

Germany Pre-Departure Checklist

Your complete timeline from first research to your first weeks in Germany — for the 2026/27 academic year.

12–9 months before your semester starts

- ☐ Shortlist programs and universities (use rankings, accreditation and city cost data)
- ☐ Check that your school/degree qualifies for admission (Anabin database / university requirements)
- ☐ Find out if you need an APS certificate (required for applicants from China, India and Vietnam) — apply early, it takes weeks
- ☐ Plan your financing: proof of funds is €11,904 for one year (blocked account rate 2026)
- ☐ Start preparing your language certificate: IELTS/TOEFL for English-taught, TestDaF/DSH for German-taught programs

9–6 months before

- ☐ Take your language test (book early — test dates fill up)
- ☐ Collect transcripts and certificates from all schools/universities attended
- ☐ Get certified copies and sworn translations (German or English)
- ☐ Apply for your APS certificate now if required
- ☐ Write your CV and motivation letter / statement of purpose

6–3 months before

- ☐ Submit university applications — via uni-assist for many universities (€75 first program, €30 each additional)
- ☐ Watch the classic deadlines at many public universities: 15 July (winter semester), 15 January (summer semester)
- ☐ Request a VPD (preliminary review document) early if your university asks for one
- ☐ Convert your grades to the German scale to check admission chances ([university.im/german-grade-calculator/](https://www.university.im/german-grade-calculator/))

3–1 months before (after your admission letter)

- ☐ Open and fund your blocked account (Sperrkonto): €11,904 = €992/month for 12 months
- ☐ Arrange health insurance confirmation for enrolment and visa (statutory student rate: about €140–150/month)
- ☐ Book your visa appointment IMMEDIATELY — waiting times at German missions can be weeks to months
- ☐ Compile the visa document set (see our separate Document Checklist)
- ☐ Apply for student housing: register with the local Studentenwerk waiting list NOW — and keep alternatives open
- ☐ Book your flight; plan to arrive 2–4 weeks before the semester starts

Final 2 weeks

- ☐ Collect your visa; check name, validity dates and visa type (national visa, type D)
- ☐ Make paper copies AND cloud scans of every document
- ☐ Confirm your first weeks' accommodation in writing

- ☐ Notify your bank; get a small amount of euros in cash
- ☐ Pack all originals in your hand luggage — never in checked bags

Your first 30 days in Germany

- ☐ Register your address (Anmeldung) within 14 days of moving in
- ☐ Activate your blocked account and open a regular German bank account
- ☐ Complete enrolment (Immatrikulation) and pay the semester fee (typically €100–400)
- ☐ Activate your health insurance (your insurer notifies the university electronically)
- ☐ Book your residence permit appointment at the Ausländerbehörde (fee about €100)
- ☐ Register for the broadcasting fee (Rundfunkbeitrag, €18.36/month per household)
- ☐ Get your semester ticket or Deutschlandticket (€63/month, often discounted or included for students)

Figures reflect official 2026 rates. Rules can change — always confirm with the German mission in your country and your university's international office.