

## **Your First Steps as an Exchange Student at TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences**

We have prepared this handout to assist and support you upon your arrival in Cologne and to get you started with your study abroad semester at our university. You will find detailed information on all formalities that need to be settled before you leave your home country and during your first few days in Germany. We therefore would like to ask you to read this information carefully as it will answer most of your questions.

You can also find all information on our website as well as in our *Just Arrived* brochure:

- ✓ [International Office - Incomings \(German\)](#)
- ✓ [Angekommen](#)
- ✓ [International Office - Incomings \(English\)](#)
- ✓ [Just Arrived](#)

### **Before Your Arrival in Cologne**

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#### **Visa**

Make sure to inform yourself in time whether you need a visa or not. If you need to apply for a visa, make sure to select the right type of visa. Information about visa requirements can be found on our [homepage](#).

#### **Health Insurance**

All students enrolled at TH Köln are required to have health insurance. Please make sure that your insurance coverage from your home country meets all health-insurance requirements in Germany. If you cannot provide proof of valid health insurance coverage from your home country, you are required to take out health insurance with a German insurance company prior to enrolling. Students from a member country of the European Union or from Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland who are in possession of a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) are sufficiently insured. If this applies to you, you are required to **request an exemption from statutory German health insurance** immediately after your arrival. We ask you to submit a confirmation of this exemption when you enroll at TH Köln

#### **Accommodation**

Dormitory or shared apartment? Downtown or suburbs? What is the easiest way of finding affordable housing? Finding accommodation in Cologne can be a serious challenge so start as early as possible. International students will find answers to these questions as well as useful advice on all issues related to apartment-hunting in Cologne and Gummersbach on our [homepage](#).

#### ***Student Dormitories***

Cologne's most convenient and economical housing option is oftentimes a student dormitory. **Kölner Studentenwerk (KSTW)** operates 86 student dorms offering roughly 4,700 rooms for about 100,000 students of Cologne's public universities. Please be aware that Cologne University of Applied Sciences does not allocate the rooms in these dorms. In order to be

allocated a room, **please apply online** as soon as possible on the website of Kölner Studentenwerk. Initially, you might be put on a waiting list. To remain on this waiting list, you will need to confirm a link sent by the KSTW via email each month.

✓ [Kölner Studentenwerk \(German\)](#)

✓ [Kölner Studentenwerk \(English\)](#)

### Hostels

For the first days after your arrival in Cologne, it is advisable to book a room or bed in a hostel. This will usually only serve as a temporary solution should you not have found accommodation by this time.

<b>Weltempfänger Backpacker Hostel</b>	Venloer Straße 196, 50823 Köln		<a href="mailto:info@koeln-hostel.de">info@koeln-hostel.de</a> <a href="http://www.koeln-hostel.de">www.koeln-hostel.de</a>
<b>A&amp;O Hostel am Dom und Neumarkt</b>	Mauritiuswall 64/66, 50676 Köln	Phone +49 (0) 800-222 67 14	<a href="mailto:reception@aohostels.com">reception@aohostels.com</a> <a href="http://www.aohostels.com/de/koeln/">www.aohostels.com/de/koeln/</a>
<b>Jugendherberge Köln Deutz</b>	Komödienstraße 19-21, 50667 Köln	Phone +49 (0) 221 81 47 11	<a href="mailto:koeln-deutz@jugendherberge.de">koeln-deutz@jugendherberge.de</a> <a href="http://www.koeln-deutz.jugendherberge.de">www.koeln-deutz.jugendherberge.de</a>
<b>Station Hostel for Backpackers</b>	Siegesstraße 5, 50679 Köln	Phone +49 (0) 221 – 91 25 301	<a href="mailto:station@hostel-cologne.de">station@hostel-cologne.de</a> <a href="http://www.hostel-cologne.de/">http://www.hostel-cologne.de/</a>

### Private Student Dormitories

The most common accommodation option for exchange students in Cologne is to apply for a room in a public student dormitory of the Kölner Studentenwerk (KSTW). However, there also are several private student dormitories in Cologne:

<b>Internationales Studentinnenheim "Helfta-Kolleg"</b>	Kaesstraße 14-16, 50677 Köln		<a href="http://helfta-kolleg.de/">http://helfta-kolleg.de/</a>
<b>Internationales Studentenzentrum Schweidt</b>	Weinsbergstraße 74, 50823 Köln		<a href="http://www.schweidt.de/">http://www.schweidt.de/</a>
<b>Studentenwohnheim Unitas Köln e.V.</b>	Pantaleonswall 32, 50676 Köln		<a href="http://hbv-koeln.unitas.org/">http://hbv-koeln.unitas.org/</a>
<b>Haus Lipp</b>	Bachemer Str. 65-67, 50931 Köln		<a href="http://lipp-apartments.de">http://lipp-apartments.de</a>
<b>Schmittmann-Kolleg</b>	Sachsenring 26, 50677 Köln		<a href="http://www.schmittmann-kolleg.de/">http://www.schmittmann-kolleg.de/</a>
<b>Evangelische Studentengemeinde - Wohnheim der ESG</b>	Bachemer Str. 27, 50931 Köln		<a href="mailto:Mueller@esgkoeln.de">Mueller@esgkoeln.de</a>

### *Private Housing and Shared Apartments*

Many students choose to live in private apartments or share an apartment with others. The following websites provide an overview of a large number of private room offers.

[www.wg-gesucht.de](http://www.wg-gesucht.de)

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

[www.studenten-wg.de](http://www.studenten-wg.de)

[www.facebook.com/-wg.koeln](https://www.facebook.com/-wg.koeln)

[www.wfh-koeln.de](http://www.wfh-koeln.de)

### **Online Application via Mobility Online**

After your home university has selected and nominated you for an academic exchange abroad, you will be asked to file an online registration on our Mobility Online platform. Upon successful completion and review of your application, your letter of admission will be available for download on Mobility Online. Those of you attending classes in German are asked to upload – if available – a language certificate, which should be no older than one year.

### **Learning Agreement**

To prepare for your stay at our university, please fill out your Learning Agreement by entering your personal data and the courses you intend to take. We therefore ask you to contact your Erasmus+ departmental coordinator at TH Köln, who is mentioned in your letter of admission, in order to prepare your list of courses and to obtain all necessary signatures before you arrive in Cologne.

### **Your Arrival in Cologne**

There are several airports near Cologne, which we recommend as your destination airports:

- ✓ Airport Köln-Bonn: [www.koeln-bonn-airport.de](http://www.koeln-bonn-airport.de)  
(about 15 minutes to Cologne using public transportation)
- ✓ Düsseldorf International: [www.duesseldorf-international.de](http://www.duesseldorf-international.de)  
(about 45 minutes to Cologne using public transportation)
- ✓ Frankfurt Airport: [www.frankfurt-airport.de](http://www.frankfurt-airport.de)  
(about one hour to Cologne using public transportation)

For your **train connections**, please visit the website of Deutsche Bahn:

- ✓ [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de) (German)
- ✓ [http://www.bahn.de/p\\_en](http://www.bahn.de/p_en) (English)

### **Your Way to Gummersbach**

From Cologne Central Station (located adjacent to Cologne Cathedral), please take RB 25 (direction Meinerzhagen) to Gummersbach Bahnhof. This regional train runs once every hour and takes approximately one hour and ten minutes to Gummersbach.

### **Rhine-Sieg Transportation Network (VRS).**

You can find electronic schedule information for all busses and trains of the Rhine-Sieg transport network (VRS) online at:

- ✓ [www.kvb-koeln.de](http://www.kvb-koeln.de)

You can buy bus or train tickets at most platforms at the ticket machines. Alternatively, you can purchase them directly on the train at the ticket machines. Please note, however, that you will need coins should you want to buy your tickets on the train.

### **After Your Arrival in Cologne**

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#### **Proof of Valid Health Insurance**

You are required to have health insurance. If you are in possession of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), you will be sufficiently insured. Should this apply to you, you are required to request an exemption from statutory German health insurance. We ask you to submit a confirmation of this exemption when you enroll at TH KÖLN. For this reason, you will need to visit a German statutory health insurance company – for example Techniker Krankenkasse (TK) or AOK Gesundheitskasse. These companies will then issue a certificate stating that your health insurance is valid in Germany. This service is provided free of charge. Please bring this document with you when you enroll at the International Office. We unfortunately cannot accept a simple copy of your health insurance card.

#### **Enrollment**

As soon as you have arrived in Cologne, please visit the International Office in order to enroll at TH Köln. Make sure to refer to your letter of admission for further information. Please note that there is an International Office on three of our four campuses: Südstadt, Deutz and Gummertsbach. Students who study at Leverkusen Campus are asked to enroll at Südstadt Campus.

Please bring the following documents when you enroll:

- ✓ **Letter of admission**
- ✓ **Proof of health insurance from a German insurance company**
- ✓ **1 passport-size photo**

#### **Registering with the City of Cologne**

If you intend to stay in Germany for more than three months, you are required to register your new place of residence with the City of Cologne's residents' registration office (Einwohnermeldeamt). We ask you to complete this registration within a week after your arrival. Should you change places during your stay in Cologne, please make sure to inform us and the registration office as well. As Cologne has a number of residents' registration offices, you are free to choose which one to visit. The addresses of the most centrally located registration offices in Cologne, Gummertsbach, Hürth and Leverkusen are listed on our [homepage](#).

You are required to present the following documents when registering with the city:

- ✓ **A valid passport**
- ✓ **Name and address of your landlord**

### **Obtaining a residence permit**

All international students who do not hold an EU-citizenship and intend to stay in Germany for more than three months are required to obtain a residence permit at the City of Cologne's immigration office upon arrival. Students must request this residence permit during the validity period of their entry visa. We recommend you do so immediately after your arrival in Cologne. The residence permit is issued as a chip card and bears the official German title "elektronischer Aufenthaltstitel (eAT)". It is usually valid for one year and therefore needs to be renewed every year. For more detailed information visit our [homepage](#).

### **Bank Account**

We recommend that you open up a bank account with a German bank. This is particularly convenient for having your rent debited directly and for transferring your semester fee. It is generally possible for you to open up a bank account with any bank in your city of residence. Before opening up an account, please consult your bank on which documents you will need to bring, as this tends to vary from one bank to another.

### **Semester Fees**

The semester fees include your public transportation pass for the whole semester as well as different administrative fees. Once enrolled, you are required to pay semester fees of approximately €235 in order to receive your student ID-card, commonly known as 'MultiCa'. You will find the bank details in the payment request, which will be mailed to you within the first few weeks of your enrolment. These letters contain your MultiCa, your student-ID number and an email address valid throughout your time at TH KÖLN. Please note that you do not have to pay anything in advance. For more detailed information, please visit our [homepage](#).

### **Faculty and Courses**

Make sure to visit your faculty in order to introduce yourself to your departmental coordinator. He or she will be your contact during your stay in Cologne concerning all academic questions. It is therefore highly recommendable that you get to know one another.

## Checklist for Your Stay Abroad at TH Köln

To do:	When?	Done
<b>After having received the letter of admission of TH Köln...</b>		
<b>Online Application via Mobility Online</b>	upon receipt of the initial email request from TH Köln	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply for a <b>visa</b> , if required	upon receipt of your letter of admission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take out / check <b>health-insurance coverage</b> for your stay in Germany	as soon as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start looking for an <b>apartment</b> / apply for a <b>dorm room</b> in Cologne	as soon as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>
	upon receipt of your letter of admission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send the <b>Learning Agreement</b> to the Erasmus+ departmental coordinator at TH Köln in order for it to be signed	prior to your departure to Cologne	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Upon your arrival in Cologne...</b>		
<b>Request exemption from statutory health insurance</b> with a German health-insurance company or take out a new health insurance policy	immediately after your arrival in Cologne	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Enrollment at TH Köln</b> Please refer to your letter of admission for contact details, address and time of your enrollment.	immediately after your arrival in Cologne	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Register</b> with the with the City of Cologne	immediately after your arrival in Cologne	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open up a <b>bank account</b>	after your registration with the City of Cologne	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay your <b>TH Köln semester fees</b> via bank transfer	after receiving a confirmation of enrollment and opening up a bank account	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Contact your faculty</b> and your departmental coordinator	following your enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>