



International Ersties¹ at UCF!

Your Guide to Navigating German Bureaucracy

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¹ What is an Erstie? Glad you asked - an erstie is a student in their "Erstsemester" or "first semester". "Erstie" is a cute way of saying you're new to uni! Read more: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erstsemester>

What Should You Do First?

Disclaimer: This guide was written from an American perspective. Therefore the suggested steps - especially those for the residence visa - reflect the process that Americans go through and should not be considered universal. Please contact your embassy/consulation before entering Germany.

Additional Resources

UCF Website: <https://www.ucf.uni-freiburg.de/prospective-students/student-life>

SWFR: The SWFR is also a great resource to learn about how to get settled: https://www.swfr.de/fileadmin/downloads/wegweiser_homepage_sose19_eng.pdf

Remember:

1. Don't get too frustrated with language incompetency - it comes with time :)
2. For bureaucratic offices, make appointments & confirm them to speed things up!
3. Your 2nd-year+ LASers went through these or similar processes, so we can help you!

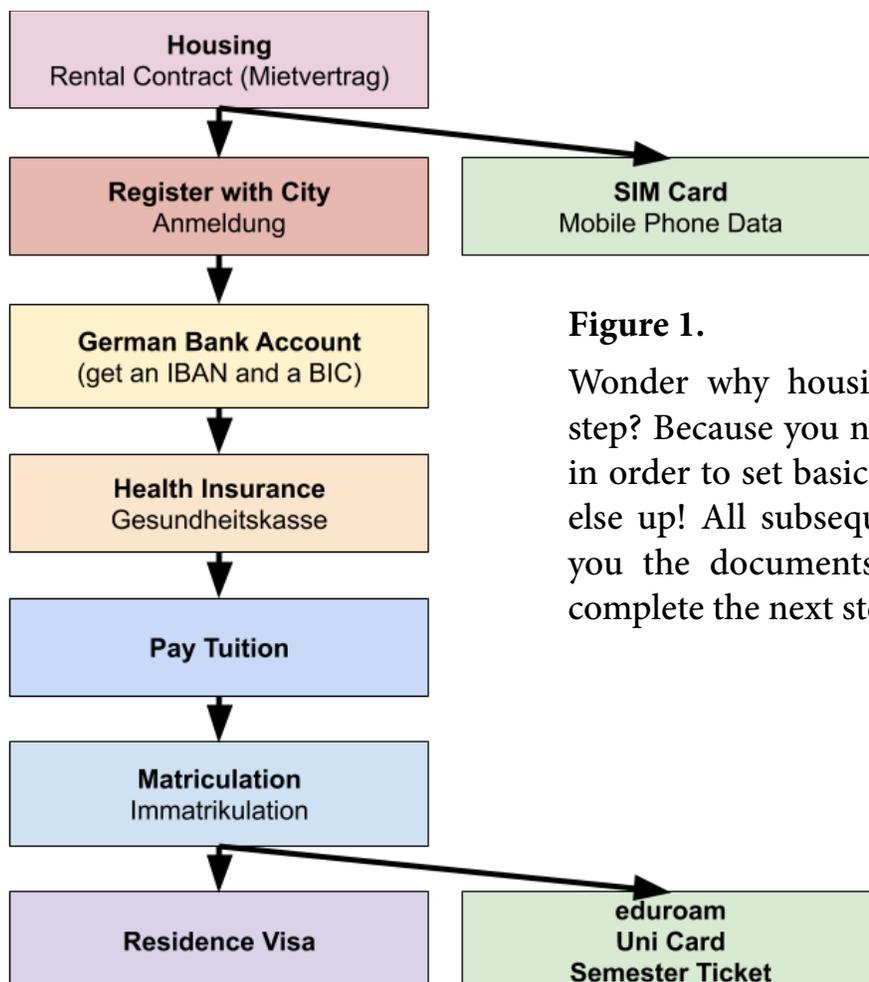


Figure 1.

Wonder why housing is the first step? Because you need an address in order to set basically everything else up! All subsequent steps give you the documents you need to complete the next step!

1. Secure Housing

The UCF website is a great resource for getting to know Freiburg and preparing for your move: <https://www.ucf.uni-freiburg.de/prospective-students/student-life>

Freiburg's renting market is competitive, so get started early. Here are places to look:

- **Studierendenwerk Freiburg (SWFR)**
 - Apply for student housing as soon as possible: <https://www.swfr.de/wohnen/wohnheime/online-bewerbung-auf-einen-wohnheimplatz/> Applications for housing can be done online. Housing through the SWFR cheap (around 300 euros / month), involves living in one of the many dorm locations in Freiburg, and is great for meeting other students when you first arrive.
 - **Note:** International students may occupy a SWFR dormitory room for a maximum of 2 semesters. After the first semester, you are required to extend the contract for your dorm (do this as early as possible). After a full year, another international student moves into the designated room. Make sure to reapply to the SWFR in the spring or fall to get a room for 6 semesters.
- **wg-gesucht.de**
 - apply to postings people have made for Wohngemeinschaft (WGs) aka shared apartments. Be prepared to write up to 100 messages - German messages are best received, expect a low response rate, and stay positive!
 - make an advertisement where you say what you are looking for so renters can find you
- **Facebook**
 - join the UCF room exchange facebook group (hint: 3rd years who are going abroad might have a room available for you)
 - join FB groups for housing in Freiburg (hint: act quickly - during winter semester it can be quite difficult to find housing)
- **Newspapers**
 - putting an ad, or looking at ads other people have placed in a local newspaper may lead to a room
- **Emergency Housing & Other options**
 - SWFR provides emergency housing
 - the FIZZ+ provides furnished rooms (however these rooms are quite expensive)
 - Black Forest Hostel

- Camping in Freiburg near the Dreisam

2. Registering with the City of Freiburg

Part of living in Germany is letting the city know where you live. Therefore, when you first arrive, and **every subsequent move you make** in Freiburg must be accompanied by an appointment at the Rathaus (city hall) to do an “Anmeldung” so the city of Freiburg has an updated record of where you live. You need to do this within 2 weeks of moving.

You can get a Termin (appointment) online ahead of time — **make sure to confirm it! Make an appointment here:** <https://netappoint.de/ot/stadtfreiburg-verw/?company=stadtfreiburg-verw&curcauses=0|1|2|3> and select “Meldewesen” -> “Wohnung anmelden”

Alternatively, you can go to the information desk in the Rathaus and request an appointment in person.

Where to go?	Rathaus im Stühlinger Fehrenbachallee 12, 79106 Freiburg im Breisgau
Language Level	Some German (best to bring a friend)
What to bring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport • Rental Contract (Mietvertrag)
What you will receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anmeldebestätigung (document confirming your residence in Freiburg)

3. Open a German Bank Account

Having a German bank account is an important first step. When you have a German account, you will also get an International Bank Account Number (IBAN), a number which allows you to send and receive money. You will need this number for some of the steps which follow: for example, setting up your monthly health insurance payments, or paying rent if you live in SWFR housing. Below are a couple of options for banking. These are only a few of many banks. Comprehensive reviews of German banks can be found online.

Note: you need an address in order to set up a bank account so that you can receive your card and pin number.

N26 - free, completely online bank. Account set-up takes half an hour and can be done online. It is a great choice if you need to set up a bank account ASAP.

Sparkasse - free until age 25; physical locations all around Freiburg; make an appointment to open an account and take someone with you who speaks German

Where to go?	Preferred banking institution
Language Level	Some German (best to bring a friend)
Cost	Should be free - don't pay for bank accounts if you can avoid it
What to bring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zulassungbescheid (Letter of Admission)• Passport• Bank Account information• Home Address• Anmeldebestätigung (residence registration document)
What you will receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bank Card (debit card)• Card PIN number• Tax ID number

4. Moving Money From Your Country to Germany

You'll need to put money into your German bank account. Here are a few ways we do it:

- Withdraw euros from your home bank and deposit cash into your German account
- Bank-to-bank transfer (call your bank to see how much this costs)
- Transferwise -> move USD -> EUR (requires ID confirmation and they take a small fee)

5. Getting Health Insurance

You can obtain health insurance from many providers around Freiburg. An easy option is AOK. The cost for health insurance is approximately 90 euros per month, but may vary based on your age and nationality.

For EU Students who have a "European Health Insurance Card" see: https://www.swfr.de/fileadmin/downloads/wegweiser_homepage_sose19_eng.pdf

Where to go?	Preferred health insurance provider
Language Level	no German required
Cost	Approx. 90 euros per month

What to bring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zulassungbescheid (Letter of Admission) • Passport • Bank Account information
What you will receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krankenversicherungsnachweis (proof of health insurance) • Insurance Card (bring this when you go to the doctor)

6. Paying Your Tuition

You can pay online through HISinOne or in person at the Rector's office (Rektorat) or using a direct debit mandate. More information about authorizing a direct debit mandate can be found online: www.studium.uni-freiburg.de/en/student-services/registration/registration

You can pay tuition fees with an EC card from a German Bank Account upon matriculation. See: https://www.swfr.de/fileadmin/downloads/wegweiser_homepage_sose19_eng.pdf

Note: Pay on time; if you're late the fee is 10 euros.

Where to go?	Rektorat Friedrichstraße 39, 79104 Freiburg im Breisgau Cashier's Desk at the Financial Transactions Office in the Rektorat 1st floor, room 01008 Opening hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 8:45 to 11:45 am
Language Level	English is fine; Some German helps
Cost	Non-EU/EEA residents: 1655 euro per semester. EU/EEA residents: 155 euros per semester.
What to bring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zulassungbescheid (Letter of Admission) • Passport • Cash or EC card
What you will receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of Payment

7. Matriculation

This final step, matriculation, ensures that everything is ready for you to start studying. Successful matriculation entails receiving a uni card. This card can be used to print, buy

coffee, Mensa² food, and more. The Uni card will come in the mail in 4-6 weeks. If you don't receive your card in a timely manner, go to the International Admissions Office and see if they have it in the office. When you go to pick it up, you will need to bring an ID to prove your identity.

For more information about matriculation, see https://www.swfr.de/fileadmin/downloads/wegweiser_homepage_sose19_eng.pdf

Where to go?	Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg Service Center Studium – International Admissions and Services Sedanstr. 6 79098 Freiburg
Language Level	English is fine
What to bring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zulassungbescheid (Letter of Admission) • Passport • Anmeldebestätigung (Residence Registration Document) • Krankenversicherungsnachweis (proof of health insurance) • Receipt for the registration fee • If you have studied at another German university, bring a record of your former studies, including the ex-matriculation certificate. • You can start your matriculation application online: www.studium.uni-freiburg.de/en/student-services/matriculation?set_language=en
What you will receive	Uni Card

8. Semester Ticket: Getting Around in Freiburg

VAG is the company which provides public transportation in Freiburg. This includes a system of buses, trains, trams, and bicycles. You can buy a ticket with the machines inside each tram. There is a VAG mobile app with departure times, every station has departure times printed, and Google maps is your friend.

As a student, you can travel **for free** every day after 7pm. For daytime use, you can get a Semester Ticket, which is a 94 euro ticket (less than 16 euro/month) which allows you to travel freely in Freiburg and surrounding areas for the 6 month period surrounding each university semester. You can get a semester ticket starting in September/October and another one starting in March/April. To get one, go to the VAG office in the middle of Freiburg and ask for a “Semester Ticket” or purchase one online or at a VAG kiosk in the train station (Hbf).

² What's Mensa? It's basically a dining hall that serves lunch and dinner Monday - Saturday at low prices.

Where to go?	VAG Pluspunkt Salzstraße 3 79098 Freiburg im Breisgau
Language Level	Some German will help
What to bring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zulassungbescheid (Letter of Admission) • Passport / ID (because the student card does not have a picture) • Uni Freiburg Student Card
Cost	94 euros
What you will receive	Paper Semester Ticket

Stay Legal: If you get controlled on the tram or a bus, you need to have a valid ticket. If you don't have a ticket, you will be fined 60 euros. If you are taking advantage of your student status and are traveling with a semester ticket or without one after 7pm, you will need to prove your student status. You need to be able to show an admissions document - this could be your Zulassungbescheid (Letter of Admission) or Studienbescheinigung (confirmation of matriculation for the current semester). You can find these documents in your HISinOne account online. Keep a printout with you, or keep an image of the document on your phone.

9. Obtaining a Residence Visa

IMPORTANT: Please check with your local embassy/consulation before entering Germany!! Different countries have different regulations!!

Most Internationals need to obtain a residence/student visa **before** entering Germany.

You can enter on tourist visa from: Australia, Canada, Isreal, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the USA and then get your residence visa.

To get a Residence Visa, you will need to go to the Immigration Office, or Ausländerbehörde. It is not possible to get a visa for the entire 4 years of study. Therefore, you must get a 1-year or 2-year visa and renew it regularly prior to expiration. **If you can, get a 2-year visa; you'll be here for a while :)**

Note: The Ausländerbehörde has really long waiting times (0.5-4 hours) so be prepared to wait. When you arrive, go to the machine, select the option to get a visa (your waiting ticket will have an "S" on it, and there are people who can help you figure out which ticket to get). Hold onto your number until it's your turn. Or, avoid the wait and email for a Termin (appointment) - they respond to emails in 2-4 weeks, or you can call them at 0761 2016470

After you go and get your application completed, it will take around 4 weeks and you will receive a letter in the mail informing you that you can pick your residence permit up at the Ausländerbehörde. You arrive, take a “A” for “Abholung“ or “Collection” number and wait your turn to pick up your residence visa.

Where to go?	Ausländerbehörde Berliner Allee 1 79114 Freiburg im Breisgau
Language Level	Some German helps
Cost	First time: 100 euro for 1 year visa / 110 euro for 2 year visa Renewal: 93 euro Note: to be on the safe side, bring cash in case your card doesn't work
What to bring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your passport • A Passport photo (35mm x 45mm) • Proof of Health insurance (Mitgliedsbescheinigung) - request this as a printout from your health insurance provider • Proof of Financial Support (for a 1 year visa: 9000 euro, for a 2 year visa: 16000 euros) - show a printout of a bank statement with the desired amount • A printout of your Zulassungsbescheid (the first page of your letter of admission) or your Studienbescheinigung (you can download both of these from HISinOne) • Anmeldebestätigung (the paper you get from the Rathaus that says where you live in Freiburg) <p>See the complete list required items to get a residence visa here: https://www.freiburg.de/pb/site/Freiburg/get/params_E2030224772/327415/Residence_permit_for_university_students.pdf</p>
Best time to go?	Afternoons are less crowded than mornings.
What you will receive	Residence Visa Card “Aufenthaltstitel”(this is your ID card in Germany / EU)

10. Getting a SIM card

ALDI: You can get a ALDI talk starter packet for 15 euro from any ALDI grocery store. This gives you a SIM card and 10 euro “guthaben” to spend on your first plan (which start at 4 euro/month). Download the ALDI registration app and then the regular ALDI app to set your account up and get your phone working.

Vodafone / Other Providers: You can also set up a contract with another provider. Ask fellow students to see what they've done to get their phones online!

11. Connecting to eduroam (campus wifi)

To set up your eduroam password, log into myAccount: <https://myaccount.uni-freiburg.de/uadmin/login> and under the “Pass-/keyword” menu item select “eduroam keyword” and set it. Now you can log in to eduroam!

12. Putting money on your Uni Card

This can be done at the machines in the UB (University Library), at any Uni cafe, and at the Mensa (either in person or at a machine if you have your EC card). For a complete list of places where you can load money onto your card, see this list on SWFR: <https://www.swfr.de/en/food-beverages/chip-card/load-up/>