



Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin
University of Applied Sciences

Master of Arts

**Intercultural
Conflict
Management**
(MA-ICM)

Master of Arts

**Social Work as
a Human Rights
Profession**
(MA-SWHR)

Housing Information 2023

ash-berlin.eu/icm

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Contents

Different kinds of housing	2
1. Student housing	2
2. Shared apartments	2
3. Non-shared apartments	3
4. Just in case: Hostels	4
Choosing the right area to live in	4
Once you have found accommodation.....	5
1. Deposits.....	5
2. Lease	5
3. Moving in and out	6

Housing Information 2023

The Alice Salomon University (ASH) can neither provide student housing nor does it have a student campus. However, there are different options of accommodation for students in Berlin as outlined in this document.

Finding a place to stay in Berlin can take some time, so it is important that you start looking for one as soon as possible and at least 2 months prior to your arrival. While in some cases (especially for shared apartments) more rooms will become available closer to the start of the semester, you should never rely on that and start searching well ahead of the start of the semester!

Important note: In order to be able to deal with all the necessary administrative paperwork during the Introduction Weeks (bank account, health insurance, Foreigner's Office etc.) it is absolutely crucial to present a rental contract.

Different kinds of housing

1. Student housing

Since it is quite complicated to find an apartment in advance from abroad the most convenient way to find a place to live in Berlin as a foreign student is to apply for student housing facilities at the studierendenWERK BERLIN (Berlin's student union). The places are limited and therefore it is very important to apply for a place as soon as possible.

We strongly recommend you to apply for student housing as it is the best option for most of our students. Consider shared or non-shared apartments as additional options which you should still look into.

In order to apply for student housing please read the following links carefully:

Information on the application process: <https://www.stw.berlin/en/housing.html>

FAQ application for housing: <https://www.stw.berlin/en/housing.html>

Application form for housing:

https://www.stw.berlin/en/housing.html#jump_online_portal

In order to fill out the online application form (see link above) you will need to upload the following documents which you also find attached to this email:

- Letter of Admission from ASH
- Receipt for payment of the semester fee
- Copy of your passport

If you encounter any problems with the studierendenWERK BERLIN not accepting these documents, please let us know immediately. Be aware that there usually are very long waiting lists for the student housing facilities, so it is important that you have an alternative plan before the semester starts.

2. Shared apartments

Rooms in shared flats, studios, or apartments are very common among students in Germany. Shared apartments can vary between ones that only exist for the purpose of sharing rent and utilities where roommates do not engage a lot; and others where roommates not only live next to each other but together, have dinner together, spend free time together etc. Rooms in shared flats are most easily found via internet – some databases are:

<http://www.wg-gesucht.de/en/>

<http://www.studenten-wg.de/Berlin,wg.html> (in German)

<https://www.wohngemeinschaft.de/wg/berlin> (in German)

<http://www.wgberlin.net/?lang=en>

Always try and call the person who is the contact for the ad (unless it is stated otherwise) as this is the fastest way of getting in contact with them, and make an appointment for looking at the place and getting to know the other roommates. Be aware that there might be quite a few other candidates for the room, so your potential roommates might want to get to know all of you first before they decide who will get the room.

Make sure to check whether the rent already includes all utilities: “Kaltmiete” refers to without utilities, “Warmmiete” usually includes heating and electricity. Check if other costs like phone or internet are included in the rent as well and if a security deposit (Kaution) will be required.

3. Non-shared apartments

If you are searching for an unfurnished apartment on your own (makes sense if you want to stay in Berlin for a longer time), you can try this most common database:

www.immobilienscout24.de

Please keep in mind that when renting an apartment, you need several documents in order to receive a contract, and it is most handy to have them all compiled on the appointment for visiting the place and handing them over to the person responsible on the same day.

Documents you will always need for renting an apartment are the following:

- passport/ID-card copy
- statement from your employer about your salary during the last three months; if you are not employed, you can also hand in a so-called ‘Bürgschaft’ (bail) signed from your parents or somebody who supports you that they will take over all financial needs regarding the apartment (sometimes you will also need to provide a statement about their financial situation)
- SCHUFA-Auskunft (this is a statement that you are not having any unpaid debts with any German actor, more information to this on www.schufa.de/en/)
- A statement from your former landlord that you are not owing him/her any money

Sometimes landlords or renting agencies also ask for additional requirements, such as certain insurances, or for instance a certificate stating that you are in need of accommodation (this is something you can only get if you are registered with several authorities in Berlin) but this will mostly be indicated on the offer’s page.

4. Just in case: Hostels

If none of the above options works out for you, there are a lot of hostels in Berlin where you could stay for a few nights until you have found something more permanent. Some suggestions for hostels:

OSTEL Friedrichshain <http://www.ostel.eu/en/index.html>

- well connected with the S5 (Ostbahnhof)
- single room from 30 EUR per night
- double room from 39 EUR per night

Heart of Gold Hostel <https://www.heartofgold-hostel.de/rooms/>

- in the city centre, well connected with the S5 (Friedrichstraße)
- dorm bed about 17 EUR per night
- single room about 60 EUR per night

Singer109 <http://www.singer109.com/rooms.html>

- located close to the U5 (Strausberger Platz) and S5 (Jannowitzbrücke)
- dorm bed from 13 EUR per night
- single room from 29 EUR per night

Schlafmeile Friedrichshain <http://www.schlafmeile.de/>

- well connected (U5 Frankfurter Allee)
- dorm beds for about 10 EUR per night
- double room 17 EUR per person. per night

If these suggestions do not work for you, you can find plenty of other hostels or Airbnbs in Berlin through Google. Good areas to stay in – both in terms of distance to the ASH as well as quality of living – would be Friedrichshain or Mitte.

Choosing the right area to live in

Berlin is a large city with many districts that have different qualities and are suitable for different needs. However, one problem affects almost all districts: High rents. We recommend that you plan with a high budget for this in order to secure your living situation.

In order to find out which district suits you, you should inform yourself about several things:

- Connection to public transport (U5 to reach ASH, S41/42 to travel across the city)
- International setting (Berlin has some districts with a large international community like Neukölln, Kreuzberg and Wedding.)
- Family friendly setting
- Safety

In order to match your needs with the different districts, we recommend that you get in touch with students from your group who already live in Berlin. There is also a lot of information online about the different parts of the city. Please keep in mind that Hellersdorf is an outlying district. From almost every corner of the city it is a long drive to reach the university unless you live in the area of it.

Once you have found accommodation

1. Deposits

Landlords will often ask for a deposit equivalent to between one and three months' rent (basic rent) plus 19% VAT. This is to cover any damage the tenant may cause to property. The deposit will be repaid, together with interest, after deduction of any amount needed for repair or renovation on termination of the lease. Specific provisions on this should be contained in the lease (cf. below). The deposit should not be paid to the landlord directly but into a joint savings book. In this way, you can prevent the landlord from keeping the money without your agreement and you will earn the interest. Your bank will give you detailed information.

2. Lease

An apartment is held to be rented by you as soon as both you and the landlord have signed the lease agreement. Your signature legally binds you to the terms of lease. Before signing, it is therefore essential to read the document very carefully, even though it is usually rather long and difficult to read. In particular, the lease covers the amount of rent and utility costs payable, the period of notice to be given for terminating the lease, payment for any necessary repairs, responsibility for redecoration costs when moving out, the length of the lease and the terms for rent increase.

Furthermore, the lease may contain additional agreements (e.g., use of the garden, car parking facilities etc.). Check with the landlord before moving in whether you are allowed to keep pets.

The lease also contains general rules for residents which, among other things, stipulate that before 7 a.m. and after 10 p.m. all unnecessary noise must be avoided.

If you do not understand parts of the lease or if you feel that unusual conditions are being imposed, please ask your German colleagues for assistance and advice.

Normally, in case either side wants to terminate the lease contract, the period of notice is three months. Any different conditions must be stipulated in the lease or separately in writing.

3. Moving in and out

Before you move into rented accommodation, you should make an appointment with the landlord to go over the apartment with him or her and inspect it for any defects (scratches, stains, wear and tear, damage etc.). All this should be put down in writing, even if damage appears very slight. Otherwise you may find you will be charged for the repairs or your deposit will not be repaid to you in full when you move out, assuming that the damage was caused by you. The list of defects and damage must be signed by the landlord and kept by you.

When you move out the same kind of appointment should be made with the landlord or manager of the property to check on defects and damage once again. The tenancy agreement stipulates whether, and to what extent, redecoration work (so-called "Schönheitsarbeiten") has to be done by the tenant when he or she moves out. If the accommodation is in a noticeably worse condition than at the start of the tenancy the landlord may retain the deposit paid by the tenant in part or in full. When you move out, you should prepare a written document of the transfer stating that the apartment has been transferred without defects or damage and that the deposit should be repaid in full.

In principle, it is advisable to have a German colleague or acquaintance with you during the transfer who knows the procedure and can check that there are no linguistic misunderstandings.

All electrical connections in Germany cater for 220-240-Volt/ 50-Hz a/c mains and European standard plugs. You may require adapters and transformers for electrical equipment you bring with you.

We are very much looking forward to seeing you soon!

Kind regards,
SWHR Team & ICM Team