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## RA - GUIDE

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Resident Assistants for international students

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## Foreword

Dear Resident Assistants

We are delighted that you have decided to join the Resident Assistant program of the Studierendenwerk Karlsruhe – International Students Center (ISC) and become a Resident Assistant (RA) for international students in our student residences.

If you have experience in staying abroad, you would know guidance in getting introduced to a new system of study and living in a foreign city in the first weeks is crucial for a successful stay. At first, everything seems to be strange and the most difficult first steps are - the orientation in the new environment and getting to know the locals. In order to have an easier start, you should help the international students during the first steps in the in the new living environment, like visits to the authorities, enrollment procedure etc., and also provide an insight into the student life, such as assistance in contact with other students, cultural activities in the student residences and cultural events of the International Student Center.

This RA manual is a guide for the care and counseling of international students. The most important steps for living and studying in Karlsruhe are enumerated and displayed in order of importance. You can also find important contacts, addresses, and opening times.

We have accepted and implemented the suggestions of other Studierendenwerken, guiding books of other universities and from our own experiences.

If you have any suggestions for improvement regarding this manual you are always welcome to contact us.

We wish you joy and pleasure at the RA work and thank you in advance for your commitment.

Ihr I.S.C. - Team

## **1. Welcome and getting to know**

„Living, studying and working in a multicultural context where people from several different cultures meet, is not only a Challenges to international students, but also to all those involved.“ (translated from German)

(Dr. Stefanie Kuschel: *„Interkulturelles Training für Tutoren: Ein Handbuch für Trainer der Studentenwerke“*, DSW, Berlin: 2007)

It is therefore important to greet new residents and gain their trust, and let them know that you are at their disposal. You are their direct contact not only in matters of the student residence, but also in everyday events of the student's life. As an international student you feel very lonely in the initial days and weeks in the new and unfamiliar city, so it is therefore important to have a contact person who shows compassion, as he might have had the same experiences or is familiar with the difficulties with settling.

## **2. Support and advice**

It is very important to be friendly, relaxed and always smiling, to give international students a sense of welcome and help students to find their way home. You must remember that for the students, Karlsruhe is a new foreign environment.

Please help students not only at request but also voluntarily.

## **3. Information on facilities and administrative procedures**

### *3.1. Registration / enrollment at the International Office*

After the admission and before the beginning of the semester, every student has to enroll at the International Office of the university in Karlsruhe or Pforzheim and pay the semester fee, i.e. student union and administration fees. The dates will be announced either in the letter of acceptance or by E-Mail from the respective universities. The

documentation required for the enrollment and payment dates depend on the respective universities. It is cheaper to transfer the semester fee from a German bank account, as there will be no transfer costs incurred.

The semester fees for the Studierendenwerk are:

- Karlsruhe Institut of Technology - KIT - 77,70 €
- University of Education Karlsruhe - 77,70 €
- University of Music Karlsruhe - 77,70 €
- State University of Arts and Design Karlsruhe - 77,70 €
- State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe - 77,70 €
- University of Applied Sciences Karlsruhe - 77,70 €
- Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University Karlsruhe - 155,40 €
- Pforzheim University - 82,00 €

### *3.2. Accommodation*

If you have applied for a place in the dormitories of the Studierendenwerks, you have to register with the Wohnheimverwaltung to sign the lease.

#### **Studierendenwerk Karlsruhe AöR**

**Housing Department**, Private accommodation service

Room Z 05 and Z 06 – Housing Department

Room Z 09 - Private accommodation service and general information

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 10.30-12.00, Thu 13.30-15.30

Phone +49 721 6909-200

Mail: [wohnen@sw-ka.de](mailto:wohnen@sw-ka.de)

Addresses of other student residences, private or shared rooms can be found in Studentenhaus and on the Internet. Ads can also be found in the newspapers: like BNN (Badische Neueste Nachrichten); in Karlsruhe "Kurrier"; "AZ Karlsruhe" and "Spermüll" and "Karlsruher Anzeiger"; Black board in a Studentenhaus, left staircase in the basement or on the Internet under [www.studiguide.de](http://www.studiguide.de), [www.studenten-wg.de](http://www.studenten-wg.de), [www.wg-gesucht.de](http://www.wg-gesucht.de).

For safety, the International Student Center can reserve you a bed in a hostel for the first few nights (Moltkestr. 24, 76187 Karlsruhe, Tel. + 49 728 248).

### **Housing scout:**

Bijuan Dong-Barié

Phone 0721 6909202

E-Mail: bijuan.dong-barie@sw-ka.de

Office hours:

Monday to Friday 10-14:00

Foyer of the Am Adenauerring dining hall

### *3.3. Bürgerbüro (Citizen registration offices)*

According to the German Act, reporting to all people within the first 2 weeks, staying permanently or temporarily in Germany, signing up residence at the citizen registration office (Bürgerbüro) is required.

### **Required documents:**

- Identity card or passport
- Completed and signed application form

### **Offices in Karlsruhe:**

#### **Bürgerbüro Durlach**

Pfinztalstr.33

76227 Karlsruhe

Opening hours:

Mon 8.00-15.00

Tue, Wed, Fri, 8.00-12.00

Thu 14.00 - 18.00

#### **Bürgerbüro K8**

Kaiserallee 8  
76133 Karlsruhe

Opening hours:

Mon - Fri 8.30-12.30

### **Bürgerbüro K8**

Kaiserallee 8  
76133 Karlsruhe

Opening hours:

Mon - Fri 8.30-12.30

Thu 14.00-17.00

### **Bürgerbüro Mitte**

Im Rathaus am Marktplatz

Karl-Friedrich-Str.10  
76124 Karlsruhe

Opening hours:

Mon - Fri 8.30-12.30

Thu 14.00-17.00

### **Bürgerbüro Ost**

Beuthener Str. 42  
76124 Karlsruhe

Opening hours:

Mon - Fri 8.30-12.30

Thu 14.00-17.00

### **Bürgerbüro Süd**

Steinhäuserstr.22  
76135 Karlsruhe

Opening hours:

Mon - Fri 8.30-12.30

Thu 14.00-17.00

Telephone information and appointment to the different Bürgerbüro in Karlsruhe can be obtained from the authority's number 115

### *3.4. Health insurance*

#### **1. European Union and Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland**

- a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card EHIC) or a provisional replacement certificate (PEB)
- can be obtained by contacting the health insurance company in your home country
- it is important to inquire prior to your departure, which costs are covered by the health insurance in your home country while staying in Germany
- if you are sick, you can use your EHIC to go directly to the doctor, dentist or the hospital

#### **2. Agreement states**

- the states of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Tunisia
- the claim ID, which is valid for the home country
- can be obtained by contacting the health insurance in your home country

Country	Name	Country
Bosnia-Herzegovina	BH6	<a href="http://www.for.com.ba">www.for.com.ba</a>
Macedonia	D/RM111	<a href="http://www.fzo.org.mk">www.fzo.org.mk</a>
Montenegro	Ju 6	<a href="http://www.fzocg.me">www.fzocg.me</a>
Serbia	DE 111 SRB	<a href="http://www.zso.gov.rs">www.zso.gov.rs</a>
Turkey	A/T11	<a href="http://www.sgk.gov.tr">www.sgk.gov.tr</a>
Tunisia	A/TN110	<a href="http://www.cnam.visadb.com">www.cnam.visadb.com</a>

- it is important to inquire prior to your departure; which costs are covered by the health insurance in your home country while staying in Germany
- normally only treatments, which cannot be postponed, have to be paid
- when claiming other benefits, the costs have to be borne by yourself



- before visiting the doctor or dentist, the claim ID must be exchanged into to a German invoice
- the following German health insurance cover this exchange:
  - supplementary health insurance (z.B. TK, BarmerGEK, DAK, KKH)
  - local health insurance (AOK)
  - trade guild health insurance (IKK)
  - company health insurance (BKK)
  - federal minors' insurance
- when using services, the deductibles, which are usual for Germany, apply (more information at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deductible>)

### **3. Other States**

- the choice between a public health insurance in Germany and a private health insurance (in Germany or home country)
- you cannot enroll in a German university without health insurance

#### **Statutory health insurance for students:**

- is generally recommended and a legal requirement in Germany
- it also includes a prescribed nursing care
- the contributions to be paid are determined by law and are in principle equal for all German health insurances
- you receive a chipcard and you will be treated by doctors, dentists and in the hospital without an invoice, and also one can receive medicines.
- When using services, drop this customary in Germany for co-payments (more information at <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selbstbeteiligung>)
- Search for a health insurance that meets the following criteria:
  - no additional contribution (then you would have to pay more)
  - branch office in Karlsruhe, documents if possibly in English.
  - for example Techniker Krankenkasse, AOK, Barmer ...
- there are some special considerations for individuals aged 30 yrs or older

## Private health insurance:

- make application for exemption from the legal health insurance
- this application is valid for the entire study (also following Master)
- There are numerous differences from the statutory health insurance, including:
  - invoices from the doctor or dentist must first be paid and afterwards submitted to the private health insurance for reimbursement
  - already existing diseases (e.g. chronic diseases such as asthma or allergies) can be excluded, as costs for this will not be reimbursed.
  - many benefits are not included, for example, dental treatments
  - there are waiting periods (3-8 months) before some benefits are paid
  - Private health insurance carries some risk and should be carefully considered
- Private health insurance from the home country is usually not advisable, since the insurance sum is often not sufficient to cover possible costs incurred in Germany

## Information for the doctor visit upon presentation of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or a provisional replacement certificate:

- when using services the following co-payments or fees have to be paid:

Services	Co-payments
Medical, dental or psychological treatment	<p>€ 10 fee per doctor / dentist / psychologists / emergency visit per quarter (keep the receipt)</p> <p>No new additional payment per quarter, during transfer from one doctor to another</p> <p>Transfer from the doctor to the dentist / psychologist / emergency service is not possible</p>
Natural remedies	Additional payment in the amount of 10% of the cost, plus 10 € per Regulation
Drugs and dressings	Additional payment in the amount

	of 10% of the cost, at least 5 €, but not more than the actual costs, a maximum of 10 €
Hospital treatment	10 € per day for a maximum of 28 calendar days per year  No cost coverage for optional services, such as Chief physician treatment

### Other insurances:

- **Private liability insurance:** As an international student in Germany, one should also take out liability insurance either in the home country, which applies also in Germany, or directly in Germany. For European students, the liability insurance from the home country is still valid. Liability means that an insurance company accepts liability for damages to persons, owners and assets, ie damages up to a certain amount are covered by the insurance. The higher the amount of damage, the higher the annual insurance premium.
- **Household insurance** covers for damage to or inside the home not only caused by natural events such as lightning, storm or hail, but also for damage caused by fire, explosion, burglary, robbery or vandalism.

### 3.5. Bank account

During your stay in Karlsruhe, it is useful to open a German bank account in order to transfer the semester fee or rent. Ask at the bank for a free bank account. Important: **Always check account fees!**

Man muss auch beachten, dass Banken nicht gern Konten eröffnen, wenn jemand nicht mindestens 6 Monate bleiben will. Bei einer kürzeren Aufenthaltsdauer sollte man diese also nicht unbedingt erwähnen.

### Required documents:

- Identity card or passport
- Registration notice from Bürgerbüro

- Student ID card and certificate of enrollment

### *3.6. Registration at the Immigration Office*

All students with EU citizenship as well as from Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and other European countries ([http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht\\_node.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht_node.html)) can enter Germany only with a valid passport or identity card. Valid visa and residence permit are not required.

Students from non-EU countries must apply for a **visa for study purposes** in their home country at the German embassy or at the German consulate in order to enter Germany.

Students from Australia, Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, the USA and other non-European countries don't need visas because Germany has signed special visa agreements with these countries.

([http://www.auswaertigesamt.de/DE/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht\\_node.html](http://www.auswaertigesamt.de/DE/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht_node.html))

Students with non-EU nationality and not from the above countries have to apply for a visa for study purposes. These students must apply for visa at the German embassy or at the German consulate in their home country before departure. The waiting time for visa can be up to 6 months.

After arriving in Germany, the students should apply for a **residence permit for study purposes** at the **Immigration Office** in Karlsruhe, if the visa is not valid for the entire stay in Germany in the passport.

#### **Ausländerbehörde (Immigration Office) Karlsruhe**

Kaiserallee 8, 76124 Karlsruhe

Phone: +49 721-133 3388

Opening hours: Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 08.30-12.30; Thu 14.00-17.00

Internet:

<http://www.karlsruhe.de/b4/stadtverwaltung/aemterliste/kontakt/?dst=ala&backUrl=/b4/stadtverwaltung/aemterliste>

#### **Required documents:**

- Biometrical passport photo
- Confirmation of registration at the city
- Proof of health insurance
- Admission notification
- Rental contract
- Passport
- Proof of secured livelihood in Germany (proof of scholarship, notary confirmed proof of financing, etc., including a confirmation of sufficient financial means for the return journey – it is expected approximately € 700 per month)
- Fees (for a residence permit for 12 months up to € 100 )

When the residence permit expires, you have to submit an application for extension of time.

## 4. Organization of leisure and cultural activities

### 4.1. *Organization for leisure and cultural activities*

- **Welcome breakfast** – Get-together and information about life in a student residence hall.
- **International cooking evening** – cooking together delicious specialties from the countries of the student residents (e.g. sushi evening, spring rolls vs. Swabian ravioli - evening, paella night, etc.)
- **International Movie night** – watching together international movies or documentaries; can take place in a residence hall, or going together to the movies.
- **International evenings or Theme evening** – experience together different cultures through music, dance, food, etc. (e.g. International Bavarian Night, Latin America evening, Oktoberfest, Chinese Spring Festival, etc.)
- **German Cultural Evening** –to get to know German language and culture through movies, music, food, drinks; Tandem language partnerships
- **Countries evening** –to get to know the language and culture of a particular country by specific movies, music, food, drinks can take

place in the residence hall or go together to a specific local restaurant, bar, cafe, etc.

- **Visiting a cultural institution** (museum, theater, concert, etc.)
- **Newcomers evening** – get-together and information about lives in a residence hall (with music, food, games) – meeting between the new and old residents in a relaxed atmosphere
- **Theme nights** - "Multi Kulti", "typically German", etc. Power Point presentation or explore the topics through games (What is typically German for the international students?) - Discussion suggestions
- **Game Evening** - German or international (board-) games; winning prizes as motivation (for example, Chess)
- **Advent Café** - mulled wine and gingerbread
- **Christmas or Nicolas Party** - Christmas celebrated not only in the German culture but also in other cultures, an experience of cultural exchange (e.g. with mulled wine, biscuits, gingerbread, etc.)
- **Excursion / Bicycle Tour** - City tours, museum visits, etc.

#### *4.2. Foreign students as a target group*

If the international students don't socialize, they won't be integrated, thus their language skills will not improve.

By grouping of international students among themselves, there is a risk that the integration into other circles is rather an exception.

The resident assistant for international students serves as a model, as a cultural mediator and as a point of contact for international students at the beginning of the study, when everything seems new and strange.

Important:

- To motivate the international students to participate at events (personal invitation / stop by the students)
- To bring International students from different backgrounds together also with German students

#### *4.3. How can a RA program become more attractive to International students?*

- Participating in the events should be free of charge
- Include the International students in the organization and planning; respond to their interests and wishes
- Targeted events should be adapted to the students' needs and desires
- Personal invitations

#### *4.4. How do I get German students to take part in the events?*

Apart from studying, there are probably other interests between German and international students. The integration of International students plays an important role in looking for a common point, which can be promoted.

You incorporate these interests in the planning and organization as follows:

- Don't name the events as being "International"
- Incorporate German culture in the events
- Language evenings (German students are interested in learning languages)
- Bring-a-Friend-rule (German and International students can bring a friend from outside)

#### *4.5. How can I encourage students to join in activities?*

- Invitation via social networks, email, website, posters, flyers **BUT** visit the International students personally
- Send a reminder one day before the event
- Cost effective events
- Give away prizes and awards
- Turn off the internet on the day of the event
- Invitation should be in English so all International students feel addressed

#### *4.6. Counselling of International students in critical situations (disability, speech problems, studying with children, conflicts between residents)*

- Most importantly: the RAs have no professional training for social counselling, psychotherapeutic counselling, thus should refer to the appropriate advisory bodies:

**Psychological Help****Karlsruhe**

Rudolfstraße 20

76131 Karlsruhe

[pbs@sw-ka.de](mailto:pbs@sw-ka.de)

Phone: 0721 9334060

**Psychological Help****Pforzheim**

Hagenschießstr. 1

75175 Pforzheim

[pbs-pf@sw.ka.de](mailto:pbs-pf@sw.ka.de)

Phone: 07231 102132

**Phone Counselling**

Phone: 0800/111 0 111

Phone: 0800/111 0 222

**Social Counselling****International Student Center**

Adenauerring 7

76131 Karlsruhe

[isc@sw-ka.de](mailto:isc@sw-ka.de)

Phone: 0721 - 6909 - 204

**Legal advice**

Adenauerring 7

76131 Karlsruhe

2. floor, room 241

[justitiat@sw-ka.de](mailto:justitiat@sw-ka.de)

Phone: 0721 - 6909 - 109

- Disability: when the RAs cannot help, they should refer them to the competent authorities; Contact: Association for Disabled People, Representative of students with disabilities at the university
- Language difficulties: use the Tandem program
- Studying with children: when the RAs cannot help, they should refer them to the competent authorities; Contact person: Family representative of the university, Guidelines for Studying with children of the Studierendenwerk Karlsruhe ([kinder.sw-ka.de](http://kinder.sw-ka.de))

#### *4.7. How can I make the RA activity more familiar in the residence?*

- Introduce yourself in person at the arrival of new students, handover of the keys
- Ask at the beginning how students at the best can be reached (e-mail, notices, Social Networks, Website)
- Welcome email before / after moving
- Sending a reminder 2- 3 days before the consultation
- Maintaining personal presence / social contact



- Flyers in the mailboxes - with contact details, activities and Events
- Poster in dormitory, mailing list, Social Networks, etc.

#### *4.8. Competition with / of other RAs*

- Organize a meeting of the various tutors on neutral ground in conflicts
- Agree on tasks / responsibilities along with the other tutors
- Keep common goal in mind: **support and integration of international students**
- Regular balancing between tutors and coordination