Factsheet for Mentees – Study-Buddy Program

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1. **What is a “mentee”?**

A mentee is a newly arrived international student at the University of Bonn. Mentees are matched with a student from the University of Bonn (buddy) who has studied at the University of Bonn for at least one semester.

2. **What is the Study-Buddy Program?**

The program seeks to connect mentees with students from the University of Bonn (buddies) who will then provide help and assistance to facilitate their transition in Bonn. Student volunteers from Bonn give international students advice and assistance and help them get off to a good start at university and in Bonn. The program aims to concentrate its efforts on taking up studies and student life.

3. **Study-Buddy Program timetable**

The dates indicated in the upper row refer to the summer semester (February–October), those in the lower row pertain to the winter semester (August–February).

4. **Who can become my buddy?**

Our buddies are students who have studied at the University of Bonn at least for one semester and are therefore able to provide you good support and guidance with regard to studying and living in Bonn.
5. What are my responsibilities as a mentee?

Contact with buddy
- Reaching out to your buddy as soon as we have provided you with the contact details.
- Briefly introduce yourself, share your details of arrival and let your buddy know if you would like to be picked up at the train station in Bonn. You can also ask questions on e.g. everyday life at university and looking for accommodation.
- If your buddy contacts you first, please reply promptly to your their email/WhatsApp message etc. Please also check your spam folder.

Intercultural exchange
- Teach your buddy about your own culture, language, customs etc. and learn about life in Bonn from your buddy in return.

6. What you can expect from your buddy

Life in Bonn (if applicable)
- Meeting you at the airport or train station
- Being available for questions on finding accommodation, on what everyday life at university is like etc.
- Helping you move into your accommodation (e.g. support with rental contract, handing over of keys, move-in, rummage sales for second-hand furniture and household utensils)
- Helping you find a room in Bonn. Please keep in mind that your buddy can advise you on finding accommodation but s/he is not responsible for finding you a place to stay.
- Supporting you with opening a bank account
- Accompanying you to appointments with authorities (e.g. local registry office (Einwohnermeldeamt), International Office, health insurance)
- Support with signing a cell phone contract
- Tips for everyday life (public transport, shops, internet, etc.)
- Optional: joint activities such as a guided city tour, museum visits, cinema, café or nights out.

Studying in Bonn (if applicable)
- Help with enrollment at the Student Registry
- Getting to know the University of Bonn: Campus facilities, libraries, International Office, University canteen, University Sports, photocopying etc.
- Support with applying for and collecting a University canteen card, library ID, etc.
- Support with compiling the timetable and registering for courses
- Informing you of important dates and events at the faculty, Language Learning Center (SLZ) and International Office and maybe even accompanying you, especially at the start of the semester.
- Support with registering for examinations
- Support with registering for university sports, etc.
7. What you cannot expect from your buddy

The service that your buddy provides is entirely voluntary. The time, effort and support your buddy dedicates to you should therefore be appreciated. We ask you to take your participation in the Study-Buddy Program seriously and that you act responsibly and at your own initiative when contacting your buddy.

Your buddy will do his/her best to support you. However, s/he is not the right person to contact in case of questions on e.g. legal matters, problems with the authorities, finances or your health insurance. In these cases, please contact the International Office directly.

8. Finding accommodation and moving in

Finding a place to stay is never easy, therefore you should start looking for accommodation early on. Via the Studierendenwerk Bonn you can apply for a subsidized room in student dormitory accommodation. These are often more affordable than private rooms/apartments. If you do not wish to stay in student dormitory accommodation or are not able to get a room there, you can also look for private accommodation. In Germany it is common for many students to live in shared apartments (“WG”). Usually each student has their own room while kitchen and bathroom are considered shared space. Often people who share a flat become close friends. Where shared apartments are “Zweck-WGs”, this means that personal contact among cohabitants is kept to a minimum.

It is important that you start searching for a place to stay early on. The demand for rooms in student dormitory accommodation is very high and it can become equally tricky to find private accommodation due to the number of applicants. Here are a few useful links for looking for accommodation:

Shared apartments:
- http://www.wg-gesucht.de
- www.studenten-wg.de
- www.immowelt.de
- www.immobilio.de/mieten/wg/bonn.stadt

Looking for accommodation:
- http://www.zwischenmiete.de
- www.immonet.de
- http://www.studenten-wohnung.de
- www.zimmerfrei-bonn.de
- www.immobilienscout24.de

Places to stay during the first days in Bonn:
- http://www.haus-venusberg.de
- http://www.basecamp-bonn.de
- http://www.max-hostel.de
- www.couchsurfing.com
8.1 Student dormitory accommodation

If you have managed to find a place in student dormitory accommodation, we have outlined some information on all the subsequent steps that they need to follow, from signing the rental contract to collecting the keys.

8.1.1 Signing the rental contract at the Studierendenwerk

First you must register with the Accommodation section at the Studierendenwerk (1st floor). You must present your passport and indicate the student dormitory accommodation in which you are staying.

Upon registration, you will be presented with a slip of paper specifying the amount due immediately (first month’s rent plus a deposit of approx. 1.5–2 month’s rent). The payment must be made at the ground floor counter in the direction of Café Eleven (follow the signs). A receipt will be issued which serves as proof of payment. With this receipt you can then return to the first floor and sign the rental contract.

You must retain the rental contract as you may be required to present it in lieu of confirmation of registration (e.g. the local registration office or bank). The rental contract with the Studierendenwerk Bonn also contains information on internet access (usually no WiFi, a cable is usually required).

Tip: Expect longer waiting times around April 1 and October 1. We recommend arriving at least 20–30 minutes before the official start of the Studierendenwerk office hours.

8.1.2 Documents required

- Passport
- Name of the student dormitory accommodation
- Cash or credit card to pay the rent for the first month plus the deposit of approx. 1.5–2 months of rent

8.1.3 Collecting the keys from the janitor / property manager

Once you signed the rental contract, you can make arrangements with the janitor / property manager of the dormitory accommodation to collect the keys. The contact details of the janitor / property manager will be issued together with the rental contract.

Tip: The janitor / property manager are usually present at student dormitory accommodation every day around April 1 and October 1.

Students scheduled to arrive at a time outside the office hours of the janitor / property manager should make prior arrangements to collect the keys. If a student arrives late in the evening or during the weekend, they should inquire whether they can collect the keys from the international tutor of the relevant dormitory accommodation.
8.1.4 Moving into student dormitory accommodation

Duvets and bed linen are available from the responsible manager or janitor/property manager against a deposit of EUR 20. If you arrive outside office hours, prior arrangements must be made. The Studierendenwerk also offer a “dorm basic set” which includes household items (e.g. plates and cutlery).

Note: Should you not like the student dormitory accommodation with which you have been issued, please note that you can move out after 4 weeks at the earliest and that you must submit a new application for a different room.

8.1.5 Lessor’s certificate for student dormitory accommodation

Lessor’s certificate is required to register, register a change in address or to deregister with the local authorities. Students living in accommodation run by the Studierendenwerk Bonn can obtain this certificate from the responsible janitor / property manager. The Studierendenwerk will not complete this form!

8.2 Lessor’s certificate for private accommodation

If you live in private accommodation, you can obtain your lessor’s certificate (English version) from your lessor.

Note: Where it is not possible to obtain a certificate from your lessor (especially in cases of private accommodation) in sufficient time, you can complete the form yourself and submit the lessor’s signature later.

8.3 License fee

In Germany every household must pay a license fee – currently EUR 17.50 – irrespectively of whether a radio and TV are present and in use. The following rule applies: one household – one fee. Even students who do not use TV, radio or the internet are required to pay the license fee. Students living in a 1-bedroom apartment must pay the license fee in full. Only a single fee will be levied on a shared apartment.

Further information is available here: https://www.rundfunkbeitrag.de/

9. Enrollment at the University of Bonn

Enrollment takes place at the Student Registry. Please note the deadline for enrollment. Students and applicants with an international university entrance qualification must go to the 1st floor. You should report to the office responsible for the first letter of your last name (clearly indicated for each office).

A – E Mr. Haas
F – L Ms. Göbbels
M – R Ms. Pesch
S – Z Ms. Zilles
9.1 Documents required

- Completed and signed enrollment form
- If applicable, letter of admission for degree programs with restricted admission (does not apply to degree programs with free admission)
- Copy of their identification document (passport)
- Officially certified copy of the university entrance qualification (e.g. Abitur certificate)
- Proof of German language proficiency
  - Holders of a non-German university entrance qualification are required to provide proof proficiency in the German language at a level specific to each degree course. Proof is provided by passing the German Language Proficiency Test for Admission to Higher Education (DSH) or submitting a language certificate specified by the DSH examination regulations as equivalent.
- Proof of health insurance cover
  - Holders of statutory health insurance can request a certificate from their insurer. Simple confirmation of a policy does not suffice for enrollment!
  - Holders of private health insurance are not required to change their cover. They however require confirmation from a German statutory health insurance provider of exemption from the requirement to hold statutory health insurance. The provider will either provide this confirmation or issue further advice.

The following documents must be submitted if required:

- If you were enrolled at a German institution of higher education previously, you will be required to submit confirmation of deregistration. This must specify the particulars of the last degree program, program-related semester, total amount of semesters studied and the number of semesters on leave.
- Copy / copies of degree certificate(s) for completed degree programs

10. Taking out health insurance

All students in Germany are required to hold statutory health insurance. Enrollment cannot be completed without the submission of proof that the applicant holds valid health insurance cover.

Travel health insurance (usually 3–6 months) you take out within the scope of the visa application process at the German embassy of your home country does not suffice. You can choose whether to take out private health insurance after the 3–6 months or statutory health insurance cover starting in the month of enrollment and valid until at least the end of the semester (March 31 or September 31 as applicable).

10.1 Statutory health insurance

It is not important which statutory health insurance provider you choose—the student premium is almost the same (approx. EUR 94) for all providers.

We recommend Techniker Krankenkasse, AOK and Barmer Ersatzkassen. During the enrollment phase (09/29-10/07), representatives of Techniker Krankenkasse and AOK are available to speak at the Student Registry (1st floor, Abteilung für Bildungsausländer; Mon to Friday 09:00 am to noon, Thu 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm). Insurance cover can be taken out and the required health insurance confirmation can be issued at the Student Registry.
10.1.1 **Documents required**

- Passport
- Current address
- Bank account details (can be submitted later)
- Certificate of enrollment (can be submitted later)

10.2 **Private health insurance**

*Students over the age of 30* are not eligible for statutory health insurance at a student premium. Students of this age must apply as an adult and may be required to pay a considerably higher premium. You can apply for **private health insurance, which under certain circumstance, may be considerably more affordable**. It is important to remember that private health insurance **covers medical and hospital expenses as well as 100% of dental bill**, i.e. at least the same amount or more than providers of statutory health insurance. **Private health insurance requires that the policy holder pay for all treatment**, which will be reimbursed following an application. It is not possible to change *from private to statutory health insurance cover*.

10.2.1 **Exemption from the requirement to hold statutory health insurance cover**

Holders of private health insurance and health insurance cover from a non-German provider require proof of **exemption from the requirement to hold statutory health insurance cover**. This can be obtained from a statutory health insurance provider and must be submitted in order to enroll. We recommend that you contact Techniker Krankenkasse and AOK to provide this confirmation. Such applications are easier following submission of a specification in English of the insurance cover provided by non-German insurance providers. During the enrollment phase (09/29-10/07), representatives of Techniker Krankenkasse and AOK are available to speak at the Student Registry (1st floor, Abteilung für Bildungsausländer; Mon to Friday 09:00 am to noon, Thu 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm) and can issue an *“exemption from mandatory statutory health insurance”*.

*Private health insurance* providers: e.g. CareConcept, CareMed, Dr. Walter, Mawista

10.2.2 **Documents required**

*Note:* If you hold private health insurance, you must submit the following documents in order to obtain confirmation of the exemption from the requirement to hold statutory health insurance cover: **passport, certificate of registration** and **confirmation that you hold private health insurance cover**.

11. **Dealing with authorities**

The first steps to take in dealing with the local authorities depend on where you are from (an **EU or a non-EU country**) and whether you are in Bonn for a single semester or to study for an entire degree program.

If you require support, please contact your buddy or the International Office. It is particularly helpful to be accompanied by someone with a good command of the German language who can help you overcome the **language barrier**, the terminology can be very specific.
11.1 Registering with the local authorities

Every new arrival in Bonn must register with the local authorities within two weeks. The German Registration Law stipulates registration with the local registration office within two weeks after arrival. Registration can be performed at City Hall and the Beuel or Bad Godesberg Citizen’s Centers. Appointments made online are usually booked out well in advance.

If this delay means that you are only able to register after the two-week deadline, this is not a problem. While the certificate of registration is required at further official appointments (for e.g. opening a bank account) the authorities are aware of these time constraints and will often allow the certificate to be submitted at a later date.

11.1.1 Arranging an appointment at the local registration office

Appointments can be booked online.

Tip: If the time slots for the coming days / weeks are booked out, additional appointments will be added after 7:30 am. Appointments which have become available following cancellations etc. will be made available online over the course of the day. We recommend checking the website from time to time! Appointments can also be booked by telephone but are the same appointments that can be made online. It is also possible to book an appointment in person at one of the three local registry offices, depending on the availability.

11.1.2 Documents required

- Registration form
- Lessor’s certificate
- ID: ID card / passport and if held, electronic residence permit/eAT.

11.2 Deregistration with the local authorities

Students leaving Germany and who do not plan on returning must deregister at the local registration office up to one week before or two weeks after moving out of their accommodation.

11.2.1 Documents required

- Deregistration form
- Lessor’s certificate
- ID: ID/Passport and if held, electronic residence permit/eAT.

11.3 Immigration office (non-EU students)

NON-EU students must apply for a residence permit with the immigration office in Bonn within approx. 4-6 weeks after their arrival.

11.3.1 Making an appointment with the immigration office in Bonn

You can make appointments online, via phone (+49 228 776370) or in person at the immigration office. When making an appointment in person, you must already have registered with the local registration office.
You must make an appointment with the immigration office to apply for a residence permit at least one month before the expiry of your visa. We recommend that this be performed within the first month of your arrival. If the appointment with the immigration office takes place after your visa has expired, you must apply for a probationary permit (cost: approx. EUR 20). This is very important, otherwise, you will be in Germany illegally.

Tip: If you are unable to make an appointment with the immigration office before the expiry of your visa, the important date is that on the confirmation of receipt when making an online appointment. If you make an online application for an appointment before your visa expires, you will not experience any problems if your appointment is set for a date after the expiry of your visa.

### 11.3.2 Applying for a residence permit

You are required to apply for your residence permit in person. Residence permits have been issued in electronic form since September 2011: an eAT (=elektronischer Aufenthaltstitel). The card requires an application to be made in Berlin which often involves a waiting time of 4–6 weeks. If your visa expires before you have been issued with the eAT, you will need to apply for a preliminary permit.

### 11.3.3 Documents required

- Completed application form
- Passport
- Certificate of registration
- Recent biometric photo (not older than 6 months)
- Certificate of enrollment
- Confirmation of health insurance cover
- Proof of financial situation (e.g. scholarship, blocked account for Chinese nationals, securities, up-to-date bank statement). Applicants from third countries (non-EU) must provide proof of a security of EUR 10,236 for the current year. In certain cases, half of that amount will be accepted for the following 6 months if further income can be expected, e.g. by proof of an employment contract.

### 11.3.4 Fees

The Residence Ordinance levies the following fees for issuing and extending a residence permit:

- **Issue for 1 year**: EUR 100
- **Issue for more than 1 year**: EUR 110
- **Extension for another stay of up to three months**: EUR 96
- **Extension for another stay of more than three months**: EUR 93
- **Extension of a residence permit due to a change in purpose of residence**: EUR 98
- Recipients of scholarships from German funds (e.g. DAAD) will not need to pay these fees.

A cash point is located on the ground floor (room 11) of the immigration office. Payments can be made in cash or by debit card.
11.3.5 Applying for a preliminary permit

A preliminary permit can be issued immediately and without making an appointment. You must take a number and wait on the ground floor of the immigration office. You must present your passport and visa in order to obtain a preliminary permit.

Fees:
- Preliminary permit: EUR 20

A cash point is located on the ground floor (room 11) of the immigration office. Payments can be made in cash or by debit card.

12. Opening a bank account

International students and scholarship recipients should bring enough cash upon arrival as it takes around 2 weeks (or more for those from Iran) to obtain a bank card. Payment of scholarship funds can take up to 2 months and checks can at take up to 72 days to clear.

You could need a German bank account. Students from EU countries can use a bank account in their home country to make transactions but will not always have a suitable bank card (other than a credit card) to make cash-free payments. Almost all banks offer free bank accounts for students under the age of 30.

Note: Some banks (e.g. Deutsche Bank) have strict restrictions for citizens of certain countries. For example, students of Iranian nationality have not been permitted to open a bank account in the past. Here is a list of countries that are subject to restrictions in terms of financial payments.


12.1 Appointments

An appointment is not required to open a bank account but doing so can save time.

12.2 Documents required

- Passport
- Letter of admission and / or certificate of enrollment (must be submitted at a later point if not immediately available)
- Address (c/o possible) with minimum validity of 3–4 weeks for mailing of account documents.
- NEW at Deutsche Bank: TAX ID number or personal identification number
- Certificate of registration
  - Rental contracts are accepted in exceptional cases. Should you wish to open a bank account before having officially moved to your accommodation, you can try to register an interim address at city hall (please note: you cannot register at a hostel etc. because you need to be able to receive personal mail!). Upon moving to permanent accommodation, you will have to notify institutions (bank, registration office, Student Registry, health insurance, etc.) of your new address.
12.3 Blocked account (non-EU students)

Some students, mostly from non-EU countries, must provide the details of a blocked account when applying for a visa / residence permit. It is possible to open a blocked account once already resident in Germany, however it will usually be required when applying for a visa at the embassy in the mentee’s home country. A blocked account can be opened online via FINTIBA online or Deutsche Bank.

12.3.1 Fee

Opening a blocked account is subject to a one-time fee of approx. EUR 50.

13. Signing a cell phone contract

You usually require a certificate of registration to sign a mobile contract. Most mobile providers will only sign a contract with the holder of an extended visa or residence permit. An alternative to signing a cell phone contract is to purchase a prepaid card.

14. Where can my buddy and I find information and contacts?

**Enrolling at the University of Bonn**
Student Registry
Poppelsdorfer Allee 49
53115 Bonn

**Studierendenwerk Bonn**
Nassestraße 11
53113 Bonn
http://www.studentenwerk-bonn.de/wohnen/

**Visa and residence permit**
Ausländeramt Bonn
Oxfordstraße 19
53111 Bonn

**German courses**
University of Bonn
International Office / Section 6.4
Poppelsdorfer Allee 102
53115 Bonn

**Contact at the International Office for enrolled international students**
Michael Becker
Poppelsdorfer Allee 53
53115 Bonn

**Opening hours**
Mon. – Fri.: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Thurs. 1:30 pm – 03:00 pm

**Opening hours**
Mon., Tues. and Thurs. 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Thurs. 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
In times of increased demand, the International Office can offer additional opening hours. They will inform you of any decision to do so.

**Opening hours**
Mon., Tues. and Fri. 8:00 am – 12 pm
Thurs. 8:00 am – 12:00 pm and 2:00 – 5:30 pm

**Office hours**
Mon. – Fri.: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Thurs. 1:30 pm – 03:00 pm

**Office hours**
Tues. and Wed. 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
Thurs. 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm
and by appointment
15. When can I contact the Study-Buddy team?

At any time! Please contact the Study-Buddy team (study-buddy@uni-bonn.de) if you have ideas for activities, requests or other suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you!

Please feel free to contact us at any time if you are unhappy with your partnership, e.g. due to lack of sympathy, lack of time or communication problems, or if you have questions regarding the program.

We wish all mentees lots of fun and hope that the Study-Buddy program initiates lasting international friendships!

Your Study-Buddy team