# Brown in Germany
# Berlin Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook is designed to assist you in the process of preparing for your journey to Berlin and participation in the Brown in Berlin program. It will answer questions about what to expect of the program. A Berlin or Germany guidebook will offer more specific information about the area and country.

Studying abroad requires enormous flexibility, openness to change, and willingness to expect the unexpected. We emphasize this because past, students have read these same words and have reiterated upon their return that these qualities were important to a successful sojourn in Germany.

Students who opt for this program must understand that they are enrolling as a foreign student in a foreign university; this is by no stretch of the imagination the home campus transplanted in Berlin. The experience differs from the U.S. university experience in many ways – academically, socially, and emotionally.

As you read this handbook, we urge you to ask yourself if you have taken the necessary steps to prepare for this challenge. Are you excited about the opportunity to develop an awareness of a different culture? An intercultural experience is always an emotionally intense and profoundly challenging experience for the participant.

If you have any questions or concerns now or while away, please contact our office immediately.

Enjoy your time in Berlin!
Program Contacts

Brown in Germany Site Coordinator
Sven Merkel
Email: browninberlin@gmail.com
Telephone: 011-49-30-44652237
Cell: 011-49-177-17.24.26.0

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Regional Officer, North American and Latin America
Humboldt-Universitaet zu Berlin
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Brown in Germany Faculty Advisor
Jane Sokolosky
Department of German Studies
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Office of International Programs
Box 1973
Providence, RI 02912
Tel. 401-863-3555
Fax. 401-863-3311
Email: OIP@brown.edu

Dismissal Policy
The Office of International Programs in consultation with the Site Personnel and the Program Faculty Directors at Brown reserves the right to dismiss a student and require that they leave immediately if in our judgment the student behaves in a manner that endangers him/herself, others on the program or the program’s continued operations. Illegal drug use is grounds for immediate dismissal.
Pre-Departure Checklist

1. Prepare yourself. Read this handbook, the FAQs of Study Abroad, the General OIP Study Abroad Handbook- Take It With You, the Humboldt University Guide for International Students, and a guidebook on Germany and/or Berlin.

2. Check with the OIP to make sure you have completed all necessary paperwork.

3. Meet with my concentration/major advisor to discuss any credit that I want to count for my concentration and get pre-approval. Arrange a way to contact concentration/major advisors, if changes are necessary once in Berlin. (General credit for graduation transfers automatically for Brown students, as long as you earn a grade of C or higher.)

4. Make photocopies of important documents – your passport, home university student ID card, driver's license, health insurance card, and acceptance letter from Humboldt, and put them in a separate place from the original documents. Have health insurance information: policy number, reimbursement procedures and forms, and list of medical procedures covered.

5. Have your medical, dental and vision check-ups as recommended. Get supply of prescription medication if you are taking any. If you know that the medication is available in Germany, bring the original prescription.

6. Email the OIP and Berlin Site Coordinator your flight itinerary.

7. Determine your needs for adapters and voltage converters for your electronic devices, and consider buying small appliances (e.g. hair dryers, etc.) on site. Purchase electrical converters for all appliances you take with you. They can be found at any hardware or electronics store in the U.S. but are very difficult to find in Germany. Don’t use a cheap converter, as they have been known to burn out and damage appliances and electronics. Ask a reputable computer store for good quality converters and think about bringing back-up storage devices.

8. Plan to have financial backup for your entire stay. Credit cards and ATM cards are options. See the Money Matters chapter for more information.
Documents Needed upon Entering the Country

1. Passport and Visa – A valid passport is necessary for entrance to Germany. Check that it is valid for 6 months after your departure date from Berlin. US citizens do not need to obtain a visa in advance; Non-US or non-EU citizens should check with their nearest German consulate for additional visa requirements.

2. Letter of Financial Support - necessary for entrance to Germany and to obtain a residency permit.

3. Medication and prescription documentation. Remember to keep all prescriptions in their original packaging so that customs officials know what they are.

4. The equivalent in Euro of about EUR 200-300 for the first few days.
Academic Program

Orientation and Language Course
The Brown in Berlin Orientation is designed to help you find your way around your new environment. Within the first two weeks you will complete the registration processes listed below with various authorities inside and outside the university. All program participants receive a month-long orientation program and German language course prior to the start of the regular university session.

Besides helping you through these registration processes, the orientation program will assist you in navigating Berlin's cultural and academic life. Throughout the orientation period, numerous events are planned such as visits to museums, walking tours through parts of the city and visits to a theater performance and exhibitions of interest. Past cultural excursions have included Buckow, Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Meißen and Dresden. All events are used to explain how people live in Berlin and what you need to know in order to make your stay a pleasant and fulfilling one. A main goal of the orientation program is to prepare you for your time in Berlin, including dealing with German administration, renting an apartment, purchasing student fare tickets, tackling coursework at Humboldt University, giving oral presentations, and writing essays for a seminar.

Intensive German Language Course
All students are required to take a credit-bearing intensive German Language course during the orientation period. The language course is offered through Humboldt University's Language Center and is designed for foreign students participating a university partnership exchange program at the Humboldt. It takes place before the semester starts.

Language Tutoring
The program coordinator in Berlin is available to students throughout the semester as a tutor for essays and for students preparing to give oral presentations in German.

University Courses
At Humboldt University, there are currently three different types of degree programs available: Magister, Diplom, and Lehramt programs. Diplom is generally for sciences, Magister is predominately for humanities, and Lehramt is for students who wish to teach at a public school. All universities in Germany are in the process of converting to the BA/MA system. You must register in specific departments and are required to take courses for a Schein. This process will be explained in detail during orientation on site.

Higher education studies are divided into an introductory stage (Grundstudium) and an advanced stage (Hauptstudium), each of which lasts at least four semesters. German students complete the introductory stage with an intermediate or pre-Diplom examination and the advanced stage with a Diplom or Magister degree, or with a State Examination (Staatsexamen) qualification. Neither the intermediate nor the pre-Diplom examination constitutes an academic degree or professional qualification, in contrast to the Bachelor's degree in the U.S.
Departments
Exchange students are normally enrolled as Magister students or students in BA programs, which allows them to study one major and two minor subjects (or fields of study). For example, the German Department (Germanistik) at EKU consists of four rather independent fields of study: "neuere deutsche Literatur“, "deutsche Linguistik“, "ältere deutsche Sprache und Literatur“ und "Deutsch als Fremdsprache.“ Every field equals one minor or major field of study - so theoretically it is not possible to enroll for all fields of study the Department offers, since you can enroll in just three of them.

That’s why it is important to know which courses in which departments and in which fields of study you want to get credits for at your home institution. Your major and the courses you want credit transfer from should guide your decisions about which field of study you choose to register in. Of course, you can take courses in other departments as well, but you may not get a Schein for it. The site personnel will assist you in the process of preparing a schedule.

Choosing Courses
Besides Humboldt’s general course announcement (Vorlesungsverzeichnis), which is provided with the welcome packet, some departments issue an annotated course announcement (Kommentiertes Vorlesungsverzeichnis), which contains detailed information on the courses offered in that particular department. You can purchase them during the orientation period for about 2 Euro at the department offices.

German students typically take 7-12 courses each semester. However, several of these will be lecture courses, with no written work. German students do not need assessment and a grade in each course they take, since their degree is dependent on performance in major thesis work and final examinations, not on coursework. For a full semester’s credit at Brown, you are expected to complete 4 courses for evaluation (i.e. for a Schein – see below) each semester.

Exchange students are advised to take between 4 and 6 courses decided in consultation with the on-site coordinator during the orientation. This number approximates the normal load of a German student while still allowing for your adjustment to a new culture and language. Courses at Humboldt generally meet once a week for either 45, 90, or 180 minutes.

The type of course can vary from seminar to lecture. You should choose from the following types of courses which are offered for the introductory studies (Grundstudium): Proseminar, Seminar, Vorlesung, and Übung. Vorlesungen (lecture courses) usually do not involve any evaluation for German students. Brown students may take a maximum of two Vorlesungen for Brown credit per semester and must be especially careful to ensure that the instructor is willing to provide an evaluation on which a grade and credit can be based. Seminare and Proseminare are similar to junior/senior level courses. Übungen are usually lab courses, or include field trips and practica. Very helpful are introductory courses (Einführungskurse) where you learn about academic expectations as well as the particular format of papers in your field of studies, which will certainly differ from what you have done at Brown.
Besides courses in their concentration(s), you are advised to take courses in "German as a foreign language" (Deutsch als Fremdsprache) at the Spracheninstitut. These courses are typically designed for learners of German, and they are quite popular among exchange students because some of them include excursions. They also offer the possibility to meet other exchange students from all over the world who are in a similar situation at Humboldt. You may take one German language course for credit.

**Before leaving your home college/university**
- Pre-select 6-8 courses and complete the Course Pre-Approval Form as part of your application to the OIP. The online course catalog for Humboldt University can be found here: [https://www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/counselling/course-catalogue](https://www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/counselling/course-catalogue)
- Meet with your concentration/major advisor to determine which courses will count toward concentration credit and to obtain their signature on the Course Pre-Approval form.
- Discuss selected courses with Brown in Germany faculty advisor.
- Speak to the study abroad advisor at the OIP if you have any questions.
- Your Course Pre-Approval Form will be forwarded to the on-site coordinator in Berlin.

**Scheine**
The maximum number of Brown course units you can transfer from study abroad per semester is four or per year eight. For each course taken for credit, you will need to receive a Schein – a document confirming that you have completed the course and received a letter grade.

When registering for a course, it’s your responsibility to go to each professor and ensure they can give you a Schein, especially since it may not be assumed that you will receive one (German professors do not evaluate each student in a course, especially not in Vorlesungen).

The requirements for Scheine may differ from course to course, like at your home institution. It is rare to have any mid-term exams, but an oral presentation is often required. In addition to that, you are generally required to write a paper of about 10 to 20 pages. Sometimes just a paper is expected at the end of the course and sometimes you have a Klausur (a written exam).

**Before leaving Berlin**

**VERY IMPORTANT**: Make sure that you receive all your Scheine before you leave Berlin! This means that you will need to hand in any necessary paper or other coursework before the last day of classes. This will give the professor a chance to evaluate you and fill out the Schein before departing for break.

**About four weeks before you leave Berlin** make sure you arrange a deadline to turn in any work due with the professor, so that you can physically pick up the Scheine from her/him before you leave Berlin. For German students, papers are often due on the first day of the next semester, but you are advised to complete all requirements by the end of the course, otherwise you will have trouble obtaining the Scheine.
You are responsible for submitting a copy of your Scheine to the site coordinator in Berlin and for bringing your Scheine back with you to the US. When you return to Brown, you must bring your Scheine to Maria Snead in Room 420 of the OIP (J. Walter Wilson) in order to have your transfer credit processed. We recommend that you have the Site Coordinator photocopy your Scheine in the unlikely event that the originals are lost in transit.

**Humboldt University**

Humboldt University was founded in Berlin in 1810. The Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm III., donated the first building to the university - the former Palace of Prince Heinrich of Prussia. The university carried the name "Friedrich-Wilhelms-University" from 1828 to 1949 when it was renamed after the two brothers Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Wilhelm von Humboldt’s founding concept was for a "Universitas litterarum" which would achieve a unity of teaching and research and provide students with an all-round humanist education. This concept spread throughout the world and gave rise to the foundation of many universities of the same type over the next century and a half.

From the outset, the university in Berlin had the four classical faculties of Law, Medicine, Philosophy and Theology. Its first academic term began with 256 students and 52 teaching staff. Professors such as Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel (Philosophy), Karl Friedrich von Savigny (Law), and Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland (Medicine), shaped the profile of the individual faculties in accordance with Humboldt’s concept.

Partly due to the influence of the natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt, the university pioneered the introduction of many new disciplines. Later, a total of 29 Nobel Prize winners did some of their scientific work at the university in Berlin, including Albert Einstein, Max Planck and Fritz Haber. The university was Alma Mater to many famous people such as Heinrich Heine, Adelbert von Chamisso, Ludwig Feuerbach, Otto von Bismarck, Karl Liebknecht, Alice Salomon, Karl Marx and Kurt Tucholsky. Heinrich Mann was the first honorary doctor of the university after the end of the Second World War.

The early decades of the 20th century were characterized by great academic achievements. In 1901, Jacobus Henricus v. Hoff from the Netherlands received the university's first Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his research into the laws of chemical dynamics. The antiquity expert Theodor Mommsen published trend setting work on Roman History, and in 1902 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Emil von Behring received the first Nobel Prize for Medicine for the development of an effective cure for diphtheria, and some years later Robert Koch, who discovered the tuberculosis and cholera bacteria, also obtained the Nobel Prize.
In the thirties and forties, the university went through a dark chapter of German history: the expulsion of Jewish academics and students and political opponents of National Socialism, and the extermination of some, did great damage to the university in the period from 1933 to 1945. It was a shameful moment for the university when students and lecturers took part in the burning of books on May 10, 1933. In the subsequent war years, many academics left the university which had once been renowned as the home of humanitarian thought.

Weakened by this great loss of scientific potential, teaching was resumed in January 1946 with seven faculties in partly war-damaged buildings. The political turmoil of the post-war period and the protest of students and lecturing staff against the increasing Communist influence on the university led to a division among the staff and students. As a result, the Free University of Berlin was founded in December 1948 in the American sector of the city.

The university reforms of 1950/51 and 1967/68 caused the university to develop in a way that ran counter to its former academic traditions and changed the academic content, study procedures and research conditions in obedience to the ruling ideology.

The reunification of the two German states in 1990 made Berlin a city with three universities. In spite of the problems associated with unification, Humboldt University went through an extraordinary process of reorganization and succeeded in gaining outstanding scientists from east and west, from Germany and abroad.

As a result of the internal restructuring process, the Humboldt University is now made up of eleven faculties and two central institutes. Today, 64 disciplines lead to the "Diplom/Magister" degree; the degree of "BA/MA" can be obtained in 168 different subjects. Included are programs leading to the "Staatsprüfung" degree, i.e. Law, Medicine, and Dentistry, and the university and church exams in Protestant Theology. In spite of its unsteady and turbulent history over several decades, Humboldt University has remained true to its principles concerning the unity of research and teaching.
Health and Safety

Before you go...
Consult your own physician and dentist or other health care provider for a checkup to make sure there are no current health issues. If you have specific concerns about your own personal health situation, please discuss them with your own health care provider in terms of your plans to study abroad.

There are no special immunizations required for travel to Germany. The same holds true for Western Europe. If you plan to travel outside Western Europe during your stay, please check with the Center for Disease Control (http://www.cdc.gov), a reputable travel clinic, and the consulate of that country for required entry documents and immunizations.

Prescription Medication
Medication cannot be mailed to you in Germany. If you take prescription medicine regularly, including contraceptives, take enough with you for the entire time you are away. Medicines differ from country to country and might be difficult to obtain in the exact formula you need. At Customs you might be asked for the original prescription, so you should take it with you. It’s also good to have the doctor give you the generic names of the drugs in case you need to consult a local doctor or get an equivalent prescription while abroad. If you wear contact lenses, consider taking extra solution as well as a spare set of lenses or glasses. Remember to take a copy of your lens prescription as well in case you lose a contact or break your glasses.

If you need prescription medication regularly and do not intend to bring a semester’s supply, bring a copy of your prescription along. Make sure it is clearly written and indicates the generic name of the drug. In most cases, a physician in Germany will not fill the prescription provided by your U.S. doctor without first doing an examination and confirming the diagnosis of your condition.

Be aware that some drugs commonly prescribed in the United States are considered “narcotics” and highly regulated in Europe (e.g. Ritalin). It is best to bring with you the full amount necessary for your stay upon arrival.

When you travel in Europe, make sure to label all medication clearly and to keep it in the original containers, which show the prescription number. This will facilitate customs clearance in and out of the country. You should also carry with you a copy of the prescription script from your doctor as custom officials have the right to confiscate medications as illegal drugs if you cannot prove proof that the medication is a legal prescription.

Health Care
Our on-site coordinator has lists of doctors, counseling services, etc. in the Berlin area. Please contact him if you need any assistance making appointments or dealing with health issues. If you are accustomed to taking a specific brand of over-the-counter medication, such as Tylenol or Sudafed, it is best to bring some with you, as certain U.S. brands are not available in Germany.
Health Insurance

US Health Insurance
Be certain to consult your insurance provider for coverage overseas. Please remember that healthcare providers in Germany and other countries in Europe will ask for payment up front with the expectation that you will get reimbursed after you submit forms and receipts to your insurance provider. Make sure you bring your private insurance policy number and other relevant documents, including information on all medical procedures covered by your policy and the process for reimbursement. Contact your health insurance provider for reimbursement forms, and please take these forms with you when you go, to save you time if you need medical assistance.

If you are carrying Brown student health insurance, reimbursement forms are available from the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services. If you have any questions regarding Brown student health insurance, you can call or write to:

Cheryl Moan
Brown University, Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services
Box 1848
Providence, RI 02912
Phone: 401-863-9481
Email: Cheryl_Moan@brown.edu

Note: Do not suspend any American or other coverage, since if you become ill, then this may be considered a pre-existing condition when you need to re-enroll in coverage at home; in addition, coverage with the German national health insurance (see below) does not start right away.

German Health Insurance
German universities require proof of health insurance for every student. The German health insurance the program provides covers you from the first day of the regular semester at Humboldt (beginning of October or April) to one month after the end of the program (mid-August). We typically work with BARMER one of the health insurances that have special programs for students. Be sure that you have insurance in place that will cover you during the first weeks of orientation until the German health insurance coverage begins.

Travel Assistance & Emergency Insurance
All students studying abroad through Brown’s Office of International Programs are provided with a Brown travel assistance plan, which covers evacuation and repatriation as well as some other services. This plan is provided by International SOS (www.internationalsos.com).

In case of emergency, contact the Brown in Germany on site coordinator as well, first if possible! We recommend that students not use International SOS when they are in Berlin.
or elsewhere in Germany and instead to contact our Berlin coordinator first, as the
program coordinator can be much more efficient and helpful in these cases. In an
emergency situation outside of Germany, please contact the OIP office as well as your
nearest International SOS Alarm Center. The Paris International SOS Office is the regional
center for continental Europe and the northwest region of Africa.

International SOS Office
International SOS
1, rue du Parc
92593 Levallois-Perret Cedex
Paris, France
Admin Tel: +33 (0) 155 633 232
Admin Fax: +33 (0) 155 633 234

Assistance center - Paris
Open 24 hours a day
International SOS (Assistance) S.A.
Tel: +33 (0) 155 633 155
Tel (Japanese): +33 (0) 155 633 107
Fax: +33 (0) 155 633 156

When you contact International SOS, you must reference your Group Membership #: 11BSGC000031

The services provided by International SOS range from telephone advice and referrals to
full-scale evacuation by private air ambulance. The SOS network of multilingual specialists
operates 24 hour a day, 365 days a year from SOS Alarm Centers around the world.

However, International SOS is not health insurance. Requests for reimbursement for
medical care received while abroad should be submitted to your health insurance provider.
You will also be given a wallet size card with important information on how to access
International SOS services. Please carry this with you at all times in case you need
emergency assistance.

**IMPORTANT**: Remember that your first contact should always be your site coordinator.
If you are traveling and/or in a situation where you are not able to reach your contact for
your coordinator, you should contact the Office of International Programs at 401-863-3555
or, if after regular office hours, the Brown University Public Safety Office at 401-863-3322,
or International SOS, who will work to meet your needs immediately and will contact the
University’s on-call staff in the United States while coordinating services with Brown
University.

Please be aware that some of International SOS’s services carry additional charges. Should
you request a service which has an additional charge, International SOS will inform you in
advance and will require a credit card number in order to activate the service. If, in the
event of an emergency, Brown University provides the financial guarantee to International
SOS on your behalf, the University will bill you for this charge upon receipt of the actual
amount by ISOS. Please know that such charges may not be billed until after you return from the trip abroad.

Should you have any questions about the coverage, please call the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services at 401-863-9481 or visit the International SOS website: http://www.internationalsos.com/private/Brownu/. For reference purposes, Brown’s group membership number is 11BGSC000031.

**U.S. Embassy**
The US Embassy in Berlin provides US Citizens Services. If you are an American citizen with an after-hours emergency, such as the hospitalization, arrest, or death of an American citizen, please call (030) 8305-0 from within Germany. For calls from the U.S., please call 01149-30-8305-0. **NOTE:** Lost, stolen, or expired passports can only be replaced during normal business hours and do not constitute after hours emergencies.

Embassy of the United States Berlin  
Clayallee 170  
14191 Berlin  
Federal Republic of Germany  
Tel.: +49-30-8305-0  
Web: http://germany.usembassy.gov/acs/berlinacs/
Arrival in Germany

Passport and Visa
Your passport MUST be up to date and valid for at least 6 months past the date of your final return to the United States. In order to enter Germany as a U.S. citizen, you do not need a specific visa. However, a financial verification entry document with the text in both languages is required (see below), and customs officials may ask to see your original letter of admission from the German university. Students who are citizens of the European Union may enter Germany just with their passport.

For students who are not US citizens, make sure your necessary U.S. visa documents are up to date with your home school’s international students office for your re-entry to the U.S. Students who are neither American citizens nor citizens of the European Union must check the German regulations pertaining to their nationalities and secure any special entry documents that may be required. Do this early, since considerable time may be necessary for clearance to be obtained for citizens of certain countries. Consult the OIP at Brown if you have questions about the information you receive from the German Consulate.

Financial Guarantee for a Residence Permit
This document must be completed, signed by parent or guardian, and notarized. You must prove that you have sufficient funds to support yourself while in Germany (approximately 750€). You must bring this form when you enter Germany, along with the appropriate documentation (original bank statement and 2 copies).

QAr
Arrival Day
Upon arrival in Berlin, you will be picked up by the site personnel if informed early enough. Please inform OIP as early as possible of your itinerary. You will be taken to the temporary housing for the time of the orientation / language course. You will receive a welcome package, including a schedule for the first few weeks, a course catalog (Vorlesungsverzeichnis) and other useful information about Berlin and Humboldt University.

Shops usually close at 8 p.m., supermarkets at 8 p.m., some at 9 p.m. and some department stores at 10 p.m. on Saturdays and do not re-open until Monday. If you arrive on the scheduled Saturday, please plan to eat out in restaurants until shops open again. There is one exception to opening hours: at Ostbahnhof (Berlin-Friedrichhain), Hauptbahnhof (Mitte) and Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse (Mitte), supermarkets (Minimal and LIDL) are open every day until 9 p.m. including Saturdays and Sundays.

Delayed Arrivals
Should your flight be delayed, please notify our Berlin Coordinator and your OIP study abroad advisor.
Students on the Berlin program arrange for their own housing for the semester, with the assistance of our on-site coordinator. Housing is typically university housing (which you must apply for online through UniExchange; housing assignments and leases are handled by a third-party provider called ERG) or in shared apartments arranged once you are on site in Berlin.

Please note that the housing market in Berlin is very tight, and it is getting increasingly difficult to find housing in a shared apartment for just a semester; you must be flexible about housing arrangements if you pursue this option. If you are considering university housing, please note that most of the residence halls are about a 30-minute subway-ride away from the university.

**Student University Housing**

Humboldt University tries to assist study abroad students in finding accommodations by placing them in student residence halls in Berlin. Students can choose from a limited number of accommodation options: Studentendorf Adlershof or Studentenwerk Berlin (Allee der Kosmonauten/Aristotelessteig).

If you are interested in obtaining university housing, please read through the housing information and guidelines from Humboldt University: [https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/accommodation-1?set_language=en](https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/accommodation-1?set_language=en)

Keep in mind that you must register to request university housing through UniExchange when you complete your online student registration with Humboldt. After the registration deadline has passed, you will be contacted by ERG to apply for and confirm university housing.

Please note that all ERG housing contracts are for a duration of 6 months (September 1 to February 28 or March 1 to August 31); a shorter rental period is not possible. Spaces are very limited. You will need to pay a housing deposit along with your application by the deadline established by ERG.

**Apartment Living: Overview**

Students who choose the apartment option will use local housing resources to find accommodation, which ranges from a room in a person’s home to a furnished shared apartment (Wohngemeinschaft). Depending on availability, you may be living with local professionals, local students, or by yourself.

The advantage of this housing option is that you will find an apartment that suits you in the neighborhood you want and with the people you choose. You will also benefit from the additional language practice with your German housemates.

**Apartment Living: Process**

Students initially live in temporary housing accommodations arranged by the program coordinator. Throughout the orientation period, students work with the program coordinator and a local
housing agency to find a room in a shared apartment, where they will live with local Germans for the remainder of the semester or year. During the orientation period, groups of two to three will visit apartments you are interested in. The program coordinator will also talk about “Stadtbezirke” (parts of the city) attractive to students and projected costs so that you will get an understanding of what to expect. Housing vocabulary will be reviewed, words and phrases concerning signing contacts with landlords will be introduced and interview questions will be prepared in our language class during the first few days of the orientation program.

In the past, students have had good experiences with finding apartments, but remember that each semester is unique depending on your preferences and the availability in Berlin. Don’t forget: you are looking for a room in apartment for only 3-4 months NOT a lifetime – adjust your expectations accordingly! Once you have decided on a place, you will sign the rental contract with the other apartment-mates.

Finding housing is a very valuable cross-cultural experience, and you will enjoy the apartment even more because of the sense of accomplishment that comes with success in a new language and country.

**Rental Insurance**

Students renting a room may sometimes be required to have a household contents insurance (*Hausratversicherung*), which can be extremely helpful in case of theft, fire or water damage, which may occur in a student’s apartment or flat.
Money Matters

The Euro
On January 1, 2002, the official currency became the Euro. The following coins are available: 1 cent, 2 cents, 5 cents, 10 cents, 20 cents, 50 cents, 1 Euro, and 2 Euros. The following notes are available: 5 Euros, 10 Euros, 20 Euros, 50 Euros, 100 Euros, 200 Euros and 500 Euros. The different countries mint their own coins. a

Take most of your spending money with you in traveler’s checks (American Express or James Cook work well) or have an American credit card that you can get cash advances from (MasterCard or Visa are the most common in Germany). It’s a good idea to have a credit card anyway, in case of emergencies. You should also have between 200 and 300 Euro available in cash for the first few days (these are always the most expensive days until you get used to Berlin – i.e. where to shop and eat out at reasonable prices). You can change money at the airport upon arrival.

German Bank Accounts
Most German banks offer student accounts, some at no fee (Deutsche Bank, Commerzbank). They usually offer a checking account including an ATM card which functions as a Euro-Card as well (that means you can use ATMs all over Europe, in some shops it even works like an Express-Check card; don’t confuse it with the new currency called EURO or the Euro-/Mastercard). They might have an option for a credit card (MasterCard or VISA) as well. Fees usually apply to all types of cards (for an ATM/Eurocard around EUR 5,- per year, for a Credit card around EUR 25,- per year). A savings account is often free of charge in general and earns a small amount of interest.

Since you will find a branch of the Deutsche Bank right across from the main building of Humboldt University and next to the Palais/Kommode, we recommend opening an account there. If you are interested in opening a German bank account, the program coordinator on site will assist you.

Deutsche Bank
Unter den Linden 13-15
(opposite the National Library)
10117 Berlin
Phone: (+49 30) 34 07 0

Humboldt University also provides a list of banks located near the university:
https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-landwegweiser/05/01_05

Common Payment Methods
In Germany, you usually pay in cash (although the situation is beginning to change and credit cards are becoming more acceptable). In some supermarket chains you can use your ATM/Euro-card to pay with no extra fee. Many stores and restaurants will also allow you to pay with your ATM card. You can use a credit card in restaurants marked with the appropriate symbols (note that not all restaurants accept credit cards, and pubs usually
don’t accept credit cards at all). Credit cards are widely accepted in department stores, gas stations, book shops and at Deutsche Bahn counters. Unfortunately they don’t accept credit cards at drugstores, but sometimes smaller shops do take them. Keep in mind that department stores usually have a grocery section that accepts credit cards as well.

**Traveler’s Checks**
Unlike in the US, it is not possible to pay with traveler’s checks in restaurants, shops or supermarkets. You can exchange them into cash at an exchange office, any bank, a travel agency or the main post office. We suggest buying American Express Traveler’s Checks in Euro (then you don’t pay an exchange fee when cashing them) although $U.S. checks are easily exchanged. If you want to speculate on the exchange rate, you might want to buy the checks in U.S. dollars. There is an American Express Travel Agency at Friedrichstraße 172 close to the main building of Humboldt University.

**International Transactions**
You or your family can wire money from a U.S. account to your account in Germany. A wire transfer into a checking account will cost 25,- EUR (minimum) and takes only a few days. You also pay at least 25,- EUR to get a personal check deposited into your account, but it usually takes up to 6 weeks to be credited. You can withdraw money from a U.S. account using an ATM card.

Request information from your bank about which cities in Europe their ATM system is active in and how much each transaction costs. It is fairly common for each foreign ATM transaction to cost $5, so you might want to plan less frequent withdrawals – maybe once a month and then deposit the money in your German account.

The best and cheapest way to exchange money or transfer funds is with the help of an American Express credit card and a personal check. You can go to every American Express office and cash a personal check with your American Express credit card. The credit card in your name is basically just taken as a backup/insurance for your check. American Express applies no fee on these transactions.

We would recommend that you get a student credit card from American Express and deposit sufficient funds for the semester in your personal checking account. Mind that this doesn’t void what we suggested for the first couple of days after your arrival. There are American Express Offices in any bigger city like Munich, Berlin, and Stuttgart.

**Refund Policy**
Withdrawal Prior to the Start of the Program: Any expenses that have been incurred by Brown on behalf of the student once the student has made a commitment to the program (in writing and/or by submitting the program deposit), will be the responsibility of the student (i.e., host institution fees, pre-payment of orientation housing, etc.) and charged to the student account.

Withdrawal After the Start of the Program: If a student withdraws from a study abroad program during the first five weeks of the program, he or she is eligible for a refund of Brown tuition payments based on the schedule below. Brown is not responsible for indirect
costs paid directly by the student, including, but not limited to, passport fees, vaccinations, and transportation costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Refund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prior to program start</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the first 14 days</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in days 15-21</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in days 22-28</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in days 29-35</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after day 35</td>
<td>no refund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For students who leave because of a medical or family emergency, the same refund policy applies. A student who is suspended, dismissed, or withdraws while under investigation for misconduct, will not have tuition payments refunded.

Students who choose to withdraw from a program abroad and, subsequently, enroll at Brown during the semester that corresponds to their semester abroad will be responsible for all costs incurred by Brown up to the time they withdrew from the program.

If a student withdraws from a program, the deposit paid to confirm his or her place on the program is not refundable.
Life in Berlin

Besides the important academic nature of the exchange, the second, no less important part of studying abroad is living in and understanding a different culture. In your classes about Germany you might have learned about the country and its people, but actually living in a German city or town brings the culture much more to life.

Berlin is not only Germany’s biggest and most densely populated city, but it is the most diverse city as well. Among the approximately 3.5 million inhabitants, 20% are of foreign heritage. Parts of the city like Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain or Kreuzberg are famous for their social as well as ethnic diversity. Other sections like Grunewald and Charlottenburg represent the posh part of the city, whereas Wedding is traditionally populated by workers. Mahrzahn and Ahrensfelde are "famous" for their East German blocks-of-flats-architecture of the late 70’s and 80’s, whereas Grünau, Pankow, and Lichtenrade are known to be the greenest parts of the city. On July 1, 2001, the Berlin government changed the administrative structure of Berlin and merged the existing 23 Stadtbezirke into 13 Stadtbezirke in what was called a “structural reform”. It was meant to cut administrative costs but had some influence on the neighborhoods. The Stadtbezirke Mitte, Tiergarten and Wedding constitute a new part of town, Pankow, Prenzlauer Berg and Weißensee form another, and Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg joined for a third.

The social and ethnic diversity results in a very broad cultural spectrum. Because of its size, famous artists from all over the world stop in Berlin on a regular basis, and exhibitions that travel around the world open their doors in Berlin. Due to liberal regulations, cultural events might take place around the clock, accompanied by open clubs, pubs and bars. In Berlin, you can choose from the programs of 60 theaters, 141 cinemas, 130 museums, and thousands of ethnic restaurants, bars, cafes, pubs and typical Berliner Kneipen.

Due to three universities and some 30 colleges, as well as to a network of public facilities, you will find as many as 258 libraries in Berlin, among them the Amerika Gedenkbibliothek with more than 1,500,000 circulating items and the Berliner Stadtbibliothek with no less than 1,297,000 books, magazines, CD’s, maps and more, the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz and the University libraries of the Free University, Humboldt University and the Technical University.

Cultural Events

Fall Semester
In September, Berlin has its Berlin Festival Weeks (Berliner Festwochen) which have a particular focus every year. You will be in the capital Berlin, when Germany celebrates its national holiday - Reunification Day - on October 3rd. In November, Berlin hosts its top-rated Jazz Festival Jazz Fest Berlin with performances held in venues throughout the city. Christmas season in Germany and the traditions around it are famous world-round, so be sure to be in Berlin when this season starts. There are Christmas markets in literally every part of the city! Check out the different markets throughout Berlin and their offers - Pfefferkuchen, Christstollen, and Glühwein. Also makes sure to be in the city for New Year’s Eve and experience how Berliner and their guest’s celebrate the turn of the year.

21
Spring Semester
If you are on the program for the full academic year, you won’t want to miss the International Film Festival Berlin (Berlinerale) in February, but be aware that it is difficult to get tickets for the shows. During the second half of March, the Festival Days start in Berlin. This is a series of concerts and operas under the auspices of the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, right across from Humboldt University. May brings the Carnival of the Cultures (Karneval der Kulturen), June the Christopher Street Day, and July the Classic Open Air and the world famous Loveparade, Berlin’s top annual Techno event (or the Love-Club-Week, in case the parade gets cancelled).

Transportation

Within Berlin
Berlin has a very developed system of public transportation. It is operated by BVG (Berliner Verkehrsgemeinschaft) und DB (Deutsche Bundesbahn). You can literally use the U-Bahn (subway/underground), S-Bahn (city train; subway, but on the surface), bus and tram (street car) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. BVG and DB publish a booklet with the timetables of all routes/lines and another booklet with the maps of all routes/lines for about 5- Euro each. We usually try to provide you with one bvgl-atlas and a BVG-timetable during the orientation.

Student Transportation Pass
Your Humboldt University student ID will include a monthly student pass for public transportation. It allows you to ride free on all trains and buses. It also gives you discount admission to all student clubs and some movie theaters. The fee for the “SemTicket” (Semester Ticket for public transport) is provided by the program. The “SemTicket” is valid for one semester (fall: October 1 to March 31; Spring: April 1 to September 30). You can find out more about the Semester Ticket here: https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/wegweiser/09/09_02_01

For the orientation month, students are advised to buy a ticket at their own expense (about EUR 70). In the event that you forget your ticket, make sure to have EURO 2.20 in coins at hand to be able to buy a ticket at the vending machines with the exact change. Most times the vending machines are not able to give you change.

By Bike
Traveling by bike is a good alternative to public transportation. Renting or buying a second-hand bike are inexpensive alternatives. Humboldt University provides information to students on bike travel here: https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/wegweiser/09/09_02_02

Outside Berlin
You can purchase a BahnCard 50 for the train, which entitles you to 50% off all second class rail fares in Germany. The Schönes-Wochenende-Ticket is also a great deal and allows you and four friends to ride on regional trains for a group rate of EUR 28,- per day between Friday and Sunday.
Plane travel is also convenient and inexpensive. Visit travel websites like www.ryanair.com or www.travelocity.com to find cheap fares.

Other inexpensive ways of traveling are through Mitfahrzentrale (ridesharing centers, where you tell them where you want to go, and they tell you who is planning to drive there -- you pay a flat rate at the counter and share the cost of gas with the driver) or by bus.

Additional Information on student travel can be found through the International student Guide from Humboldt: https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/wegweiser/09/09_13

While abroad, you should remember that public transportation is the way the majority of local residents get around their town and country, and so it should be a part of your experience as well. For that reason, and for reasons of economy, we strongly discourage students from renting automobiles or other motorized vehicles while abroad.

**Shopping**

Many of the supermarkets and shops in the center of Berlin are open from Monday to Saturday from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m., with some supermarkets open until 10 p.m. or even midnight. Some late-night shops are open 24 hours a day, usually even on Sundays.

Information on supermarkets in the center of Berlin can be found here: https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/wegweiser/09/09_03

**Student Life at Humboldt**
The International Office at Humboldt University provides extensive information for incoming study abroad/international students through its online Guide for International Students.

- International Club: https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/wegweiser/09/09_01_02
- Performing Arts at Humboldt: https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/wegweiser/09/09_01_07
- University and Student Newspapers: https://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende/aus-dem-ausland/wegweiser/09/09_01_08
Communications

Cell phone
Brown University provides cell phones for all participants for the duration of the program. On the first day of orientation, each program participant will receive a cell phone upon a deposit of EUR 50,- for use during the semester. You will get the deposit back upon return of the functioning phone at the end of the program. The main reason for the cell phone is to stay in contact with the site coordinator, especially in emergency situations. All emergency procedures will be explained and discussed in detail on the first day of orientation.

Telephone: Calling Germany from the U.S.
There are a lot of American telephone companies that offer reasonable rates to call Germany. The best way to find out about rates is to have a look on the Internet. When calling Germany from the US, use the following country and area codes:

- Germany: 011 - 49
- Berlin: 30 (from outside Germany) or 030 (from inside Germany)

Telephone: Calling the U.S. from Germany
Call by call carriers: You can make use of call-by-call carriers by pre-dialing a number (Vorwahl). You can find these numbers online at http://www.billiger-telefonieren.de. If you opt to use one of these Vorwahl numbers, remember that you need to dial the five digit Vorwahl, followed by the country code (001 for the US) followed by the area code and the actual local number. Please note that these rates do not apply to cellular phones!

International carriers: You can choose a carrier for national and international calls besides those call-by-call options. However, your local carrier will be Deutsche Telekom, which you can also use for international calls if you wish by dialing the code for the U.S. (1) followed by the area code and the local number. Please note that local calls are not free in Germany nor is there a flat fee for local calls. You pay for each call at a rate based on the time of day you call.

Land line in apartment: In order to activate a phone line, you go to the nearest T-Punkt (Telekom branch). They have you fill in a form, then it takes between 3-10 business days to get phone service, depending on where you live and if the place is already wired. Besides an activation fee of EUR 50,-, you will face a monthly fee of about EUR 15,- for the service. In addition to that you will have to pay for the calls. The Welcome Package will contain information about the documents necessary for activating the telephone line. For further information contact the site personnel.

U.S. Calling cards: It is advisable to have an American calling card for the first few days or even weeks since "Deutsche Telekom“ is not the cheapest when it comes to international calls, and it will take some time for you to find your way through the jungle of German telephone companies and offers.
German Calling Cards: You can also purchase a German calling card – either a **T-Card** with a **Chip** (the T-Card works as a calling card and as a **Telefonkarte** if it has the **Chip**) or a **Telefonkarte** that enables you to make calls at public phones. Many more public phones operate with these types of cards than with coins.

**Computers & Email**
We recommend that, if possible, you bring a laptop with you. The big computer clusters at Humboldt are as busy and remain open fewer hours than the labs at Brown.

Remember that, although you might not need a transformer, you should definitely bring the appropriate adapter plug for the German outlet. You can get these at a hardware or electronics store.

Make sure that your computer is insured under your family’s general household policy or a specialized student insurance policy.

You will get an email account when you have completed your Humboldt registration process (usually within the first ten days). It then takes 2-5 business days to activate your account. The account will remain active until the last day of the academic year (September 30). You will be assisted by the Site-Coordinator with this application. In your welcome package, given to you upon your arrival in Berlin, you will find a list of computer clusters at Humboldt University.

If you want to check email immediately after arriving, you can use webmail with your Brown/home University account or open a free account (e.g. gmail) prior to your departure.

**Appliances**
Leave most electrical appliances at home. You can buy an inexpensive hairdryer or straightener in Germany without having to worry about voltage converters/transformers. Expect to have to purchase some kitchen supplies.
## Metric Conversion Factors (Approximate)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>When You Know Number of</th>
<th>Multiply By</th>
<th>To Find Number of</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>LENGTH</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In</td>
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<td>2.54 (exact)</td>
<td>Centimeter</td>
<td>cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ft</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Centimeter</td>
<td>cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yd</td>
<td>yards</td>
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<td>Mi</td>
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<td>km</td>
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<td>AREA</td>
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<tr>
<td>in²</td>
<td>square inches</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Quadratzentimeter</td>
<td>cm²</td>
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<td>yd²</td>
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<td>Quadratmeter</td>
<td>m²</td>
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<td>mi²</td>
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<td>Quadratkilometer</td>
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<td>WEIGHT (mass)</td>
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<td>Milliliter</td>
<td>ml</td>
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<td>Tbsp</td>
<td>tablespoons</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Milliliter</td>
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<td>cubic inches</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>fl oz</td>
<td>fluid ounces</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>c</td>
<td>cups</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>Liter</td>
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<tr>
<td>pt</td>
<td>pint</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>Liter</td>
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<tr>
<td>qt</td>
<td>quarts</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Liter</td>
<td>l</td>
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<tr>
<td>gal</td>
<td>gallons</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Liter</td>
<td>l</td>
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### Temperature

\[\frac{5}{9} (\text{after subtracting 32})\]

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<th>°F</th>
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<td>-29.64</td>
<td>7 (normale Körpertemperatur)</td>
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<td>-40</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>100 (Wasser siedet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-12.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>68</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>(normal body temperature)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>°F</th>
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</thead>
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<td>-40</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
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<td>212</td>
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Shoes and Clothing Sizes
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's US</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Europe</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's US</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>40</th>
<th>42</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women's Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's US</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Europe (pants)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's US (pants)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Europe (shirts)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's US (shirts)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Checklist: Before Leaving Berlin

One month before you leave:

1. Take photos and buy souvenirs as memories.

2. Three months before you leave you’ll get a letter from the program coordinator indicating that you are canceling your rental contract. Pass this on to your Hausverwaltung or your landlord.

Two weeks before you leave:

1. Hand in all your papers and coursework before the end of the semester.

2. Go to your Telekom branch to close your phone account.

3. Notify friends and family of your return itinerary.

One week before you leave:

1. Attend your professors’ office hours to physically obtain “Scheine“ from your courses. Of course, the professor will need to have graded your final papers and exams in order for you to obtain the Schein.

2. Visit your bank and close your account.

3. Fill out the form stating that you are leaving the country (polizeiliches Abmeldeformular), which will be provided by the Resident Director, and hand it in at the nearest police registration office (Landeseinwohnermeldeamt).

4. Set your e-mail account at Humboldt to forward messages to your permanent account. Your account will remain active until the last day of that semester.

Last day before you leave:

1. Clean your apartment and leave it in the condition you found it in.

2. Meet with friends at your favorite restaurant to have your favorite dish, pastry, or beverage.

3. Have excess luggage shipped home!