

Welcome to the University of Hildesheim: A Guide from Adi

Welcome! On behalf of the entire university community, we are so excited to welcome you to the University of Hildesheim. This handbook is designed to be your guide as you prepare for the start of your studies in University of Hildesheim in the City of Hildesheim. Please consider this handbook a **personal guide from me**, designed to assist you in preparing for your exciting journey to Germany and settling into your new life as an international student at the University of Hildesheim. While I've done my best to provide accurate and helpful information, please remember that this is not an official or absolute guide, but rather a collection of advice and insights to help make your transition as smooth as possible. Always refer to official university and governmental websites for the most current and definitive regulations.

1. Before You Arrive

Visa and Residence Permit

For non-EU/EEA citizens, a student visa is a mandatory first step. It's crucial to apply for this at the German embassy or consulate in your home country well in advance, as the process can take several weeks or even months. Remember that for your visa application, you will need to provide proof of financial means, often through a blocked bank account (Sperrkonto) with a specific amount of funds. Please refer to your national government or your personal visa for the rules and regulations regarding residence permits, as this may not apply to all. However, it is an important document to be aware of.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is compulsory for all students in Germany. You must have valid health insurance to enroll at the university and to apply for your residence permit. We strongly recommend getting a plan from a German public health insurance provider. You can arrange this before you arrive. TK is usually what everyone has, Expatrio does a great job at helping you with your blocked account and the Health insurance.

Accommodation

Finding a place to live is one of the most important things to arrange before you arrive, so we recommend starting your search early! You have a few main options to consider:

- **Student Dormitories (Studierendenwerk):** These are often the most affordable choice. You must apply for a room as early as possible on the Studierendenwerk website.
- **Private Housing:** You can look for private apartments or rooms in shared flats (WGs - Wohngemeinschaften) on websites like WG-Gesucht.de.
- **Temporary Accommodation:** If your permanent accommodation is not available on your arrival date, you should arrange for a temporary place to stay for your first few nights. Be careful with costs; booking an expensive hotel for a week can be as costly as a couple of months of rent. A better option is to book a hostel or a budget hotel for a short period to give you time to settle in before moving to your permanent place.

2. Arrival in Hildesheim DE

How to Get Here

Hildesheim is easily accessible by train from major airports like Hanover (HAJ) or Frankfurt (FRA). From Hanover Airport, you can take a regional train or the S-Bahn to Hanover Hauptbahnhof (main train station), then a direct train to Hildesheim Hauptbahnhof.

A critical tip: Your **Semester Ticket**, allows for free public transportation across Lower Saxony and all of Germany in the regional transportation ICEs are not covered in it. You can download your ticket from the official university website and add it to your Google Wallet or use the QR code for identification. This ticket covers train travel to Hildesheim if you arrive at a regional airport like Hanover. For arrivals from more distant airports such as Frankfurt, you'll need to buy a ticket to the Lower Saxony border, as your Semester Ticket becomes valid only from that point. Always verify the ticket's validity area in advance to avoid extra costs.

International Welcome Week

The International Office organizes a Welcome Week before the semester begins. This is an excellent opportunity to meet other international students, get to know the campus, and take care of important administrative tasks like enrollment. Make sure to check the university's official website for the exact dates and schedule.

The International Office

The International Office is your most important point of contact for official and organizational matters. They are there to help you with everything from enrollment to visa questions. Make sure to visit them early in your first few weeks. For day-to-day advice on living in Germany and navigating your studies, your fellow students, tutors, and seniors are your best resource.

3. University Life

Enrollment & Registration

You must officially enroll at the university to become a student. This involves submitting required documents (like your admission letter, passport, and proof of health insurance) to the Registrar's Office (Studierendensekretariat).

Keep a close eye on your university email! The German education system might be different from what you are used to. Online enrollment and course registration are done over a two-week period. It is very easy to miss the deadlines, so you need to be ready to act when the time comes.

Student ID & Semester Ticket

Once enrolled, you will receive your **Student ID card**. This card also serves as your **Semester Ticket**, which gives you free access to public transportation in the entire state of Lower Saxony for the duration of the semester. Don't leave home without it!

University IT Services

Your student account gives you access to the university's Wi-Fi, online library resources, and the student portal (Stud.IP), where you can register for courses.

Sports & Student Community

The university offers many options for students to be active and engage in sports. The small but vibrant student community is dedicated to keeping the college culture alive and well. Don't be shy about joining clubs or groups to meet people with similar interests!

4. Living in Hildesheim

Opening a Bank Account

You will need a German bank account to pay your rent, semester fees, and for everyday life. You can open an account at any major German bank like Sparkasse, Deutsche Bank, or online-only banks.

Registration with the City (Anmeldung)

Within your first two weeks of arrival, you must register your residential address at the city's Bürgerbüro (Citizen's Office). This process, known as *Anmeldung*, is mandatory. You will need your passport, visa, and a signed confirmation from your landlord. This document is essential for your residence permit application.

The Public Broadcasting Fee (Rundfunkbeitrag)

Every household in Germany is legally required to pay a public broadcasting fee. The fee is currently €18.36 per month. You will receive a letter from the ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice shortly after you register your address. You can register online to pay the fee or apply for an exemption if you are a scholarship holder.

Public Transport

Hildesheim has a reliable bus network. Your semester ticket covers all public transport within the city and the entire region, so take advantage of it!

Shopping

Germany has nearly everything for everyone from any corner of the world. As a trade capital of Europe, most goods are present here. Don't hesitate to visit multiple stores and malls to find exactly what you need. Most stores are closed on Sundays in Germany, so remember to do your grocery shopping on a weekday or Saturday. Popular supermarkets include REWE, Edeka, and Aldi.

5. Important Contacts

- **International Office:** For all questions related to your stay.
- **Studierendenwerk:** For dormitories and general student services.
- **Studierendensekretariat:** For enrollment and academic administration.
- **Ausländerbehörde (Foreigners' Office):** For your residence permit.
- **Bürgerbüro (Citizen's Office):** For your address registration.

I look forward to seeing you soon!