



Information for Newcomers



IMPRS
Functional Interfaces in
Physics and Chemistry
Fritz Haber Institute (FHI)
of the Max Planck Society
Faradayweg 4-6
14195 Berlin
Germany

Warm Welcome



The Fritz Haber Institute (FHI) of the Max Planck Society warmly welcomes you and wishes you all the best for your stay in Germany.

With these guidelines, we would like to inform you about the formal paperwork necessary for your stay and also to give you some basic information about living in Germany. Please note that some contact information may have changed and check the internet for the most current details.

We recommend visiting the [official website of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany](#) to get a first impression and a general idea about Germany before you come here.

The [official Berlin website](#) and [Visit Berlin](#) offer you a broader range of information about Berlin in various languages. If you are considering living in Potsdam, [potsdam.de](#) and [potsdam-tourism](#) will give you relevant information about the city, shopping, cultural events, health, social welfare and much more.

Further useful information is available on the very helpful and comprehensive Researchers-in-Motion Portal [EURAXESS](#) or [How to Germany](#). The latter is also recommended for information on various issues like funding, taxes and even child care.

Prof. Dr. Martin Wolf, Spokesman of IMPRS

The Fritz Haber Institute (FHI)	2
Welcome Office	2
How to get to the FHI.....	2
Arriving at the FHI	3
Central Services at the FHI.....	4
Overview	4
Works Council.....	4
Equal Opportunity	4
Formalities from A to Z	5
Accommodation.....	5
Looking for an Apartment	5
Terminology.....	6
Lease and Deposit	7
Health Insurance and Services.....	7
Money.....	8
Opening a Bank Account	8
Electronic Cash	8
Registration in Germany	9
Residence Registration.....	9
Registration Offices in Berlin.....	9
Registration Offices in Potsdam	9
Residence Permit.....	9
Social Security Plans	12
Tax Number	12
Work Permit Applications	12
Everyday Life from A to Z	13
Communication.....	13
Private Telephones and Internet Access	13
Learning German	13
Public Transport.....	14
Traveling with the „Semesterticket“	15
Travelling with Deutsche Bahn	15
Shopping	15
Television License	15
Living in Germany with your Family from A to Z	16
Child Benefit („Kindergeld“)	16
Nursery and Pre-School	17
Schools	17
Imprint and Disclaimer	18
Overview on Essential Formalities (Checklist)	19
Map of the FHI	20

The Fritz Haber Institute (FHI)

Welcome Office

For any questions or problems before or during your stay in Germany, feel free to contact the FHI's Welcome Office or your department's secretary. You will receive assistance in finding an apartment, a kindergarten place, in filling in documents and with other issues.

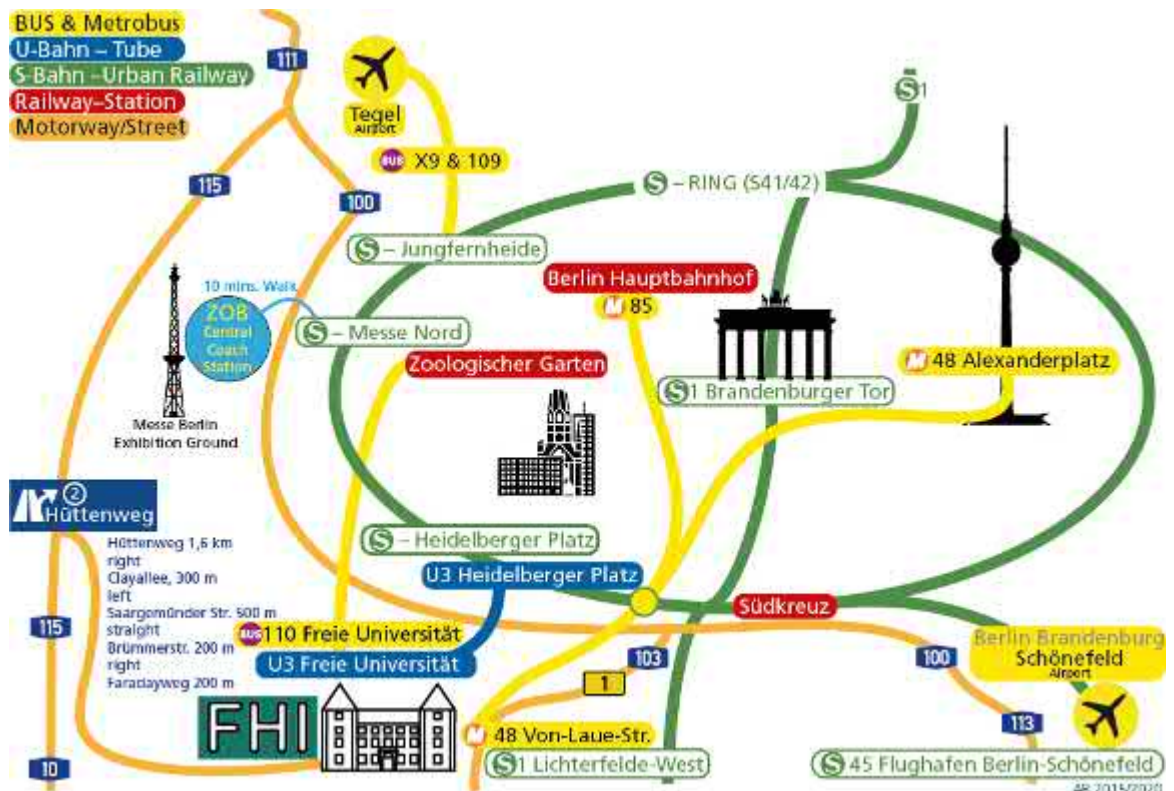
Please contact **Sandra Tamminga**, or come by personally every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 h till 12:00 h.

You will find the Welcome Office on the second floor in building A, room 2.09, the phone number is +49 30 8413 3102. Please also consult the Welcome Office's [webpage](#).

How to get to the FHI

The FHI is located in the beautiful southwest of Berlin on the Dahlem science campus, which offers cutting-edge international research and training for tomorrow's scientists. The close proximity of the Departments of Natural Sciences at the Free University of Berlin provides ideal conditions to discover new collaborative ventures.

The nearest subway station is „Freie Universität“ on line U3 to „Krumme Lanke“. This stop is also served by bus 110. For more details on how to get to the institute by car or public transport, please see „How to reach us“ on our webpage.



Further information including a version of this document with working links is available on the FHI-intranet

Arriving at the FHI

The secretaries supporting your department will provide you with a key to your office and the key card for all FHI buildings. They will also be able to answer most of your questions or will be able to advise who can answer them.

Department of Inorganic Chemistry

Sibylle Hartung: Room F 4.10, Dorothea Damm: Room F 4.09,
Phone: +49 30 8413 4409, email: acsek@fhi-berlin.mpg.de

Department of Interface Science

Daniela Nikolaus: Room A 1.11,
Phone: +49 30 8413 4102, email: nikolaus@fhi-berlin.mpg.de

Department of Molecular Physics

Manuela Misch: Room C 1.09,
Phone: +49 30 8413 5600, email: misch@fhi-berlin.mpg.de

Department of Physical Chemistry

Daria Haberland, Manuel Krüger, Room G 1.07,
Phone: +49 30 8413 5113, -5112 email: pcsek@fhi-berlin.mpg.de

Department of Theory

Julia Pach: Room T 1.19,
Phone: +49 30 8413 4700, email: thsecretary@fhi-berlin.mpg.de

You will be given a guided tour of the FHI campus which will take you to a number of central service facilities as outlined in the next section.

Central Services at the FHI

Overview

During your guided tour across the FHI campus you will visit a number of central service facilities:

- the Administration
- the Computer Support Group (PP&B)
- the Joint Network Center (GNZ)
- the Library
- the Electronics Workshop (ELAB)
- the Mechanical Workshops
- the Works Council
- the Conflict Management
- and other Service Facilities

Works Council

The Works Council represents the employees of the FHI in all affairs concerning the relationship between employer (that is the Max Planck Society, respectively the directors of our Institute) and employee. Consequently every employee may contact the Works Council during working hours for the purpose of obtaining information or advice, or if they have any requests, suggestions, or complaints regarding aspects of their labor conditions. For our current representatives please see here (internal users only).

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunities are highly valued at the FHI. To guarantee these, counseling and support is provided by the Gender Equality Officers. They will help avoid and if necessary, remove any institutional disadvantages to students, staff and faculty because of their gender.

Please visit [Equal Opportunities at the Fritz Haber Institute](#) for more information.

Accommodation

Housing in Germany is either let unfurnished, partly furnished, or fully furnished. Unfurnished accommodation is the most common, and it really is „unfurnished“, so it comes without lamps or kitchen appliances. An available built-in kitchen will usually be mentioned separately in the advertisements.

Looking for an Apartment

Looking for an affordable apartment in Potsdam and Berlin can be quite time-consuming. On arrival in Germany, you may find it necessary to stay in temporary accommodation for a few weeks or months until you can move into your own apartment. Please arrange your temporary accommodation at least 2-3 months before arrival.

... in the FHI Guest House

Please contact the department secretaries for details.

... in newspapers

Advertisements for all kinds of accommodation can be found in various local newspapers on Saturdays. You can also place an advertisement in the newspaper yourself.

... on the internet

[studierendenwerk-berlin](#)

[zweitehand](#)

[kleinanzeigen.ebay](#)

[studentenwerk-potsdam.de/wohnen](#)

[housinganywhere](#)

[immobilien.de](#)

[wg-gesucht](#)

[immobilienscout24.de](#)

[coming-home](#)

[immonet](#)

[berlin.homecompany.de \(+ commission\)](#)

[bestimmo](#)

Alternative Options

Shared apartments: For those who are coming to Germany alone, „WGs“ or „Wohngemeinschaften“ (shared living arrangements) are often a good option as you can live at lower costs and meet new people. You will note that most WG rooms are not furnished. You can find them on websites like [wg-gesucht.de](#).

Temporary accommodation: If you intend to stay in Germany for a limited time, you might consider subletting a flat. This means that you will sign a contract with the tenant, rather than the landlord. Sublets can generally be found under the terms „Untermiete“ or „Zwischenmiete“.

Terminology

3 Zi. - Whg.	Three room apartment
3 ZKDB	Three rooms plus kitchen, hallway, bath
AB	Old building (before 1949)
Abstand	You are required to buy fixtures or furnishings
App	Apartment
BJ	Year of construction
CT	Brokerage fee
DG (Dachgeschoss)	Loft apartment
EB (Erstbezug)	First time occupancy
EBK (Einbauküche)	Built-in kitchen
EG (Erdgeschoss)	Ground floor
HH (Hinterhaus)	Rear building
K (Kaution)	Deposit
Kalt	Heating is billed additionally
KM (Kaltmiete)	Rent bill without heating
KN	Kitchenette
MVZ (Monatliche Vorauszahlung)	Rent in advance
Nachmieter	Tenant, who takes over an old lease
NK	Additional costs (waste, cleaning of staircase etc.)
NMM (Nettomonatsmiete)	Net monthly rent (plus costs for heating, electricity, gas, water, waste disposal)
NR (Nichtraucher)	Non-smokers
Prov. (Provision)	Commission
Qm (Quadratmeter)	Square meter (Size of flat)
TG (Tiefgarage)	Underground garage
VH (Vorderhaus)	House facing the street
WBS erford.	„Wohn-Berechtigungsschein“ required, i.e. subsidized housing only rented to holders of a special permit (WBS)
WG (Wohngemeinschaft)	Shared flat
Wfl (Wohnfläche)	Living space
WM (Warmmiete)	Warm rent (rent including heating)
ZBB	Room/Bath/Balcony
ZH (Zentralheizung)	Central heating
Zi. (Zimmer)	Room(s)
ZKB	Room/Kitchen/Bath
Zzgl. NK	Plus extra charges (heating, electricity etc.)

An even more comprehensive list of common **abbreviations on accommodation** is published by the Uni Potsdam, another searchable list on a private homepage is available [here](#).

Rent is generally given in terms of basic rent („Kaltmiete“) which means that you will have to pay additionally for water, heating and waste disposal („Nebenkosten“) and electricity. In contrast these subsidiary charges are often included in the rent for furnished flats („Pauschalmiete“). When you are looking for a flat, note that „Warmmiete“ includes all costs, whereas „Kaltmiete“ does not.

Lease and Deposit

Before signing the lease, read the document very carefully, including the small print. If you are interested in an apartment, be sure to ask the landlord for a draft of the lease! The lease will usually be in German, so ask a German-speaking colleague to have a look at it.

To rent the flat you will be required to pay an immediate deposit of up to 3 months' rent. This will be refunded to you in full when you move out as long as you leave the apartment without causing damages.

Normally, the lease includes the rent amount and additional costs, the payment for any necessary repairs up to about 80 EUR, responsibility for renovation costs when moving out, length of lease and terms of rent increase. Furthermore the lease may contain additional arrangements (use of garden, parking lots etc). To keep a pet, you will need the landlord's permission. The lease also includes general house rules like cleaning the hallway, staircase, entrance area or the basement.

Before moving into your new home, you should make an appointment with your landlord to inspect the apartment for any damage (scratches, stains, wear and tear). Any details should be documented, even if the damage appears very slight. Otherwise you may be charged for repairs or your deposit will not be refunded when you move out, because it is assumed that the respective damage has been caused by you. The list of defects and damages has to be signed by the landlord. You are required to keep this list until you move out.

Health Insurance and Services

You are required to have health insurance for the duration of your stay in Germany. In general you will need either statutory or private insurance, depending on your work contract with the FHI. Please consult the [website](#) of our Welcome Office or www.euraxess.de for more information.

If you have further questions, please contact
Kerstin Henning (ext: -3126, henning@vw.fhi-berlin.mpg.de)
Angela Ziebarth (ext: -3122, ziebarth@vw.fhi-berlin.mpg.de) or
Ilka Marquardt (ext: -3120, ilka.marquardt@vw.fhi-berlin.mpg.de)
at the FHI (phone: +49 30 8413-...)

The webpage aerzte-berlin.de offers you a list of physicians in Berlin. You can also specify your search according to the doctor's language competencies.

You can get prescription and non-prescription drugs at the pharmacy. In case of an emergency, there is at least one pharmacy open in your area around the clock. The pharmacy at the Berlin Main Station („Hauptbahnhof“) is open 24/7. You will find the „Notdienst“ pharmacies online at www.akberlin.de/notdienst.html.

For Potsdam, please visit info-potsdam.de/notdienst.

Money

Opening a Bank Account

To open an account you will need your passport and registration certificate (Anmeldebestätigung).

The most common form of an account in Germany is a „Girokonto“ (checking or current account). Most financial transactions are completed using this type of account. In general, a current account allows you to withdraw money from your bank using a Girocard. This is normally free of charge at your own bank's ATMs, but a fee of a few EUR may be charged for withdrawing money from other banks' ATMs. You can also transfer money to pay bills using transfer forms, set up regular fixed amount payments (e.g. your rent) paid by standing order („Dauerauftrag“) and set up regular payments (even of variable amounts, e.g. telephone bills and health insurance contributions) to be paid by direct debit.

At many banks you can choose between several current accounts with various facilities (e.g. online banking, interest, a credit card at no charge, etc.) but the fees differ. As a student you can apply for exemption from the usual account charges („Kontoführungsgebühren“).

You should always take your studentcard with you.

Electronic Cash

When you have opened a current account, you can order a „Girocard“ from your bank. This debit card works like a credit card with the same advantages and risks. If you lose your card, contact your bank as soon as possible. You can also report your loss to the emergency service (116 116 within Germany; otherwise/international +49 116 116); please have your bank account number and bank code at hand.

If you have frequent payments from or to your bank account in your home country, ask your home bank whether it cooperates with a bank in Germany. This could shorten and cheapen the transfer of money between banks.

For example, the **Postbank** offers bank accounts without any charges as long as more than 1.000 € per month are paid to the account. You can also check the **DKB** (account without charges, worldwide free money withdrawal with your credit card), the **N26** or any other bank that suits your needs.

Online comparison portals like **FMH** (unfortunately in German only) will help you finding the best banking partner.

Registration in Germany

Residence Registration

As soon as you find a place to stay in Berlin or Potsdam (even in our guest house), you are required to register your address within two weeks at the local Residence Registration Office („Einwohnermeldeamt/Bürgeramt“), usually located in the town hall.

Each subsequent change of address also has to be registered with the relevant local authority.

Registration Offices in Berlin

In Berlin, you will find a „Meldebehörde“ for each borough to register your address. Please go to **Bürgeramt** where you will find all boroughs. Click on yours to find the address and phone number of your registration office.

Registration Offices in Potsdam

If you live in Potsdam, you have to register at the

Stadtverwaltung Potsdam		Opening hours
Bereich Bürgerservice	Mon:	10.00-18.00
Friedrich- Ebert- Straße 79/81	Tue-Thu:	08.00-18.00
14469 Potsdam	Fri:	08.00-14.00
Phone: 0331/2891111	Sat:	08.00-12.00

vv.potsdam.de

(unfortunately German only)

Please ask at your secretariat for assistance with the forms („Anmeldung“ and „Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung“).

Residence Permit

To apply for a residence permit („Aufenthaltsgenehmigung“), first get your registration certificate („Anmeldebestätigung“, see above). Then take that to your Berlin or Potsdam foreigners' registration office („Ausländerbehörde“) to get your residence permit. You will be required to present the registration certificate and to fill in additional forms. These can usually be found at the information booths or in the waiting areas. The Berlin foreigners' registration office provides the form in various languages online at www.berlin.de. In Berlin you can **book an appointment online** in advance.

Citizens of the EU, EEA, and Switzerland are granted unlimited residence and working permit by default.

Citizens of the UK should check both **British** and **German** Government information on the internet please. Regulations may change during the transition period and after the withdrawal.

Citizens of the United States of America, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, and the Rep. of Korea may apply for a residence permit after entering Germany without a visa.

Citizens of other countries are required to apply and obtain a visa prior to entry (an option also open to US citizens) at a German embassy or consulate in their country of residence. When applying for a residence permit, you usually have to present the following documents:

- application form (two completed)
- lease agreement for accommodation
- confirmation from your landlord
- valid passport
- 2 passport photographs (biometric)
- proof of valid health insurance (Germany)
- contract of employment/grant/fellowship
- proof of residence/address in Germany / copy of residency registration
- certificate of academic degree for BlueCard applications (only for TVÖD employments, not stipends)
- research agreement („Forschervereinbarung nach § 20 Aufenthaltsgesetz“) - if applicable
- marriage certificate - if applicable
- birth certificate - if applicable
- documents mentioned above for every accompanying person
- fee of 60 € - 110 € per person

Scholarship/fellowship holders have to prove their fellowship with a document from the Max Planck Institute.

Your application for a residence permit will usually be processed within one or two weeks. In this time, you will be covered by a certificate stating that you are awaiting a residence permit.

Frequently asked questions are answered at [Ausländerbehörde Berlin/Immigration Office](#). If you have further questions, please contact Sandra Tamminga (phone: 3102, tamminga@fhi-berlin.mpg.de).

Registration office for foreigners (Ausländerbehörde) in Berlin

Landeseinwohneramt Berlin		Opening hours
Abteilung Ausländerangelegenheiten	Mon:	07.00 - 14.00
Friedrich-Krause-Ufer 24	Tue:	07.00 - 14.00
13353 Berlin	Thu:	09.00 - 17.00

Phone: (030) 90269-0
Fax: (030) 90269-4099

<https://www.berlin.de/einwanderung/en/>

It is strongly recommended to arrange an appointment by using the [online appointment tool](#). You should do this about 1 month in advance. Without an appointment, you can go to the office directly, but to shorten your waiting time low, you should be there just before the office opens.

Registration office for foreigners (Ausländerbehörde) in Potsdam

You will find the Ausländerbehörde on their campus in building 20. Please also consult [potsdam.de](#) (unfortunately in German only)

		Opening hours
Phone: 0331/289-1113	Mo.	09.00 – 12.00
Fax: 0331/289-1764	Tue:	09.00 – 18.00
Helene-Lange-Straße 6/7	Thu:	09.00 – 16.00
14469 Potsdam	Fri:	09.00 – 12.00

Social Security Plans

As soon as you have a permanent employment contract in Germany you are subject to social security.

If you are required to contribute to the German pension plan, you can apply for refunds but only after 24 months after your contract has ended and only if you were not compulsorily insured in Germany within this time.

Tax Number

Every employee in Germany is required to have a tax number („Steuernummer“). Once you are employed and registered at the „Bürgeramt“, you will receive this number via mail soon thereafter. Please make sure that you receive this tax number and forward it to the personnel department immediately. More information, e.g. about where your tax office („Finanzamt“) is located, can be found at [EURAXESS](#).

Scholarship/Fellowship holders do not need a tax number, as they do not pay taxes.

Work Permit Applications

In general, foreigners from non-EU countries, countries not affiliated with the European Economic Area or persons who are not married to a citizen of the EU or the European Economic Area require a work permit to work in Germany.

However, there are some exceptions. Scientific employees of research institutions who are financed mostly or solely by public funds do not need a work permit, provided that their skills and abilities are of public interest to Germany. Because of this, most Max Planck scientists do not require a work permit. Nevertheless, you are required to submit a copy of your contract, job description, academic transcript and university degree to be exempt from applying for a work permit.

Sometimes it is difficult to convince the officials of this fact, but things usually work out. Before you go to the registration office, call them to check out the latest details. Requirements can change, so try to get as much information as possible to avoid multiple visits (e.g. because of a missing document). Also check opening times before you go there.

Foreign fellowship holders do not require a work permit because they are no employees. The same applies for students working fewer than 90 days or 3 months per year.

All other foreigners, including the scientists' spouses, require a work permit for Germany. This can be obtained at the [employment office for foreigners](#) („Arbeitsamt für Ausländer“). The form required there must be filled in by yourself and by your potential employer. According to German law, you are required to wait 4 weeks before receiving a work permit and you are not allowed to work while your application is being processed. During this time officials assure that no other German or EU jobseeker is equally or more qualified for your position. You have to renew your work permit every year. In order to receive a residence permit, you must take your work permit to the foreign registration office along with your residents' registration, documentation of health insurance, a valid passport and a passport photo.

Further information including a version of this document with working links is available on the FHI-intranet

Communication

Private Telephones and Internet Access

The telephone market in Germany is liberated and you find a wide selection of service providers for electronic communication operating regional or national. Usually you sign a contract for data and telephony with the same provider offering you DSL at various speeds including VOIP telephony with a variety of possible flat rates. Depending how the infrastructure is developed in your area and the house you are living in you might find the choice between DSL over the former telephone line or fibre or cable-DSL through the cable-TV infrastructure. It may take 2-3 weeks to get high-speed access, such as DSL, installed.

Online comparisons can be found at [teltarif](#), [dslweb](#) or [verivox](#).

To get an internet contract or a mobile phone with internet, you also need to show your residency registration when going signing up for a contract.

Mobile communication networks are run by Deutsche Telekom, Vodafone, and O₂ (Telefónica) and sold by 60 contractors offering endless tariffs. The quality of the networks is different not only in speed but density of the connection points („Netzausbau“ or „Netzabdeckung“).

Please note that many contracts do include a bonus for the first period and are extended each year automatically without notification for the next period, usually for the next year, and might include TV-services and additional streaming options.

Learning German

To help you feel more at home in Germany, the FHI offers you German classes. For detailed information please contact Andrea Braaker in the Administration Department (email: braaker@fhi-berlin.mpg.de, phone: +49 30 8413 3152).

Furthermore, there are language courses at the „Volkshochschulen“ in [Berlin](#) and [Potsdam](#).

Potsdam University offers special German classes for foreign students, doctoral candidates or guest scientists, staying at the university. Depending on your previous knowledge you can join one of two courses („Aufbaukurs“ 1 or 2). You will have to take a German language test and need at least 60% of the points to be accredited. You finish your class with a participation certificate and a mark. Further information is available at uni-potsdam.de.

Public Transport

Please note that every city or administrative district has its own regional transport system, which has its own charges, tickets and services. There is no uniform system for Germany.

You can find schedules for buses and trains at the following useful websites.

www.fhi.mpg.de/directions

Our site gives you all the information you need to get to the Institute.

www.bvg.de

The list of buses and trams that run in Berlin with some PDF maps to download.

www.swp-potsdam.de/de/verkehr/

Here you can download schedules of trams and buses in Potsdam.

www.havelbus.de

List of buses in and around Potsdam. It has good downloadable PDF files of bus schedules.

www.vbb.de

List of all public transportation in Berlin and Brandenburg with destination search and maps.

www.bahn.de

Here you can get information about train schedules for the whole of Germany. There is a timetable searching service and you can buy your tickets online. They also offer an English version of their website.

More frequent travellers on the railroad might consider buying an additional „Bahncard“ which qualifies to a discount of 25% or 50% on regular and sometimes even special fares.

Different Fare Zones in Berlin/Potsdam

Berlin and Potsdam each have their own fare zones (A, B and C) which extend concentric around the city centres. Tickets can be purchased with the zone combinations AB, BC or ABC.

Different Tickets in Berlin/Potsdam

Note that each ticket allows you to travel with all kind of public transport like SBahn, UBahn, bus, tram and Regionalbahn.

- Einzelfahrt/Single Ticket: Is valid for one hour in Potsdam or two hours in Berlin one way only.
- Set of four Single Ticket: Same as above with a rebate.
- Tageskarte/Day Ticket: Is valid from the date of purchase until 3 am the next day.
- Wochenkarte/7-Tage-Karte/Weekly Ticket: Is valid for a whole week and costs about the same as 5 day tickets.
- Monatskarte/Monthly Ticket: Is valid for the entire current calendar month or 30 days from the date of purchase.
- Jahreskarte/Yearly Ticket: Is valid for 1 year from the date of purchase and costs about as much as 10 monthly tickets. On weekends and in the evening after 8.00 p.m. you can take another adult and up to 3 kids aged 6 to 14 years at no additional charge.

Remember to validate every ticket before entering the train or instantly after hopping on the bus or tram by collecting a stamp at the validation machine. Ticket inspectors only accept stamped tickets and will charge you no less than 60 EUR.

Berlin pupils generally travel free of charge inside Berlin AB on the **fahrCard** you have to apply for.

Travelling with the „Semesterticket“

Students of the Berlin or Potsdam Universities can obtain the student's semester ticket. With this ticket you can board all buses, trams, urban lines and underground lines throughout the entire public transport system of Berlin and Brandenburg (VBB). You can find more detailed information on [astafu](#) (Freie Universität) and [astaup](#) (Universität Potsdam), both in German only.

Travelling with Deutsche Bahn

For all who want to travel in Germany or Europe, some offers of Deutsche Bahn are listed below.

Bahncard: This card is recommended for those who travel by train frequently. Please see [Bahncard website](#). Card holders receive discounts on their tickets. The Bahncard can be purchased in every travel agency of the Deutsche Bahn or online. You will need a photo and your valid passport for the application. For further information please see „Offers/BahnCard“ on the [DB homepage](#).

Shopping

Most shops are open between 08:00 and 21:00 (or 18:00 for small shops) Monday-Saturday. Berlin shops are often open a bit longer. Shops usually close on Sundays and public holidays.

In Berlin you will find department stores and shops all over the city.

Department stores, chain stores and boutiques can be found around Kurfürstendamm, Friedrichstraße, Tauentzienstraße, Wilmersdorfer Straße, Hackescher Markt, Schönhauser Allee, Alexanderplatz, or Schlossstraße.

To shop in Potsdam try the pedestrian precinct Brandenburger Straße, the shopping malls Bahnhofspassage, Marktcenter, or Stern-Center. For groceries, go to Potsdam-City or Potsdam-Eiche.

Television License

In Germany, every household is required to register for the compulsory „Rundfunkbeitrag“. You can register online on their [webpage Rundfunkbeitrag](#). As of 2020 the monthly fee is € 17,50 payable for three, six or twelve months. Unfortunately, this site is available in German only.

Living in Germany with your Family from A to Z

Child Benefit („Kindergeld“)

As parents, you may receive a monthly allowance („Kindergeld“) for your kids. Citizens of the 27 **Member States of the EU**, the **EEA States**, and Switzerland may receive child allowance irrespective of whether they have a settlement permit or a residence permit. The same applies to nationals of Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Morocco, Serbia, Tunisia, and Turkey on the basis of the respective bilateral agreements if they are liable to pay contributions for unemployment benefits under the terms of their employment in Germany.

Foreigners from other countries *may* be entitled to receive child allowance provided their residence status („Aufenthaltstitel“) in Germany is expected to be permanent („voraussichtlich dauerhaft“). A residence permit and work permit are necessary but not automatically sufficient prerequisites for receiving child allowance (see **familienportal**). In any case, you are advised to contact the local Family Office (see below) to find out whether you are entitled to child allowance.

Applications for child allowance must be made at the local Family Office („Kindergeldkasse Berlin“) with a copy of your passport from which the status of your residence permit can be identified. There are several Family Offices in Berlin or Potsdam; please contact the one responsible for your borough.

Familienkasse Berlin-Brandenburg (for Berlin Mitte)
Charlottenstr. 87 - 90
10969 Berlin

Familienkasse Berlin-Brandenburg (for Berlin North)
Storkower Str. 120
10407 Berlin

Familienkasse Berlin Brandenburg (for Berlin South)
Sonnenallee 282
12057 Berlin

Familienkasse Berlin-Brandenburg (for Potsdam)
Schlaatzweg 1
14473 Potsdam

If you have further questions, please contact
Kerstin Henning (ext: -3126, henning@vw.fhi-berlin.mpg.de),
Angela Ziebarth (ext: -3122, ziebarth@vw.fhi-berlin.mpg.de) or
Ilka Marquardt (ext: -3120, ilka.marquardt@vw.fhi-berlin.mpg.de)
at the FHI (Phone: +49 30 8413-...

Nursery and Pre-School

In Berlin and Potsdam children have the right to part-time care (5 to 7 hours daily) from their first birthday in a so-called „Kita“. Public Kitas in Berlin are free of charge. Parents have to pay € 23 per month for food.

Please note that you should apply for a Kita placement well before the time day care is needed (~6 months and more if your child is younger than 1 year old). All necessary information (e.g. a list of Berlin Kitas, the application procedure, opening times, fees, alternatives to Kitas) can be found on this public [daycare website](#) or the day-care information of the [Berlin Business Location Center](#) in English language.

Staff members of the FHI have special conditions of day care for their children in the Kita Lützelsteiner Weg e.V., Lützelsteiner Weg 25, 14195 Berlin, phone 030/832 56 44. This Kita is quite close to the FHI and covers both, nursery and pre-school. The facility is supported by the Max Planck Society and preferably accepts the children of MPG employees. Parents should apply by January 31. Subsequently, free places will be allotted, and accepted children will start attending the Kita from August 1. For questions or details regarding this Kita, please contact Kerstin Henning, henning@vw.fhi-berlin.mpg.de.

The family support by „PMEassistance“ provides consultation on and procurement of child care or assistance for family members, if you stay with the FHI for at least six months. Consultation is free of charge; all other assistance must be paid for. Brochures are available in your local department's secretariat or in the personnel department. More information can be obtained by phone 0800 801007080 or email to berlin@familienservice.de. Before using this service you must verify that you are a collaborator of the Max Planck Society either through an authorization document, available from the personnel department.

Schools

Finding a primary school for your children aged 6-12 is not a problem. Generally, the place where you live determines which school your children will go to.

If you live in Berlin, schools and day care centers in your neighbourhood can be found on the [schools in Berlin website](#). If you live in Potsdam or elsewhere in Brandenburg you find information on schools in your neighborhood in [Schulporträts](#).

International schools such as the [Kant school](#) offer teaching in English, but tuition fees are charged.

Another option in addition to the German school system are bilingual schools like the German-American John F. Kennedy School [JFK-School](#).

Imprint and Disclaimer

Based on:

- An information guide of the Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces
- Original document by Scott H. Hawley, Brian Grady, Guruswamy Kumaraswamy and Bao-Hang Han 2001
- „Living in Germany“, Guide for Marie Curie Research Fellows by Barbara Lieder, Andre Schlochtermeyer, Jörg Schneider (DLR e.V.)
- „Leitfaden für Ausländer“, Guidelines for Scientists New to Germany by Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Generalverwaltung
- Websites listed in the document.

Disclaimer:

The Max Planck Society makes every effort to provide timely and accurate information. Nevertheless, mistakes and confusions may occur. The Max Planck Society does not assume liability for relevance, accuracy and completeness of the information provided. The Max Planck Society is only liable for material or immaterial damages if it can be proved that the Max Planck Society caused damage deliberately or through gross negligence. The damages include those which arise from the use or misuse of the information provided or direct or indirect damages which arise through the use of faulty or incomplete information. The same goes for the software available free of charge which can be used for downloading. The Max Planck Society reserves the right to change, supplement, or delete some or all of the information on its Internet web site without notice. Similarly, the Society also reserves the right to temporarily or permanently discontinue the Internet web site.

Individuals or organisations providing information on the internet are only responsible for illegal and punishable contents derived from other sources which are accessed by direct or indirect connections, e.g. links, if the individuals and organisations are aware of the nature of these contents on these web sites. Contents derived from other sources are noted appropriately. The Max Planck Society has no influence whatsoever on contents derived from another sources and does not promote them. The Max Planck Society has no knowledge of illegal or offensive contents contained in the linked web sites from other information providers. If there are illegal and offensive contents on the web sites of other information providers, the Max Planck Society distances itself from these contents.

Overview on Essential Formalities (Checklist)

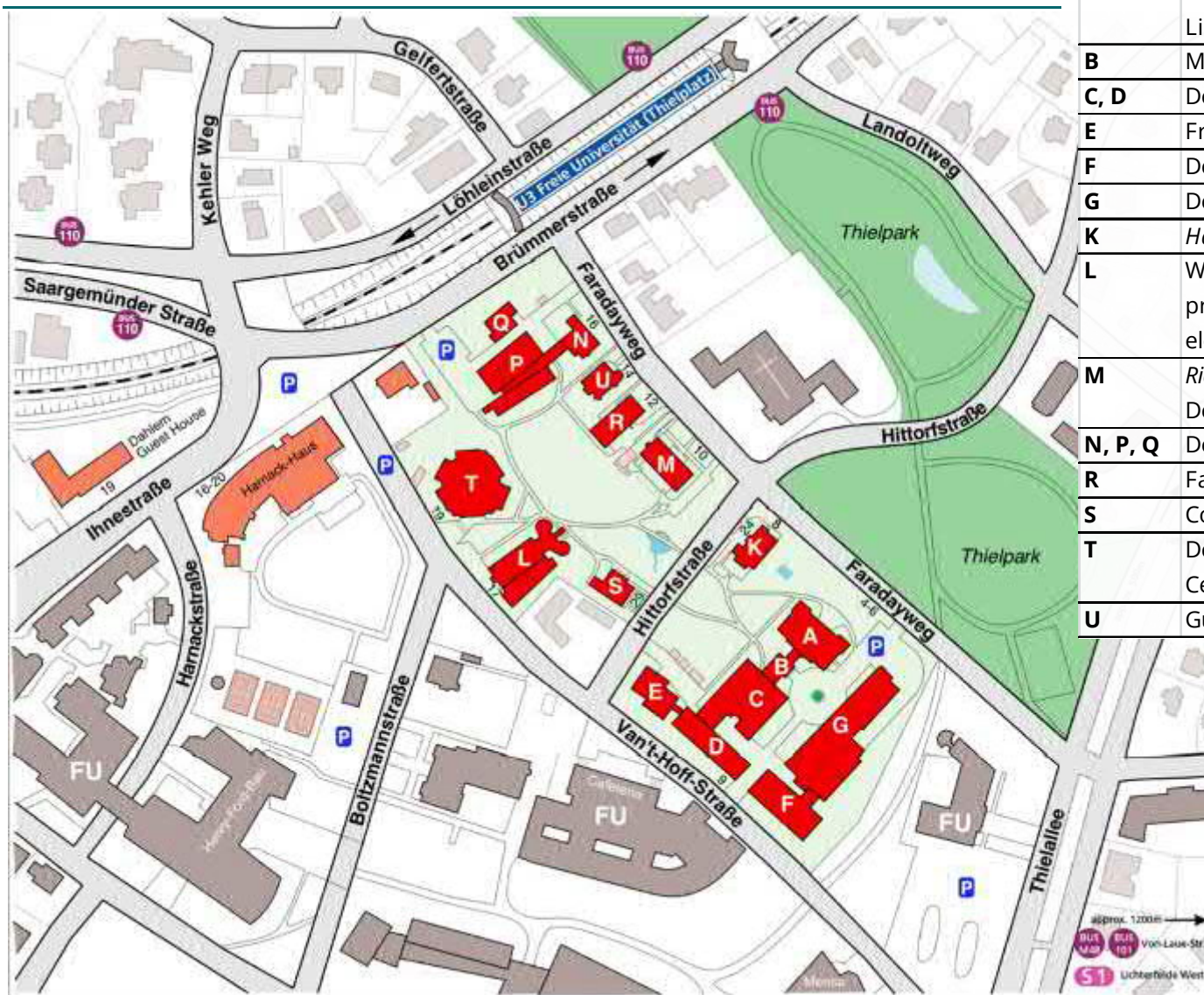
Checklist for EU-citizens

- ✓ settle accommodation before arriving in Berlin
- ✓ make an appointment at the local town hall to register your residence – you will need to bring:
 - the application form available at the respective secretariat or on the internet
 - your lease agreement or the confirmation of your landlord
 - a valid passport
 - if applicable – proof of doctoral degree
- ✓ apply for health care
- ✓ apply for a bank account

Checklist for Non-EU-citizens

- ✓ check if visa is necessary to enter Germany
- ✓ settle accommodation before arriving in Berlin
- ✓ make an appointment at the local town hall to register your residence – you will need to bring:
 - the application form available at the respective secretariat or on the internet
 - your lease agreement or the confirmation of your landlord
 - a valid passport
 - if applicable – proof of doctoral degree
- ✓ apply for health care
- ✓ make an appointment at the foreigners' registration office to apply for a residence permit – you will need to bring:
 - the application form available at the Welcome Office or on the internet
 - a copy of your residency registration
 - valid passport
 - 2 biometrical passport photos
 - copy of work contract, fellowship- or research agreement
 - copy of health insurance
 - if applicable - marriage certificate
 - if applicable - birth certificates of children
- ✓ apply for a bank account

Map of the FHI



A	Department Interface Science (ISC) , Library, Administration
B	Main Entrance, Reception
C, D	Department Molecular Physics (MP)
E	Free Electron Laser (FEL)
F	Department Inorganic Chemistry (AC)
G	Department Physical Chemistry (PC)
K	<i>Haber-Villa</i> : Seminar Room
L	Workshops precision and mechanical engineering, electronic lab and carpenter
M	<i>Richard-Willstätter-Haus</i> : Department Theory (TH) , Seminar Rooms
N, P, Q	Department Interface Science (ISC)
R	Facility Management
S	Computer Support Group (PP&B)
T	Department Theory (TH) , Joint Network Center (GNZ)
U	Guest House

Fritz Haber Institute (FHI)
of the Max Planck Society
Faradayweg 4-6

14195 Berlin
Germany

Tel: +49 30 8413 - 30
Fax: +49 30 8413 - 3155

E-Mail: phi@phi-berlin.mpg.de

2015/2020