

**Information for new students at MAHASSA, Heidelberg
University
Winter Semester 2019/2020**

Welcome to MAHASSA!

In this list we have gathered the most important information you will need as a new student in Heidelberg.

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Accommodation

Finding a place to stay in Heidelberg can be a frustrating process. The university provides student accommodation and many international students get a place in one of these rooms. For more information on this you can visit the Studierendenwerk Heidelberg website for photos and details of the application process (<https://www.stw.uni-heidelberg.de/en>). If you have been rejected for a room in a dorm, the Studierendenwerk's Service Center and the InfoCafe International can provide you with further information on how to find a room somewhere else.

Office Hours:

Service Center at University Square (Universitätplatz):

Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

InfoCafé International in the Central Mensa (*Zentralmensa* - Im Neuenheimer Feld 304):

Monday – Thursday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

If you would prefer not to live in student accommodation a popular alternative is to find a Wohngemeinschaft (WG, pronounced “vay gay”) or shared flat. There are two kinds of WG's: ZweckWG and normal WG.

A ZweckWG is perfect for students who are only looking for a place to sleep. This type of shared flat is meant for students whose schedules keep them at the library late or out of the house the whole day. If you just need a place to crash at the end of the day and to store some of your belongings these WG's can offer you what you need. There is typically very little interaction between the flatmates in these living situations.

The alternative to this is the normal WG. In contrast to the practical atmosphere of a ZweckWG, a normal WG looks to create a community feeling within the flat. This process is more competitive as the existing flatmates will hold “castings” to interview potential new flatmates. These castings usually take place in the evening and it is normal for there to be several people scheduled to come for a casting on the same night. Typically, the casting starts with the existing flatmates showing you around the flat and they will explain how they divide housework, if and how they share food/ spices, what they like to do together as a flat, etc. They will ask you

personal questions (do you have any hobbies? what are you studying?) and will expect that you ask them some questions as well (what do they do? How is the landlord? etc...). It is normal for people who post advertisements for rooms in WG's to receive around 100 emails in the first day. Therefore, many incoming students do not receive answers to their initial messages. Do not let this dishearten you. Keep sending messages regardless of how many responses you receive. To increase your chances of getting a response write a longer message with more personal information. By giving them an idea of who you are and what you like to do they can start to imagine you living in the flat. A simple "I am interested in the room" will mean your email is disregarded immediately.

Tips for messaging:

- Address everyone in your message. The person who is moving out is responsible for writing the advertisement but it is their flatmates that you will be living with. They may mention some information about their current flatmates in the advertisement so you can find their names there. If you cannot find any information about the flatmates, use more general greetings such as "dear all".
- Give some personal information. Why are you moving to Heidelberg? What are you studying? What do you do in your free time? This will help break the ice and the WG's can start to visualize their life with you.
- If you can, write at least a few sentences in German. If you plan to take a German language course, let them know. Do you speak any other languages? Let them know!
- Let them know how long you will be staying for. Do you need long-term accommodation? Or are you just spending one semester here?
- Let them know that they can pick the date and time for the casting. It is recommended that you let them know you can work around their schedule.

Casting tips:

- If they offer you something, do not turn it down out of politeness or hesitation – enjoy yourself. This is an opportunity to "try out" spending some time together. However, do not make yourself "too" comfortable. There is an element of professionalism to the casting (like a job interview).
- If they offer you something to drink or eat, offer to help.

- They will tell you everything you will need to know about the costs, cleaning plans, information about the landlord, etc... during your interview. In turn you can ask them about the neighbours, if they do anything together (like make dinner), how they divide up space in the kitchen/bathroom, buy groceries, etc...
- Ask them questions about themselves. Are they students? Do they work? What do they do in their free time? Are they active (and noisy) until late at night, or do they appreciate quietness in the evening? Get to know them so you can start to visualize yourself living there as well. Ideally, the WG life should match your own expectation and habits.

Most students in Heidelberg advertise available rooms/apartments and post “wanted” ads for spaces in the *Facebook group WG* and *Wohnung Gesucht Heidelberg*. Otherwise, there are several nationwide websites that are used to find accommodation such as *WG Gesucht* and *Immobilienscout*. It is also common for students to live in the smaller towns outside of Heidelberg, with some even living in the neighbouring city of Mannheim, so be sure to consider options in these locations as well.

If you arrive in Heidelberg and have not been able to secure more permanent accommodation there are alternatives. Heidelberg boasts a few hostels and cheap hotels that can act as a stop gap until you have a place of your own. In emergency situations the student union also provides emergency housing. More information about this can be found on the Studierendennwerk Heidelberg website (<https://www.stw.uni-heidelberg.de/en>).

Alternative Resources:

***Wohnraumvermittlung* / Accommodation Service of the International Relations Office**

Seminarstraße 2, room 32, 69117 Heidelberg

E-mail: aaazimmer@zuv.uni-heidelberg.de

Phone: +49 6221 542497

Online Room and Board Services

www.studenten-wg.de – Residential market free of commission

www.wg-gesucht.de – Biggest residential market free of commission

www.studentenwohnungsmarkt.de – Offers a free notification service of new ads

www.zimmer69.de – By students for students, no registration necessary, ad-free

www.hc24.de – Short-time rentals of furnished rooms

Connecting with People

The University of Heidelberg offers a Buddy program for incoming students. This program helps connect you with students who can assist you in all aspects of life from registering as a resident to recommending good, cheap places to eat out. Moving to a new country alone can be stressful but this program means that you will have someone to act as a point of contact in Heidelberg so you can start meeting new people - even on the day you arrive. More information about this program can be found on the university's website (https://www.uniheidelberg.de/courses/undergraduates/arrival/Buddy-Programm_en.html).

Another great way to connect with people is through our MAHASSA Heidelberg Facebook pages. In these Facebook groups you can share articles or stories of interest to medical anthropologists and receive reminders of upcoming lectures and presentations at the South Asia Institute, as well as enabling you to connect with current MAHASSA students and professors. We encourage all MAHASSA students with a Facebook account to join these groups (MAHASSA Heidelberg & M.A. Health and Society in South Asia).

Health Insurance

Finding an insurance provider is one of the first tasks you should complete once you arrive in Heidelberg. There are two kinds of health insurance in Germany: public and private.

If you are under the age of 30 you are eligible for public insurance which is, on average, cheaper than private. There are several different insurers you can use and they have offices ("Kassen") all over Heidelberg, making it very convenient to find an office near you.

The main insurance companies are AOK Baden-Württemberg and TK (Die Techniker Kasse), however there are other options that you can easily find when you search for "Krankenkasseversicherung Heidelberg". When you find an insurance provider that suits you and your needs the best then you can simply locate the office closest to you and visit during office hours with your registration packet. They will then set up an appointment at a later date with you to prepare your health insurance card and process your documents. This should all take less than a week.

Students older than 30 years

After your 30th birthday, or after you complete your 14th semester in Germany (whichever comes first), your obligation to take out medical insurance with a statutory health insurance provider ends. If you have already been insured with a German statutory medical insurance, you can maintain your membership there. If this is not the case or if you do not wish to do that, you can choose to take out a private medical insurance in Germany.

For further **information on medical insurance and liability insurance** please contact after arrival the International Relations Office:

Ms. Gabriele Monzel

Seminarstraße 2, room 29, 69117 Heidelberg

Phone: +49 (0) 6221/54-2171

E-mail: monzel@zuv.uni-heidelberg.de

Some statutory medical insurance providers in Heidelberg:

AOK Heidelberg

Friedrich-Ebert-Platz 3

69117 Heidelberg

Phone: 06221 91401-3311

BARMER GEK Ersatzkasse

Kurfürstenanlage 3

69115 Heidelberg

Phone: 0621/1700131-6200

DAK Heidelberg

Adenauerplatz 6

69115 Heidelberg

Phone: 06221/718160

Innungskrankenkasse (IKK)

Römerstraße 5

69115 Heidelberg

Phone: 06221/53000

Kaufmännische Krankenkasse (KKH-Allianz)

Friedrich-Ebert-Anlage 21

69117 Heidelberg

Phone: 06221/4340590

Techniker Krankenkasse

Friedrich-Ebert-Anlage 1

69117 Heidelberg

Phone: 06221/534100

Techniker Krankenkasse HD-Campus

Im Neuenheimer Feld 370 (Gästehaus)

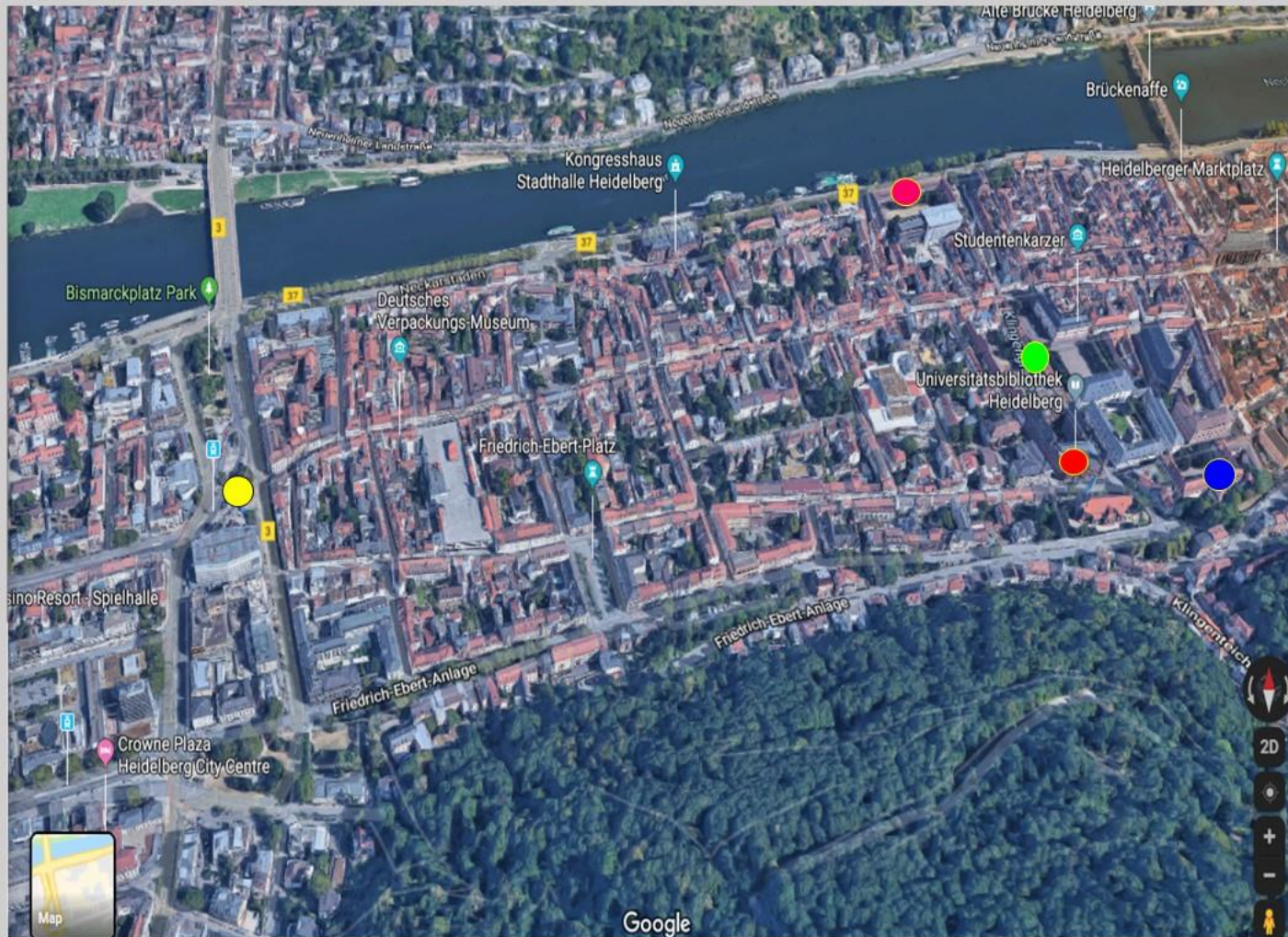
69120 Heidelberg

University Administration Building - Serviceportal, Room 35

Seminarstraße 2

69117 Heidelberg

Map of Altstadt/ Old Town (Most important locations for students)



- Bismarckplatz Square: From here you can reach mostly all buses and trams. Most important for your student life; Bus 31 and 32 (Direction to Altstadt-Universitätstplatz/ University Square), which leaves you close to the University library (Bus stop Universitätstplatz/ University Square)
- Carolinum–Studierendensadministration/ Heidelberg University Student Advice Center–International Relations Office; Here you can validate your Uni ID, ask questions regarding your student status, etc.
- Universitätsbibliothek/ University Library; Every person can use the library’s computer and reading rooms. However, if you wish to borrow books you have to be registered at the library (even if you are already registered at the University as a student)
- Zeughaus-Mensa im Marstall/ Marstall University cafeteria and canteen; in order to have a discount as a student you owe to have always your student ID with you, otherwise you will be charged as a guest customer (i.e., higher prices).
- Triplex-Mensa am Universitätstplatz/ Triplex cafeteria and canteen; in order to have a discount as a student you owe to have always your student ID with you, otherwise you will be charged as a guest customer (i.e., higher prices).

Semester Ticket



Area of application

The *Semesterticket* is a personal, non-transferable semester rail ticket. It enables students to use public transportation in the entire Rhein-Neckar region and their transport system (VRN) **without** the area *Westpfalz* (see map below). The *Semesterticket* is also valid in the 2nd class of regional trains of the *Deutsche Bahn*, but not in fast trains like IC, EC or ICE. In the west of the map below, the *Semesterticket* **ends** at **Kaiserslautern main station**. You can get more detailed information leaflets and maps (“*Wabenpläne*”) at Heidelberg main station, in all VRN selling points, in the *Studierendenwerk*’s ServiceCenter and the InfoCafé International as well as online at www.vrn.de.

Price & period of validity

170 € per semester (latest update: August 2018). The *Semesterticket* is valid for six months and you can buy it at the beginning of each month. Connection-*Semestertickets* to other regions can be purchased at an extra charge.

Where can I get the *Semesterticket*?

The *Semesterticket* is available at the *Studierendenwerk*'s ServiceCenter at *Universitätsplatz* and the InfoCafé International in the *Zentralmensa*, Im Neuenheimer Feld 304, and at all VRN selling points in Heidelberg (e.g. next to the main station).

***Semesterticket* in the online shop of RNV**

You can also buy your ticket online at **tickets.rnv-online.de**. In the online shop of RNV the *Semesterticket* costs 167,50 € (latest update: August 2018). Payment options are direct debit, credit card (Visa, Mastercard) and giro pay. The ticket will be available as PDF document which has to be printed.

Important: The *Semesterticket* is **valid only in combination with other documents!** This means that in addition to the *Semesterticket* you also have to carry your Heidelberg student ID and your personal identification card (or passport) with you at all times and show them on demand. As long as you have not yet received your student ID card, you have to carry your certificate of enrolment.

More information you can find here:

<https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/studium/studienorganisation/beitraege-und-gebuehren/semesterticket>

Registration on LSF (Courses/Seminars)

LSF is the online platform that you have to visit if you want to register on seminars or lectures, have access to your grades and credit points, receive certifications of enrollments, etc.

The registration on seminars or lectures is obligatory. The period of registration varies each semester but it is usually one month. For the specific time period of registration for each semester you get informed by the registrar of SAI, Dr. Lars Stöwesand, via email (you receive an email at your personal student email address).

Steps for registrations on seminars or lectures:

1. Visit the website of LSF (<https://lsf.uni-heidelberg.de/>).
2. Log in with your Uni ID, which you received with your certification of enrollment.

3. Choose “My Functions”.
4. Choose “Administration of Exams” and then “Apply for Exams”.
5. Choose your Study Program.
6. Choose the Modul in which the seminar you want to register for belongs.
7. Choose the specific seminar you want to register.
8. Choose “Prüfung” anmelden.

Equal Opportunities Commissioner of Heidelberg University and Commission Collegial Behaviour

Equality is a continuous effort which needs to be adjusted constantly to fit current requirements. It involves the university as a whole. Much has been accomplished in recent years: Equality plays a pivotal role at Heidelberg University. The ratio of female professors is increasing and equal opportunity measures as well as services at Heidelberg University have not only been effective internally, but have also received positive recognition from outside. And yet, a lot remains to be done. At our university, too, female postdocs are still faced with a glass ceiling. Their academic expertise is not sufficiently utilised in science and research and, as a consequence, their skills remain untapped. Safeguarding and securing this potential is a matter of equal opportunity, but it is important for the university's performance in national and international competition as well. The same applies to the capabilities and competencies of other groups. Be it people who come to us as migrants, or who take on family responsibilities, students and researchers with physical disabilities, or older colleagues: for all these groups we need to establish open spaces and points of transition with the help of equal opportunity offers.

The goal is to create equal opportunities and chances by reflecting on needs and requirements, thereby strengthening Heidelberg University's reputation as an attractive employer and innovative research site. Achieving this goal requires further structural changes, conduct that is

geared towards gender equality and equal opportunity, as well as individual support – an effort that concerns all of us.

Equal Opportunities Commissioner of Heidelberg University, Link: https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/gleichstellungsbeauftragte/ueberuns/gleichstellungsbeauftragte_en.html

Commission Collegial Behaviour (Rektoratskommission Partnerschaftliches Verhalten), Link: https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/einrichtungen/rektorat/kommission_partnerschaftliches_verhalten.html

General Q&A

Q: How can I have access to my personal student email address?

A: You have to visit the following link: <https://wwwmail.urz.uni-heidelberg.de/>. As long as you have your personal Uni ID (which is written in the certification-of-enrollment document) and your password, you have only to log in and, then, you will have access to all of your emails.

Q: Do I have to use my student email address if I have already a personal one?

A: Yes. Professors and teachers are often sending emails, materials, files, etc. on the Moodle platform and when this happens you receive directly a notification email for it. Moreover, in your student email address you receive important information about the registration period, the specific period for the payment of the semester fees, events at the University of Heidelberg, etc.

Q: What is the Moodle Platform?

A: Moodle is one of the most important websites for your student life, as through this website professors, teachers, and students share with you materials, events and information for each seminar you participate at. (Link: <https://elearning2.uni-heidelberg.de/?lang=en>).

Q: How can I see the content of a seminar that is available on Moodle?

A: You will have to search for the name of the seminar at the website of Moodle. After that, you have to give the specific password of the seminar, which each professor shares with the students during the first session of each seminar.

Q: Do I have to attend the first session of a seminar/lecture or is it not so important?

A: Quite the contrary. The first session can be perceived as the most important (including also the last session), since during this session students receive information about the ‘body’ of the seminar for the whole semester, they sign up for their participation in each through an attendance list that they receive by the professors/teachers, and they choose the day of their presentation (most seminars require presentations by the students).

Q: How can I borrow a book from the library?

A: If someone wants to borrow a book the first and most important step is to register at the library, even if s/he is already registered as a student at the University. From the time you become a member at the library you are allowed to borrow books from all the libraries of the University (for further information please visit the website: <https://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/Englisch/service/einsteiger/ubfuereinsteiger.html>).

Q: What happens if I lose my student ID card?

A: The cards that are found by someone are send directly to the ServicePortal, in Seminarstrasse 2. Even if you are not sure where exactly you lost your card (Library, Mensa, University, Centre,etc.) there is always a possibility that the card will be there, so we recommend you to ask first someone at the ServicePortal.

Q: How many lectures am I allowed to skip during the semester?

A: Usually you are allowed to miss **two** lectures for each seminar (for the absence in block seminars you have to ask precisely each professor). If you miss **more than two** sessions you

have to provide to your professor a valid documentation, which explains the reason of your absence (for example, doctor's document). Nevertheless, it is better to **ask each professor/teacher beforehand**, as the decision for the absence availability may vary.

Q: What happens if I signed up at a seminar, which I don't want to take anymore?

A: You have to inform the professor directly, since the structure and the flow of each seminar depends on the collaboration of the class with the professor. If you signed up, for example, at a seminar and you received a specific day for a presentation for which you do not want to participate anymore, your uninformed absence will probably cause problems to the whole class. In that sense, it is better to inform the professors via email on time if your interest in a seminar changes.

Accordingly, you need to **de-register from the seminar by your LSF account**, otherwise the seminar will be marked as a failed one.

Q: What happens if I miss a deadline?

A: The deadlines are designed to serve both you and the professors. Knowing the precise time you have to submit an assignment or paper is always good for you, as you can manage better your priorities based on a specific schedule. However, if you miss the deadline for an assignment or paper you have to contact your professor via email and inform her/him about the event. Either you will receive an extension or you will be asked to provide a valid document which will explain the reason of your absence (**the decision on deadlines and extensions comes by each professor, not by the students**).

If you have any further question do not hesitate to contact:

Dr. Kira Schmidt Stiedenroth (MAHASSA Course Coordinator)

Email: kira.schmidt.s@uni-heidelberg.de

Vicky Kosmidis (MAHASSA Student Assistant)

Email: vasiliki.kosmidis@sai.uni-heidelberg.de