



FAQ for exchange students (Incoming students from Partner Universities)

International Office Pforzheim University

September 2025



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(incl. Learning
Agreement)



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Academic Year/Calendar

The study year at Pforzheim University is divided into two semesters; each semester lasts 15 weeks. The lectures of the winter semester start at the end of September or in the beginning of October; the summer semester starts in the middle of March. The detailed academic calendar can be found here:

[Academic Calendar](#)

When does the semester start? In the letter of acceptance, it says 1st September / 1st March, but I thought it was October / mid-March.

It is depending on the courses you take. Officially, the semester starts in the beginning of September / March. If you plan to take one of the pre-semester German language courses you will need to arrive at the beginning of September / March (the exact date will be announced later). Otherwise, it is sufficient if you are in Pforzheim for the Welcome Session end of September / mid-March. (Exact date see academic calendar above).

When will the exchange be finished?

The semester officially ends on August 31st / February 28th but the exams end already mid-July / mid-February. You are free to leave after the exams end. The exact date is depending on the courses you take and will be announced at the beginning of each course.

Letter of Acceptance



When will the letter of acceptance be sent?

You will receive the letter of acceptance after the application deadline has passed and we reviewed all of your documents. This will be mid-November / mid-June at the latest.

I am staying for two or more semesters? Why does my letter of acceptance state only one semester?

The main purpose of the letter of acceptance is to apply for a visa. That's why it says: "The candidate will be enrolled at Pforzheim University (Germany) from DD.MM.YYYY onwards." The embassy accepts this even though the letter does not say anything about your actual duration of study in Pforzheim. You will get a new letter of acceptance for the second semester.

When can I send the semester fee?

Payment of the semester fee can be made starting in June for the winter semester, and from December for the summer semester. You will receive detailed information about the payment process via email as soon as it becomes available.

Courses



General information

- On our [ISP course list](#) you can see all the classes that will be offered in the recent and the upcoming semester
- Please mind that changes in time or other specifics may occur
- You are expected to do a minimum of 24 ECTS. The credits for the courses are indicated behind the course number (ECTS Credits).
The maximum is 36 ECTS per semester.

Where can I find more information about courses?

The latest available syllabus is uploaded to the website ([ISP course list](#)) - syllabi of the current semester will be available the week before lectures start.

Where can I find the contact hours for the courses?

1 ECT credit corresponds 30 hours of workload, including contact hours with professor, further reading, assignments & preparation for exams. 1 contact hour translates to 45 minutes; typically, one session comprises 90 minutes.

Can I do less than 24 ECTS during the exchange semester?

Even with the Fast Track option (only during winter semester) we expect you to take at least 24 ECTS. If that does not work out for you for some reason, we need the approval from your home university.

Can I choose courses from all faculties, even when I am studying something different at home?

You can choose from all the courses in our [ISP course list](#) as long as your home university agrees (Double Degree students need to follow the given schedule).

Are there many courses with seat limits?

Some of our courses are limited in the number of seats in order to maintain the quality of teaching. But usually the students get into the courses of their choice.

Some courses are still on „tbc“

The courses are more or less the same every year. There can be small changes but in general you can orientate on the last semester. Sometimes we offer additional courses from our guest professors (which can vary and are announced some time before the beginning of the semester).

German Language Courses



General information

We offer free German classes 3 weeks before the semester starts and during the semester. The pre-semester course is on level A1 with no pre-knowledge and the courses during the semester vary from beginner (A1) to advanced. The exact course dates will be announced on time.

How can I enroll in a German course?

We will send you an email asking if you are interested in taking part in the pre-semester course. Then we will do the registration for you at the Language Center. If you are not a beginner, you can take a placement test in September /February (tba). After that you will get the information for which level you can register.

If you already have a certificate (e.g., from the Goethe Institute) stating your level of German, you can send it to us and we will check if you can skip the placement test.

In case you take a course during the semester you can enroll at the beginning of the semester in our online platform moodle. The exact procedure will be explained during our Welcome & Orientation session.

How to find German courses?

You will find the German courses on our website. It is not updated for the upcoming semester yet:

[Language Center - German courses](#)

I want to put the German course in my Learning Agreement. Should I put in the pre-semester German A1 course or the A2 level semester course?

That is depending on the number of credits you can transfer (you get 5 ECTS for every language course you complete successfully, Double Degree Students get 3 ECTS). Please ask the coordinator at your home university about this matter. You can also take courses without putting them in your Learning Agreement if you don't want to do a credit transfer here.



Application process

There are two personal details that we need to put for the registration, but I don't know what they mean. They are "ESI" and "tax number"

These fields are not mandatory to fill out, if you do not have that information, you can leave it blank.

Learning Agreement

General information

- EU students will need to fill in a Learning Agreement (LA) before, during and after the mobility (for ERASMUS Grant only)
- Don't stress about the Learning Agreement. The first one is just a proposal to see if you potentially find enough courses for your semester abroad. You can always change it in the "Learning Agreement during the mobility" within the first two weeks of the semester. Changes are absolutely common since there may be overlaps in the courses.
- You can also take courses without putting them in your Learning Agreement if you don't wish to do a credit transfer here.

When/where should we submit our learning agreement?

For us, you need to submit it at least two weeks before the semester starts and you need to submit it via email or the OLA website (in case your home university uses it).

What is the Erasmus Code for Pforzheim University?

The Erasmus Code for Pforzheim University is D PFORZHE01.

Who is my contact person at Pforzheim University?

If you fill in the LA before the mobility you can just leave the contact person (Erasmus) resp. sending institution (Erasmus+) empty. We will forward it to the right department / person and you can just fill it in the next time.
(Responsible for regular exchange is always Mr. Jochen Ebert)

Online Learning Agreement

If your home university uses the Online Learning Agreement (OLA) we can also sign it online.

I am unsure on whether to use the learning agreement given to me by my home university which is an online learning agreement, or whether I should use the learning agreement given to me by Pforzheim University.

If your home university already uses the online learning agreement you can simply use that. We will receive a link to sign it.

Changes in the Learning Agreement

The first LA is just a proposal! Changes in the LA are totally normal (due to overlaps, changes of times etc.) and can be made within the first two weeks of the semester.



Health insurance

General information

Health insurance is a mandatory step for the enrollment.

There are different steps for students studying within or outside the EU:

EU students:

Please note that you need to **validate** your health insurance at a German health insurance company! To do so you can simply send an e-mail with a photo of your EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) or the documents of your private insurance to any public German health insurance company.

- * Herr Oliver Berger Oliver.Berger@tk.de of the TK insurance company
- * Or Herr Uwe Krause Uwe.Krause@bw.aok.de of the AOK insurance company

After your documents have been accepted, Pforzheim University gets a confirmation of your status. This is transmitted electronically through an internal system.

Non-EU students:

Germany has signed agreements with the following countries for the recognition of national health insurance (English country names):

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Montenegro, Norway, North Macedonia, Switzerland, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey & United Kingdom. Students coming from these countries can apply for a document similar to the EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) and therefore, usually don't have to purchase an additional health insurance. (Please follow the instructions for EU students above).

Students who do not come from EU countries or the above-mentioned countries must buy a health insurance for Germany. You can choose between any public (AOK, DAK, IKK, TK etc.) or a private health insurance provider. From your 30th birthday onwards, you can only insure yourself with a private health insurance provider. Applicants who are privately insured in Germany, need a certificate of validation from public health insurance to enroll.

To validate your private insurance, you need to send a photo of your documents to either:

- * Herr Oliver Berger Oliver.Berger@tk.de of the TK insurance company
- * Or Herr Uwe Krause Uwe.Krause@bw.aok.de of the AOK insurance company

and they will send you the document back via e-mail. Afterwards please send this insurance document validation back to us.

Can you recommend any health insurance?

We are not allowed to recommend a health insurance company. The public health insurance cost more or less the same and there are no big differences in the range of services.

Is private insurance acceptable?

The private health insurances can vary in cost and range of service. Usually, private insurances are cheaper than public ones. In some cases, they will not cover your expenses automatically but you have to pay your medical bill first and hand in the facture to get your money back from the insurance company.

Blocked Account (“Sperrkonto”)

General information

If you come from a non-EU country and need to apply for a visa you have to prove that you are able to financially care for yourself.

The account has to be opened at a German bank while you are still in your home country, preparing your documents for your visa application. This type of bank account implies that your money will be “blocked” for the duration of your stay in Germany. The amount that needs to be transferred serves as a guarantee that you can uphold an appropriate standard of living abroad and is defined by German authorities. Even though the funds fully belong to you and are held in your name, you do not have access to the whole amount at once and receive a monthly allowance into your regular bank account opened at a German bank of your choice.

Can you recommend any provider of blocked accounts?

We are not allowed to recommend a provider of blocked accounts. Usually, the differences are not that significant.

Visa

When should I apply for a visa?

If you come from a non-EU country you will need to apply for a visa. We recommend to do that immediately after you have received your letter of acceptance since it can take some time.

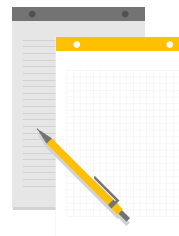
Who does need a visa?

Students from non-EU countries generally need to apply for a student visa before entering Germany. However, students from the following countries may enter with just their passport and apply for a visa after arrival in Pforzheim: Andorra, Australia, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Monaco and New Zealand, San Marino, South Korea, UK, USA.

To do so please contact the Foreigners Office within the first 6 weeks of your stay. Further general information on visa and residence permits can be found on our [website](#).

Who is my contact person for the application form of the visa (“References in the Federal Republic of Germany”)?

Christina Gottfried (she/her)
Manager International Programs
Hochschule Pforzheim | Pforzheim University
Tiefenbronnerstr. 65
75175 Pforzheim +49
7231 28 6142
incoming@hs-pforzheim.de



Are there any helpful tools for applying for a visa?

Yes, we can recommend using VisaFlow. It’s an online tool designed to help international students with the visa application process. It guides you step by step through required documents, forms and requirements based on your country of origin. VisaFlow is free to use – to register, simply enter the following code: **HSPFORZHEIM25.**

Scholarships

Where can I find scholarships and what is the exact procedure to apply for a scholarship?

For more information about financial aid and scholarships please contact your home university. You can also have a look here:

<https://www.daad.de/en/study-and-research-in-germany/scholarships/>

Housing



Can you recommend an accommodation?

We recommend to apply for a room in a student dorm since you will have contact to German and international students there. If you prefer to live in a quieter and more private environment, a private apartment or a shared apartment ("WG") might suit you better.

Here you can find a list with all student halls in Pforzheim: [Student halls in Pforzheim](#)

Here is the most popular website for shared flats: [wg-gesucht](#)

How does it work? Do I need to apply for that separately?

Yes, you will need to apply for a room separately. In Germany it is common that students look for accommodation by themselves. Since there is no on-campus housing it is not organized by the international office. The process of application depends on the accommodation you have chosen.

I am booking a private apartment for my stay at Pforzheim, so I wanted to ask if it is a standard and safe practice to pay the deposit amount in advance to the owner to confirm rooms?

It is common to pay a deposit ("Kautiön") of 2-3 months' rent in advance to the landlord or student hall. It is a safety for them. You get the money back after you have moved out again. In case something is broken they can keep a part of the money to repair / replace it.

That's why you should check everything when you move in. If you find something is broken or not right you should claim it at the beginning to make clear that this damage was not caused by you.

Bank Account



Can you recommend any bank?

We are not allowed to recommend any banks. It is up to you if you prefer a traditional bank or an online bank. Both are fine and usually free of charge for students.

For the traditional banks you may need a tax identification number which you will get after the registration in the city center at the beginning of the semester. Therefore, the traditional bank accounts will probably take more time than online banks.

Language Certificate

Do I need to present a proof of my level of English as a native speaker?

No, if English is your mother tongue you don't need to present a Language Certificate. The same applies if your home university teaches exclusively in English.

Do I need to present a proof of my level of German?

Only if you plan to take courses taught in German language. We recommend a B2 level. You can either hand in an official certificate or take our online placement test a few days before the semester starts.

Extension of Stay

I would like to stay for another semester. What do I need to do?

We will send an e-mail where we ask if you would like to extend your stay. You can either study another semester or take an internship (up to 3 semesters in total). You only need the permission of your home university (no new nomination needed).

Internship

General information

We highly do recommend an internship in or around Pforzheim. In Germany it is common for students to find an internship by their own but the University will provide you with some information and will help you in the process. Even with low German language skills it is possible since a lot of companies work in an international area.

How do students reach their internship location if the company is in another town? Is the public transport always available?

The public transport in Germany is always available and with it you can reach every city or town in the country.

Do you think it is possible to combine internship and courses during the semester?

No, you need to do the courses in one semester and the internship in another one. The companies expect you to work at least 3 months or 100 working days.

Connecting with the other Internationals



How can I connect with the other international students?

Usually, there is a group on WhatsApp for all international students. As soon as the group exists, we will inform you about it.

Student ID card

General information

The student ID card has different functions, including the following:



- Student identity card
- Ticket for public transport in Pforzheim (VPE, from Vaihingen (direction: Stuttgart) to Wilferdingen-Singen (direction: Karlsruhe))
- Library card
- Making cashless payments in the cafeteria (Mensa)
- Payment card for soft drinks and coffee machines
- Keycard for particular rooms and labs
- Payment card for copy machines and printers
- Payment card for washing machines in some student residencies

Your student ID card is only valid as long as you are registered (enrolled) at Pforzheim University. You can extend the validity of your card for a further semester by inserting it into one of the electronic self-service terminals in the foyer of building W1 after you have made the payment for the upcoming semester.

When will I get my student ID card?

You will get your student ID card after you have arrived in Pforzheim. It can only be set valid after you are properly enrolled and you have paid the student service fee (we will inform you about that beforehand).

How can I load credit on to my student ID card?

There are terminals in the foyer of the cafeteria building and also in the W1 building of the business department where you can load the desired amount of credit on to your card using your EC-card or cash.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



General information

Additional to the welcome session, there are a lot of other activities in the university offered by the student initiatives, or the university itself.

Student initiatives

There are many student initiatives in the university, here you can find the list of them and know more about what they are about.

[Student Initiatives at Pforzheim University](#)

Sport programs offered in the university

The student initiative ASTA offers the sport programs in the university. Each semester you can find the updated sport program.

<https://asta-pforzheim.de/unsere-angebote/>

Is there a gym in the university?

No, but there are different gym options in the city.