you have to be alert and present at your faculty if you are looking for a student assistantship. The best way is to learn about the field of study of individual research groups, and then contact the head of the group of your research interest directly for an informal interview, in which you discuss your career plans and your wish to work as a student assistant in this research group.

## 6.3. Finding Work through the Employment Office (Arbeitsamt)

The local Employment Office ('Arbeitsamt') will provide assistance in finding a casual or temporary job for students. If you need to earn a little extra money, contact this address:

### **Agentur für Arbeit Bremen**

Jobvermittlung  
Dovntorsteinweg 48  
28195 BREMEN

### **opening hours:**

Monday und Tuesday 8:00. to 17:00  
Wednesday 8:00 to 16:00  
Thursday 8:00 to 18:00 and  
Friday 8:00 to 14:00

Phone: ++49 421 178 - 2241/-2242

Fax: (0421) 178 - 1557

E-Mail: [bremen.team241@arbeitsamt.de](mailto:bremen.team241@arbeitsamt.de)

or visit the **Career Centre** on campus, which belongs to the Employment Office. The Career Centre is located on the boulevard of the university (opposite the Mensa).

### **Career Center Universität Bremen**

ZB(campus center), C 1040  
Bibliothekstr. 1  
28359 Bremen  
Tel.: +49 421 218-82 61

### **office hours:**

Fax.: +49 421 218-90 82  
E-Mail: [pdroste@uni-bremen.de](mailto:pdroste@uni-bremen.de)  
[www.careercenter.uni-bremen.de/](http://www.careercenter.uni-bremen.de/)

Monday till Thursday  
9:00 to 12:00 and  
13:00 to 15:30

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

## 6.4. Scholarships, Grants and Stipends

The University of Bremen is generally not in a position to offer scholarships or stipends to students. You have to find a way to finance your study through different sources before coming to Germany. Below you will find a list of organizations that offer stipends, grants and fellowships to students. Conditions vary widely among the different options, thus you have to find the one most suitable to your personal situation and apply directly to the organization, acknowledging the requests for information and deadlines they set. This list is by no means complete, thus we strongly recommend you are inventive and look for other options that suit your needs.

### SCHOLARSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

#### **Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung**

Jean-Paul-Straße 12, D - 53173 Bonn  
Phone 0049-228-833-0, Fax 0049-228-833-212,  
E-mail [select@avh.de](mailto:select@avh.de), Internet <http://www.avh.de>

#### **Alfred Krupp von Bohlen & Halbach-Stiftung**

Hügel 15, D - 45133 Essen Phone 0049-201-188-4857, Fax 0049-201-412-587

#### **Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft e.V.**

Postfach 26 01 20, D - 50514 Köln Phone 0049-221-2098-0/117, Fax 0049-221-2098111,  
Internet <http://www.inwent.org/>

#### **Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD)**

Kennedyallee 50, D – 53175 Bonn Phone 0049-228-882-0, Fax 0049-228-882-444,  
Internet <http://www.daad.de>

**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung**, Abteilung Studienförderung Godesberger Allee 149, D - 53170 Bonn  
Phone 0049-228-883-0, Fax 0049-228-883-697

#### **Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung**, Wissenschaftliche Dienste und Begabtenförderung

Königswinterer Straße 409, D - 53639 Königswinter Phone 0049-2223-701-0 or 701-349,  
Fax 0049-2223-701-222

#### **Fritz Thyssen Stiftung**

Am Römerturm 3, D - 50667 Köln Phone 0049-221-2575051, Fax 0049-221-2575092

#### **Fulbright-Kommission**

Theaterplatz 1 A, D - 53177 Bonn Phone 0049-228-93569-0, Fax 0049-228-363130,  
E-mail [fulkom@uni-bonn.de](mailto:fulkom@uni-bonn.de)

#### **Gottlieb Daimler- und Karl Benz-Stiftung**

Dr.-Carl-Benz-Platz 2, D - 68526 Ladenburg Phone 0049-6203-15924, Fax 0049-6203-16624,  
E-mail [GD-KB-Stiftung@t-online.de](mailto:GD-KB-Stiftung@t-online.de)

#### **Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, Förderungswerk**

Lazarettstraße 33, Postfach 190846, D - 80636 München Phone 0049-89-1258-0,  
Fax 0049-89-1258-403,

Internet <http://www.hanns-seidel-stiftung.de>

**Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V., Studienwerk**

Rosenthalerstraße 40/41, D - 10178 Berlin Fax 0049-30-28534-109,

Internet <http://www.boell.de>

**Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst**

Hausdorffstraße 151, D - 53129 Bonn Phone 0049-228-91758-0, Fax 0049-228-91758-58

**Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (KAS)**

Rathausallee 12, D - 53757 Sankt Augustin Phone 0049-2241-246-320,

Internet <http://www.kas.de>

**Deutsches Nationalkomitee des Lutherischen Weltbundes,**

Stipendienreferat Diemershaldenstraße 45, D - 70184 Stuttgart Phone 0049-711-2159362,

**Otto Benecke-Stiftung e.V.**

Kennedyallee 105-107, D - 53175 Bonn Phone 0049-228-8163-0, Fax 0049-228-8163-400

**Ökumenisches Studienwerk e.V.**

Girondelle 80, D - 44799 Bochum

Phone 0049-234-93882-0

**Studienstiftung des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin**

Preußischer Landtag, D - 10111 Berlin

**Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft (SOG)**

Widenmayerstraße 49, D - 80538 München Phone

0049-89-212154-0, Fax 0049-89-2289469

**Union der deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften**

Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 2, D - 55131 Mainz Phone 0049-6131-57 89 46,

Fax 0049-6131-513 16,

E-mail [konfakad@mail.uni-mainz.de](mailto:konfakad@mail.uni-mainz.de)

**Volkswagen-Stiftung**

Kastanienallee 35, D - 30519 Hannover Fax 0049-511-8381-0,

E-mail [mail@volkswagen-stiftung.de](mailto:mail@volkswagen-stiftung.de),

Internet <http://www.volkswagen-stiftung.de>

**World University Service (WUS), Deutsches Komitee e.V.**

Goebenstraße 35, D - 65195 Wiesbaden Phone 0049-611-446648, Fax 0049-611-446489,

E-mail [WUSGERMANY@aol.com](mailto:WUSGERMANY@aol.com)

## 7. Possibilities for accomodation:

Oekumenisches Wohnheim (ecumenical student house), Vahrer Str. 249, 28329 Bremen, Phone: 46 90 18, furnished rooms with communal kitchen and bathroom on each floor 140.00 € and deposit 250.00 euro.

## 8. Private accomodation, furnished

Bed & breakfast, Phone: 5 36 07 71 (estate agent's fee), 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Sabine Schmidt, Phone: 34 80 30 (estate agent's fee), 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Oliver Caspers, rooms to let, Hastedter Osterdeich 204, Bremen, furnished rooms to let 12.50 € per person/day + VAT, estate agent's fee, Phone: 44 04 88 or mobile 0171 380 37 70, Fax:

44 89 45

Home Company (agency for arranging shared accommodation, estate agent's fee), 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Humboldtstr. 28, 28203 Bremen, Tel. 1 94 45

Mitwohnbüro Körnerwall 1 (estate agent's fee), 28203 Bremen, Phone: 7 70 67  
DJH Jugendgästehaus Bremen, Kalkstr. 6, 28195 Bremen, Phone: 17 13 69 + Fax: 17 11 02,  
162 beds, 35 rooms with 4-6 beds + 7 double rooms, breakfast incl., from 15.00 €

Seemannsheim Bremen, Jippen 1, 28195 Bremen, Phone: 16 94 40, per person/night 16.00 €

(youth hostel membership card is needed)

Bremer Touristik Zentrale, (Tourist Centre) Verkehrsverein, Findorffstr. 105, 28215 Bremen  
Phone: 3 08 00-0 or Fax: 3 08 00-30

Hotel Weltevreden, Am Dobben 62, single rooms from 30.00 € and double rooms from 50,00

€, Phone: 7 80 15

Hotel garni (Walter) Buntentorsteinweg, single rooms from 22.50 € to 35.00 € and double  
rooms from 38.00 € to 55.00 €, Phone: 55 80 27 /55 80 28.

Pension Weidmann, Am Schwarzen Meer, single rooms from 20.00 € and double rooms from

1. 40.00 €, breakfast excl., Phone: 4 98 44 55 Pension Haus Neustadt, Graudenzer Str., single  
rooms from 35.00 € and double rooms from

2. 55.00 € breakfast incl., Phone: 55 17 49

Campingplatz (camping site) Am Stadtwaldsee (Unisee), Phone: 21 20 02