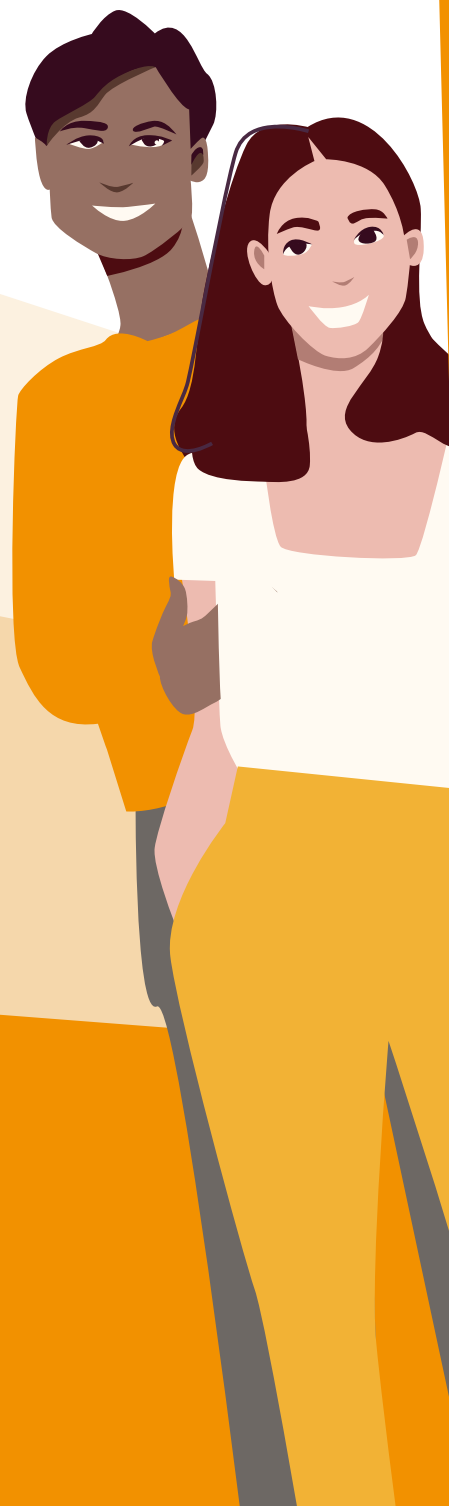


WELCOME GUIDE

of
Ostbayerische Technische
Hochschule Amberg-Weiden



Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule
Amberg-Weiden

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Disclaimer: While we try to keep the information in this brochure up to date, please be informed that it is for information and orientation purposes only. Please stay informed by checking the official sources of information (relevant authorities and/or relevant OTH Amberg-Weiden departments) for any updates and legally binding information.

WELCOME NOTES

Dear incoming students,

Congratulations on your admission to OTH Amberg-Weiden, a young up-and-coming and innovative university of applied sciences in the beautiful region of Bavaria! We are known for our high-quality academic programmes, extensive research projects and practical training opportunities. Our University specialises in offering technical, engineering and business undergraduate and graduate programmes with a particular focus on energy and resource technology, information and communication technology, the health industry, medical technology and business: all topics that are shaping the future of economies worldwide.

In addition to its strong academic programmes, OTH Amberg-Weiden is also known for its applied research initiatives. The University has a long-standing tradition of collaboration with industry as is committed to finding solutions to real-world problems through its research. From energy technology to artificial intelligence, from business informatics to medical technology and, of course, automotive engineering – we conduct research in numerous fields on our campuses and in our institutes.

As a University with strong ties to the cities of Amberg and Weiden and to the region, we have developed a large network of industrial partners, one that abounds in global players that push the local and regional export quota and the industrial density (measured in industrial employees per 1,000 inhabitants) above those of the Upper Palatinate and the wider Bavarian region. In educating the future workforce of these companies (80% of our graduates enter the regional workforce), our University continuously fulfils its research mission in the best possible way and brings our students together with top global technology and business players.

With your admission to OTH Amberg-Weiden, you are joining our success story and starting to write your own. Be assured that we will be there to support you in this process. On behalf of OTH Amberg-Weiden I wish you every success as you work towards realising your academic and professional dreams!

Best regards,

Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Ulrich Müller
Vice President for International Affairs



Welcome to OTH Amberg-Weiden!

We are happy that you chose to join our university in the beautiful cities of Amberg and Weiden!

As an international student, you are about to embark on a journey filled with new opportunities, challenges, and new experiences. At the same time moving to a new country and navigating all the associated administrative procedures can be overwhelming.

For this reason, we have put together this brochure with practical information and resources to make your arrival to Germany easier, including information on how to find an accommodation, health insurance, opening a bank account, other administrative issues, orientation weeks and much more. This brochure is your go-to guide for your start into your new future.

We are confident that with the information and resources provided in this guide you will be well on your way to making the most of your time here at OTH Amberg-Weiden.

Good luck!

With best wishes,

Dr. Annabelle Wolff

Director of the International Office



To dos at a glance – A checklist



**Congratulations for being accepted at OTH Amberg-Weiden!
Here is a checklist to guide you through your prep to finalise your enrolment, get to Germany and navigate your first weeks on campus.**

After receiving your letter of acceptance (see Section 4):

- Provide all documents required in the application process (as instructed in PRIMUSS)
- Upload a passport photo (for your student ID)
- Choose a health insurance (see Section 3)
- Pay the student union fee and service fee, if applicable (see Section 4)
- Set up your blocked account and apply for visa, if applicable (see Section 2)

After confirming your enrolment, before arriving to Germany:

- Finalise visa application
- Start your search for accommodation (see Section 5)

After your arrival to Germany:

- Finalise your search for accommodation and update your address in PRIMUSS
- Register with the Residents' Office & get a residence permit, if applicable (see Section 6)
- Open a bank account (see Section 7)
- Get the semester ticket (see Section 8)
- Pay the broadcasting service fee (see Section 9)
- Make sure that you attend the Freshman week (see Section 10)

Good to know for your studies:

- Regularly check your @oth-aw.de Email address for important instructions
- You may join the Buddy Programme of the International Students' Club (see Section 11)
- Get information about your studies (see Section 12)
- In case you get sick (see Section 13)
- Legal and psychological counselling (see Sections 14 and 15)
- Resources for improving your German (see Section 16)
- Leaving Amberg/Weiden or Germany (see Section 17)

Good luck!

PREPARING YOUR STAY AT OTH AMBERG-WEIDEN

Welcome to OTH Amberg-Weiden! This overview will help you to prepare your arrival to Germany. For further details, please read our Welcome Guide carefully.

A VISA

- Check whether or not you need a visa for studying in Germany
- If you do need a visa, check the necessary documents and steps and book an appointment as early as possible
- Do not forget the so-called Blocked Account



> See SECTION 2



B HEALTH INSURANCE

- Is a must document in order to be enrolled as a student
- Different rules apply, depending on your nationality and age
- Consider travel health insurance if you wish to travel outside Germany AND a liability insurance for your stay here

> See SECTION 3

C ENROLMENT

- To be enrolled as a student you need to provide all necessary documentation, pay the necessary fees and provide proof of health insurance coverage
 - You may only get your student ID once you arrive on campus
- > See SECTION 4



D ACCOMODATION

- The university can help with information and links, but does not provide or book accommodation for students
 - Only a limited number of rooms are available in student dormitories
 - Start looking for accommodation as soon as possible since places are limited
- > See SECTION 5

E RESIDENCE REGISTRATION & RESIDENCE PERMIT

- Residence registration:
 - Mandatory for all
 - Within two weeks of your arrival in Germany
 - Make an appointment at the Residents' Registration Office
 - Documents : passport, filled registration form, visa (if applicable), a form from your landlord ("Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung")
- Residence permit:
 - Only for non-EU, non-EEA, non-Swiss citizens
 - Make an appointment at the Foreigners' Registration Office
 - The documents required and timelines vary so check with the local office



> See SECTION 6

QUESTIONS ?

Check out the contents of this Welcome Guide for more details on the above and for information on



Transportation



Banking



Other fees



Orientation Weeks & Student Affairs



ISC & Buddy Programme

BEFORE YOUR ARRIVAL IN GERMANY

1. Start of semester and other important dates

The summer semester always starts on 15th March and the winter semester always starts on 1st October. Lectures may start a few days later if these days fall on a weekend or holiday. Any updates to this information can be found on the website: www.oth-aw.de/en/studies/getting-started/university-formalities/lecture-examination-and-lecture-free-periods/

2. Visa

Whether you need a visa for Germany depends on where you come from and how long you plan to stay here. For more information about visa requirements, contact the German Embassy or German Consulate in your home country (www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/about-us/auslandsvertretungen/deutsche-auslandsvertretungen)

The information below is non-binding and may change at any time.

2.1. International students from the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland

If you come from the European Union, the European Economic Area or Switzerland you do not need a visa or other documentation to enter Germany and study here. However, upon your arrival in Germany, you are required to register with the local Residents' Registration Office (see Subsection "6.1. Registration with the Residents' Office" below). This also applies, under certain conditions, to students from other countries who already have a residence permit for studying in another EU country. However, it is essential that you inform yourself about this individually and find further information in the flyer EU-wide study and research from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

2.2. International students from countries with no visa requirement

International students from certain countries do not require a visa to enter Germany. Please consult the website of the Federal Foreign Office (www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/-/231148) to find out whether your home country is one of those without a visa requirement for entering.

Currently you may enter Germany without a visa for a visit of up to 90 days if you are a citizen of the following countries (last updated December 2023): Andorra, Australia, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Monaco, San Marino, South Korea, UK, USA. However, you are required to register with the Residents' Registration Office (see Subsection "6.1. Registration with the Residents' Office" below). Moreover, if you wish to study in Germany for more than three months, you are required to apply for a residence permit in Germany (see Subsection "6.2. Residence permit for non-EU citizens" below). We recommend that you consult the German diplomatic mission in your home country (www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/-/231148) in good time before your departure, because special regulations may apply - for example, if you want to work in Germany directly after your studies. You may also need to provide other documents or fulfil other prerequisites for your entry.

2.3. International students from countries with a visa requirement

All students from other countries require a visa. That means that you must apply for a visa in your home country. Please apply for your visa in good time, as it may take several months to be issued.

Visit the website of the German Federal Foreign Office for the latest visa requirements for all countries: www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/-/231148
You can also find an overview of the steps to enter Germany at: www.internationale-studieren.de/en/prepare-your-studies/entry-into-germany

Important

Please note that, in order to obtain a visa to study in Germany, you must be able to prove that you can finance your studies. The document you need for this is called a “Finanzierungsnachweis”, or proof of financial resources. In most cases, applicants have to prove that they have a minimum of 11,208.00 Euros (as of July 2023) at their disposal for one year, usually in what is called a “blocked account” (“Sperrkonto”). This amount of money is called „Regelbedarf“, which means it is the amount of money that is estimated to be needed by a student to live in Germany for one year.

Please check this and all other specific requirements for your country by contacting the German embassy or consulate in your home country. They can help you with any questions relating to the visa application procedure. You can find the addresses of all German diplomatic missions on the website of the German Federal Foreign Office (www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/about-us/auslandsvertretungen/deutsche-auslandsvertretungen)

3. Health insurance

All students, regardless of their home country, age and insurance status need to contact a German statutory health insurance provider and ask it to confirm their current insurance status by sending a digital confirmation of appropriate health insurance to OTH Amberg-Weiden.

To apply for health insurance, you need:

- Your letter of admission (“Zulassungsbescheid”) as a Bachelor’s, Master’s or exchange student
- A passport sized photo (for your health insurance card)
- Your IBAN for a German bank account

When you have taken out health insurance, the health insurance company will confirm this electronically to the university and you can be enrolled.

3.1. Health insurance for non-EU citizens

Non-EU students under 30 years of age have to take out mandatory student health insurance with a statutory health insurance provider (“gesetzliche Krankenversicherung”) before they can be enrolled at OTH Amberg-Weiden.

There is a wide choice of statutory health insurance providers with whom you can get insurance. This insurance costs about 120 Euros per month and basic coverage is always the same: your health insurance covers the cost of check-ups, treatment for illness or after an accident

and certain medications (for prescription medication you will have to pay a fee of between 5 and 10 Euros at the pharmacy). General costs for hospital stays are also covered. For more information on the various health insurance providers, please refer to www.krankenkassen.de/

Some companies are also contactable on campus, please check our website for some examples, contact details and office hours at www.oth-aw.de/en/studies/getting-started/university-formalities/insurances/

When you have taken out health insurance the insurance provider will inform the university electronically about your health insurance status. If PRIMUSS shows an error message, please contact your German health insurance provider.

Please consider that there are special rules and exceptions for students from countries with a social security agreement like Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey (see Subsection “3.3. Special rules and exceptions”).

All students under 30 years of age who have already obtained private health insurance through a scholarship programme (e. g. Erasmus Mundus students, DAAD scholarship holders) need to contact any statutory health insurance provider and present a proof of their scholarship award including health insurance. Before they can be enrolled, the health insurance provider must electronically confirm to the university that the student is exempt from statutory health insurance.

All non-EU students over 30 years of age must take out private health insurance. The private health insurance policy then needs to be submitted to a statutory health insurance company, which will send electronic confirmation to the university of your insurance status. Please write to the Students’ Office (studienbuero-am@oth-aw.de for Amberg and studienbuero-wen@oth-aw.de) with any questions that you might have.

3.2. Health insurance for EU citizens

As an EU citizen you are required to bring a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from your insurance provider in your home country. In order to enrol at the university, you will have to get in touch with a German statutory health insurance provider (see a list at www.krankenkassen.de/) and notify them about your EHIC. As the next step, the German provider needs to transmit this information electronically to OTH Amberg-Weiden. Only then you can be enrolled. Please make sure to always carry your original health insurance card with you.

You will receive urgent and necessary medical treatment at a doctor, dentist or in a hospital with your EHIC. For prescriptions you will have to pay a fee of between 5 and 10 Euros at the pharmacy. If you do not have the EHIC, you are required to take out student health insurance (see Subsection “3.1. Health Insurance for non-EU citizens” above).

3.3. Special rules and exceptions

All students from countries that have a social security agreement (“Sozialversicherungsabkommen”) with the EU, such as Bosnia, Serbia or Turkey, need to get in touch with a German statutory health insurance provider (see Subsection “3.1. health insurance for non-EU citizens” above) and notify them that they are covered by a social security agreement between Germany and their home country. As the next step, the German provider needs to transmit this information electronically to OTH Amberg-Weiden. Only then can these students be enrolled. The social security agreement applies to both exchange and degree-seeking students. Please contact your health insurance provider in your home country to obtain the necessary form. It is important that the document is valid for the entire duration of your stay at OTH Amberg-Weiden.

3.4. Health insurance for travelling outside Germany

If you plan to travel outside Germany we recommend that you take out travel health insurance for a fee of about 15 to 20 Euros per year (available at most banks or health insurance companies).

3.5. Beyond health insurance: liability insurance

Personal liability insurance is not compulsory in Germany, so it is not required by law. However, the law does stipulate that you are financially liable for any damage you cause to someone else. Personal liability insurance is therefore one of the most sensible forms of cover that you should have. It is relatively inexpensive (prices start at 1,50 Euro per month) and can protect against high financial costs if the need arises.

4. Enrolment at OTH Amberg-Weiden

In order to be enrolled as a student at OTH Amberg-Weiden, you need to:

- Provide all documents required in the application process
- Upload a passport photo
- Pay the semester/student union fee (for non-EU students also study service fees)
- Have health insurance: the health insurance company confirms this to the university electronically

You will normally be enrolled a few weeks before the start of term. Student identity cards are not sent by post abroad. As soon as you know your date of arrival, please contact the Students' Office in Amberg or Weiden, so your ID card will be waiting for you when you get here. The opening hours of the Students' Office are usually 9 am to 12 pm but please check in advance.

5. Accommodation

Some accommodation is available in student dormitories, or in private apartments.

Important

Please note that in Germany accommodation in student halls of residence is not automatically granted upon admission to a degree programme and places are limited, so please make your own arrangements for accommodation and, above all, be sure to make them in good time. You should start your search 2 to 3 months prior to your arrival in Germany by doing research on the internet and, if possible, arranging appointments to look at potential places once you arrive. It may also be a good idea to book temporary accommodation for the first few days/weeks in Germany (hotels, hostels, Airbnb...) while you are searching for longer-term rent.

Beware of scams! In Germany it is not common to pay rent before arriving or seeing the flat, so DO NOT transfer money to a bank account before seeing the flat and signing a contract! The only exception is with student dormitories but for that you will receive a notification from the Student's Union. OTH Amberg-Weiden cannot assist you in resolving matters related to such scams.

5.1. Student dormitories

Since the student dormitories offer less accommodation than needed for all students, you may need to wait up to three semesters to get a place in dormitories in Amberg or Weiden. If you want to live in a student dorm, apply as soon as possible to the “Studentenwerk Oberfranken” by filling out the application form available at www.studentenwerk-oberfranken.de/wohnen/wohnheimbewerbung/wohnheimantrag.html

If you do get a room in a Student Dormitory, the illustrated dictionaries at www.studentenwerk-oberfranken.de/wohnen/wohnheim-woerterbuecher.html may be helpful in your first days.

Important

Please note that the student dormitories are not managed by OTH Amberg-Weiden but by a separate entity, the Students’ Union (“Studentenwerk”), which manages applications, allocation and administration of the dormitories. The name of the Students’ Union branch managing the student dormitories for Amberg and Weiden is Studentendwerk Oberfranken (www.studentenwerk-oberfranken.de/wohnen/wohnheim-woerterbuecher.html)

5.2. Private apartments

As a rule, accommodation on the independent housing market is more expensive than student accommodation. Moreover, flats and rooms in Germany are almost always unfurnished.

For private apartments, the offers are mostly in German, so be ready to use your German skills (First tip: “WG - Wohngemeinschaft” means “shared apartment”). You should also try to become familiar with key German terms such as “Kaltmiete” (without heating), “Warmmiete” (including heating), “Nebenkosten” (additional costs), “Kautiion” (deposit), etc.

There are two options to rent a private apartment: either you take an apartment by yourself or together with other students, in a so called “WG” (“Wohngemeinschaft” - “shared apartment”). This second option is very popular for students in Germany. In a shared flat/apartment, each student has their own bedroom but shares the kitchen, the bathroom, sometimes a living room and occasionally the costs of telephone and internet connections. Living together with others also has the advantage of allowing you to make friends quickly and improve your language skills.

If you wish to search for a private apartment (to rent alone or with other students), please check the following websites/apps:

- OTH website: www.oth-aw.de/en/studies/campus-life/marketplace
- Immowelt: www.immowelt.de
- Immobilienscout24: www.immobilienscout24.de
- WG-Gesucht: www.wg-gesucht.de/
- Ebay Kleinanzeigen: www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de/
- Immo.Onetz: www.immo.onetz.de/mieten/amberg (for Amberg) and www.immo.onetz.de/mieten/weiden (for Weiden)

If none of these options work, you could look for apartments in other cities/towns that have good access to Amberg/Weiden, for example in Sulzbach-Rosenberg, Kümmerbruck, Ebermannsdorf, Pleystein, Neustadt, Weiherhammer, Pirk, Schirmitz, Hirschau, Schwandorf, Regensburg, Neukirchen, Nürnberg, etc. You can use the German Railways website (www.bahn.de) to figure out the towns best connected (by railway) to Amberg or Weiden.

If you live in a private accommodation, you will also have to sign a tenancy agreement and pay a deposit/guarantee of (usually) three months' rent before you move in. The deposit is returned to you when you move out of the flat providing that you leave it in an orderly condition. Do have a look at this video as well for an overview of key aspects related to housing: <https://youtu.be/mHPzwrXUpqI>.

5.3. Students' suggestions

We asked our international students who have already gone through the process of finding a room about their experiences and recorded their suggestions for new students. Although they are studying at the Weiden Campus, more than half of the students who answered our questions said that they found accommodation in other cities (Pirk, Nuremberg). The monthly rent of their rooms in shared flats was around 500 Euros and most of them paid a deposit of 1-2 month's rent.

These students found their rooms via Facebook groups, eBay Kleinanzeigen, Whatsapp groups and by asking their friends and colleagues. These are some of their suggestions:

- “The rents are lower in Weiden, which is a big plus. Shared apartments or dormitories have both advantages and disadvantages, it depends on the individual person and their likings. Look out for the “Warmmiete” price. For foreign students, student apartments are the easiest way of finding a place.”
- „I live in Pirk and even though it is only 4 km from Weiden the transportation is not the best. I would suggest to get a bike immediately after coming here (especially in spring and summer - I haven't experienced German winter yet). I can only recommend the well-known websites like WG-gesucht, Immobilien, Facebook and ebay and also asking other people. Tell people that you are looking for a room and ask them if they have any friends offering a room.”
- “When communicating with the landlords, it is easier to make the first contact in German, so prepare a text describing yourself and what you are looking for and try to use parts of this text according to your needs when communicating with the landlords.”
- “Finding a single room can be difficult, so try to meet people with whom you can rent an entire flat together.”
- “Sometimes elderly people advertise their flats in local newspapers, so be sure to check out the local papers sometimes too.” See, for example, <https://anzeigen.onetz.de/anzeigen/immobilienteil/vermietungen/>

YOUR FIRST WEEKS IN GERMANY

6. Registration

6.1. Registration with the Residents' Office

Anyone who moves into accommodation in Germany must register within two weeks of moving in. Both Germans and foreigners are required to register (“Anmeldung einer Wohnung”). Violations of the registration requirement are subject to fines. Your registration appointment (“Anmeldungstermin”) is the most important step when relocating to Germany, as it provides you with your registration certificate. You will need this certificate for all kinds of administrative tasks, for instance when applying for a residence permit (see Subsection “6.2. Residence permit for non-EU citizens” below) and for opening a bank account (see Section “7. Opening a Bank Account” below).

This means that, once you identified a place to stay, you need to register with the Residents' Registration Office (called “Einwohnermeldeamt” or “Bürgerbüro” or “Meldebehörde”) in the local municipality office of the city you live in. You can find your local residents' office by selecting “Einwohnermeldeamt” and entering your postcode on the Deutsche Post website at www.umziehen.de/behoerdenfinder.

Sometimes multiple offices exist in larger German cities. You do not necessarily need to register at the office closest to you so it might be worth going to one further away if they have an appointment available sooner.

The documents that you will need for this are:

- Your passport or passport substitute document or national identity card
- The filled-in registration form (“Anmeldung”) available at your local municipality (often also available on their website)
- Visa (if applicable)
- From your landlord: a registration form called “Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung“.

It is best to make an appointment for your registration, either in person or by phone (or via online booking, for larger municipalities, although these are usually only available in German). When selecting a service, look for “Meldeangelegenheiten” to find the option to register. If you are calling, ask the office for an appointment for “registering an address” (“Anmeldung einer Wohnung”). The service is usually free, but some offices may charge nominal processing fees. Be aware that many places in Germany do not accept payments by credit card.

The appointment itself lasts about 15 minutes, as the civil servant will check your documents, fill in the paperwork and give you a stamped certificate of registration. Please note that public administration staff cannot always be expected to speak English and so the registration appointment will usually be conducted in German. If possible, take a German speaker with you. Your Buddy might help in this matter (see Section “11. Buddy Programme” below).

After your registration, you will be provided with a confirmation of your registration, called “Meldebestätigung” or “Anmeldebescheinigung”. You need this document to open a German bank account and to obtain a residence permit (if applicable, see Subsection “6.2. Residence permit for non-EU citizens” below).

If you do not have a fixed address yet, registering can be tricky, as one of the documents required to register is a confirmation of residence signed by your landlord (“Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung” mentioned in necessary documents above). In some municipalities, it may be possible to have this filled out by the proprietor of your temporary accommodation, but usually you will be unable to register until you have a rental contract. If you are unsure what to do, check with your Residents’ Registration Office.

Important

The local authorities need to be notified of each change of residence. When you move to another municipality, you have to register there with the local administration. This will automatically de-register you from your former German address. However, if you are leaving Germany permanently, you will need to personally de-register at the Residents’ Registration Office within two weeks after moving out. You are not allowed to de-register more than one week prior to moving out.

6.2. Residence permit for non-EU citizens

All foreigners from outside the European Union who wish to remain in Germany for longer than three months must obtain a residence permit (“Aufenthaltstitel” or “Aufenthaltserlaubnis”). You need to apply for this at the Foreigners’ Registration Office (“Ausländerbehörde” or “Ausländeramt”) at the place of your registered residence (see Subsection 6.1. “Registration with the Residents’ Office” above).

The residence permit is called an eAT (“elektronischer Aufenthaltstitel” = electronic residence permit). We recommend that you apply for your Aufenthaltserlaubnis or eAT as soon as you find an apartment and register at your local municipality. The processing of an eAT takes about four weeks. When you apply for an eAT, the Foreigners’ Registration Office will tell you when you can expect to receive it. Meanwhile, the Foreigners’ Registration Office will provide you with a “provisional certificate of an approved residence permit” (“Vorläufige Bescheinigung über einen bewilligten Aufenthaltstitel”). The eAT usually consists of a chip card and a supplementary sheet.

The residence permit is initially issued for at least one and no more than two years, but it can be extended. The extension depends on your studies progressing in a regular manner (meaning you must adhere to the standard period of study). It is imperative that you apply for an extension before your current residence permit expires.

Citizens from some countries (including the USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, Israel, New Zealand and Switzerland, see “Subsection 2.2. International students from countries with no visa requirement” above) are allowed entry into Germany without a visa and may apply for a residence permit while in the country. If you do not come from any of these countries or from the EU, a visa will be issued by a German embassy or consulate in your country of residence. It may also be possible to directly apply for a residence permit at the embassy or consulate in your country.

The requirements for a residence permit may vary from place to place and according to your status (citizenship, foreign residence, etc.).

You will certainly need a valid passport, a couple of “biometric” passport photos, proof that you have a place to live, proof of health insurance (see Section “3. Health Insurance” below) and proof that you can support yourself (“Finanzierungsnachweis”). Most frequently, this proof takes the form of a so-called “blocked account” (“Sperrkonto” – see Subsection “2.3. International students from countries with a visa requirement”), which is a special kind of bank account for foreign students in Germany. In this account, foreign students deposit the required amount of money to cover their living expenses for one year. It serves as proof of financial resources when applying for a German student visa and when extending a residence permit.

When you first apply for a residence permit, you have to pay a fee of up to 110 Euros. The extension costs up to 100 Euros (as of July 2023).

7. Opening a bank account

If you are a non-EU student, you must have a German bank account, specifically a personal current account (“Girokonto”), for regular payments such as rent or health insurance, so that the money will be taken out of your account automatically at the right time (direct debit). The rent for student dormitories as well as your health insurance can only be paid by using the direct debit procedure. Moreover, if you wish to take a part-time job, your pay will also need to be transferred to a German account.

You can open a personal current account in person at a local bank (close to your accommodation or to the campus) or with an online bank (“Direktbank”). Please remember to specify that you are a student because many banks offer administrative fee reductions to students. All banks offer online banking.

Please inform yourself about the process of opening an account with the bank of your choice.

When opening a bank account, you will need:

- Proof of your residence registration and your residence permit (if applicable, see Section “6. Registration” above)
- Your passport (for EU students: identity card)
- Letter of admission from the OTH Amberg-Weiden in order to get a cheaper bank account designed for students

Do you already have a bank account within a European country? We still recommend that you open a German bank account. Only if you definitely do not need to use the direct debit procedure (if you have no automated payments for rent, for example) and you are in Germany for a short time, it might not be necessary to open a German bank account.

Important

When withdrawing cash from an ATM other than those operated by your Bank, you may be charged extra fees. Upon opening a bank account do inquire about the ATMs that you can use and how many times you can take money out free of charge.

8. Local and regional travel

As of May 2023 Germany introduced the “Deutschlandticket”. For students, this ticket costs 29 Euro per month and you may use it for local transportation (NOT for ICE, IC, etc) throughout Germany. For more info please check www.bahn.com/en/offers/regional/deutschlandticket.

If you wish to buy the Deutschlandticket, its price can be offset with the price of the semester ticket. This ticket is especially relevant for you if you live in cities that are further away from our campi in Amberg and Weiden (like Regensburg or Nurnberg).

- Bus service for Amberg and surroundings: www.znas.de/ (only in German)
- Bus service for Weiden and surroundings: www.nwn-bus.de/ (only in German)
- Train service for regional traffic (Amberg area): www.vgn.de/en/
- Train service for regional traffic (Regensburg area): www.rvv.de/ (only in German)
- Train service for longer distances: www.bahn.com/en

9. Broadcasting service fee (GEZ)

The so-called Rundfunkbeitrag (broadcasting service fee) is a mandatory fee for the German state-funded radio and TV programmes. It has to be paid by every household even if you do not use radio or TV. The fee amounts to 18,36 Euros per month (as of January 2024). If you share an apartment you can also share the broadcasting service fee. You or one of your flat-mates must register with the ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice. The non-paying members have to inform the agency that their fee has already been collected under the registered person’s fee account number but they do not personally register! More information and the registration/ deregistration forms which need to be sent online can be found at: [Der Rundfunkbeitrag - English](#).

10. Freshman week

Orientation week prepares new international students for their studies at OTH Amberg-Weiden, explains structures and processes at the university and life in Germany. Therefore, this is a central element of the first week on campus, and international students are required to take part. Participation is mandatory for all international students!

Detailed information regarding the date and form of the orientation week will be communicated to all admitted/enrolled students via the e-mail associated with your application/your OTH email address. In preparation, you should also get familiar with the key university tools, which you will be using throughout your studies at OTH Amberg-Weiden. You may find a helpful video outlining these tools here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfNltBj_tGc.

Important

Please note that you must use your OTH AW email address for all communications within the university. Do not forget to change the password you receive from the IT Centre after your first log-in, otherwise your account will be blocked. If you need to unblock your account or otherwise need assistance with the IT system of the university, please fill in the support request available at: www.oth-aw.de/en/university/about-our-university/facilities/computer-centre/support-request

It is also essential to sign up for the Noticeboard (“Schwarzes Brett”) for your specific degree programme, to ensure you receive all important information and communications.

Downloading the OTH App on your smart phone is a good idea: then you will have all your important information (emails, Noticeboard announcements) in one place.

11. Buddy Programme

The Buddy Programme is organized by the International Students’ Club at OTH Amberg-Weiden (Instagram: @isc_othaw). For international students, this is a great way to connect with other students from OTH Amberg-Weiden, ask questions and make new friends. If you wish to be assigned a buddy, please e-mail isc@oth-aw.de. Find out more about the ISC at: www.oth-aw.de/en/international/internationales-profil/international-students-club/

12. Module handbooks and information pages for degree programmes

We highly recommend that you regularly visit the official website pages of your degree programme before starting your studies, as they provide important information especially for first-year students (e.g. preliminary courses or introductory events). Furthermore, you should also carefully read the Module Handbook / Overview / Course Catalogue to see which courses you should attend, especially in the first semester. A timetable may also be provided on the web pages.

It is essential to inform yourself about the structure of your studies at the beginning of your first semester. To this end, please take time to familiarise yourself with the Study and Examination Regulations for your specific degree programme. Many degree programmes include certain hurdles - e.g. a minimum number of credits to be obtained, courses to be passed or proof of language knowledge - which must be overcome by a certain deadline. Failure to do so can result in you losing your study place. All Bachelor’s programmes also have compulsory internships, which must be completed before the end of the degree.

As soon as you are enrolled, please take time to familiarize yourself with the PRIMUSS portal for students. This is your interface with the Students' Office. Here you will find information regarding:

- Re-registration, which needs to be done each and every semester
 - Your current grade sheet/overview of marks
- Registration for exams
- Forms to fill out, for example in the case of illness, to have previous academic credits recognised or to change your address

If you have questions regarding admission, enrolment, re-registration, exam deadlines or registration and applications for credit recognition/leave of absence/maternity etc. please contact the Students' Office:

- Contact for degrees taught in Amberg: studienbuero-am@oth-aw.de
- Contact for degrees taught in Weiden: studienbuero-wen@oth-aw.de

Important

Please note that you need to register via the PRIMUSS Portal for each new semester that you begin, for each elective course that you wish to take AND for each exam that you wish to take.

In addition, please also get familiar with the regulations concerning situations in which you do not pass an exam (repeat exams), or if you cannot take part in an exam (medical certificate required). You may find an overview of the key examination rules, responsible bodies and contact details at www.oth-aw.de/en/studies/getting-started/university-formalties/examinations/

13. In case of illness

For emergency situations, call the German Emergency Services: 112. If you have an accident on campus, which is not so severe to require emergency services, you must contact the first aid responsible persons (list for Amberg campus and list for Weiden campus). For insurance reasons, do also inform the Students' Office for insurance reasons.

For less urgent health concerns, you should identify a primary care doctor. Residents in Germany can choose their primary care doctors regardless of location. That said, some practices will only register patients from their catchment area. If you are looking for a primary care doctor ("Hausarzt"), it is best to ask around for recommendations. You can also search for a doctor through the Bavarian Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (Kassenärztliche Vereinigung) by location and specialty at <https://arztsuche.116117.de/>. The search engine is only available in German so ask a friend or colleague for help. Please note that Doctors' Offices have hours "Sprechstunden") and you need to make an appointment in advance.

If you cannot attend an exam for medical reasons, you will need to submit a doctor's note to the Students' Office. Find out the exact procedure by asking your Students' Office.

14. Legal counselling for students

The Student Union (“Studentenwerk Oberfranken”) offers students free legal counselling. The advisory service covers the following areas of law:

- Tenancy law (except for cases concerning the dormitories of the SWO)
- Contract law (e.g. GEZ, purchase contracts, telephone contracts, etc.)
- Labour law
- Maintenance law (not BAföG)
- Examination law (be sure to bring your University examination regulations with you)

Important

Please note that the Studentenwerk Oberfranken CANNOT provide any kind of assistance in matters related to visa or to residence permits.

You may make an appointment for an online meeting for any of the available slots mentioned on the Studentenwerk Oberfranken website (for the locations Bayreuth, Coburg and Hof since there are no in-person counselling sessions in Amberg or Weiden).

15. Psychological counselling

Students at OTH Amberg-Weiden can receive support from the Psychological Counselling Centre to overcome study-related and personal difficulties. Psychological counselling is free of charge, unbureaucratic and completely confidential.

Please always make an appointment in advance. The easiest way to do this is by e-mail. In this e-mail, please also state that you are studying in Amberg or in Weiden. Unfortunately, the data security of e-mails is not high. Therefore, please do not describe the symptoms or the topic to be discussed in your e-mail requesting an appointment.

You can find more information about the Psychological Counselling Centre of the Studentenwerk Oberfranken and contact details for Amberg [here](#) and for Weiden [here](#). The websites are in German only but counselling may be held in English.

16. Practice your German

Despite studying in a programme entirely taught in English you still need to have some (and provide proof of) German language knowledge by a certain deadline during your study.

We highly recommend learning some German before arriving to Germany or at least during your time here because it makes your student life easier and more fun. Please be aware that you will need to speak some German for finding an apartment or for other administrative matters, as described in this guide.

The big bonus is that knowing German can help you really enjoy your life here: getting together with your peers, better understanding local and regional customs and attending events that Amberg, Weiden, Bavaria and Germany have to offer.

Please also note: within our bachelor programmes you are also required to do an internship in a company or another organization. For this it is also useful to have some basic German knowledge!

Do not be afraid to write us in German, even if you make mistakes. We really do appreciate your effort! You can also use an online translation tool, which will help in communications. For further information on language requirements and language courses offered at OTH Amberg-Weiden, see the website of the university's Language Centre:

www.oth-aw.de/en/university/about-our-university/facilities/language-centre/

17. Departure

Once you have finished your studies at the OTH Amberg-Weiden, you will need to undertake the following steps:

- Deregistering from the Residents' Office: this step can only be done in person and one week before your departure from your apartment, at the earliest. This is a step needed to terminate services (i.e. electricity, internet contracts, GEZ). Please note that if you move to another address in Germany, you do not need to deregister, this will automatically happen once you register your new German address.
- Termination of health insurance: students who signed up for German health insurance will need to cancel it before departure.
- Cancellation of the German bank account: if you opened a German bank account, make sure that you have an agreement with your landlord about the return of your deposit (which will be returned to the German account). Afterwards check with your bank about the procedure for closing your account.
- Cancellation of all other services (GEZ, telephone, internet, etc).
- Arrangement of moving out date and checking of the apartment by your landlord (you will need to leave your apartment empty, clean and in good order or you will not receive your entire deposit back).
- For ERASMUS exchange students: make sure that you have the document "Confirmation of stay" signed by the International Office at OTH Amberg-Weiden.



**GOOD
LUCK!**

**We look forward to
welcoming you on campus!**