

Upon Arrival

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Enrollment

Once you arrive in Offenburg or Gengenbach, you need to enroll at the University. Exchange students do so at the International Office, Master's degree students at the Graduate School's registrar's office.

Before enrollment, exchange students have to pay their fees at the the University's payment office (room A106 on the Offenburg Campus). Please note that this office accepts cash payments *only*.

Graduate School students have to have transferred the fees in advance by a given deadline in order for their admission to be valid.

For detailed information about the relevant fees, please see the website on "[Costs and Expenses](#)."

Once enrolled, you will receive your registration certificate and student ID, which is called **OSKAR** (link in German only). The OSKAR card offers a number of additional advantages, such as paying for meals at the campus cafeteria or for the printing services on campus. You will also receive an email account from Offenburg University.

Opening a Bank Account

One of the first things you should do after arrival is opening a bank account, because health insurance, rent and other obligations can only be paid by bank transfer.

To open a bank account, bring your passport and the registration certificate you receive at enrollment, so that you qualify for a free student account. Bringing cash will allow the account to be opened immediately, whereas a transfer from your home country could take up to three or four weeks.

There are three main ways of conducting monetary transactions:

- **Transfer** - used to move money from one account to the other; transfer forms can be filled out by hand at the bank or online
- **Standing order** - used for recurring payments of a specific amount, e.g. the monthly rent; the bank automatically debits your account on an agreed date
- **Direct debit** - used for recurring payments of varying amounts, e.g. phone bills; the recipient is given a direct debit authorization to deduct the respective amount from your account.

In Germany most transactions are conducted with cash, especially when paying a small sum of money. Credit cards are relatively common, but not often used for everyday purchases. Instead, people pay more often with debit cards. When you set up a German bank account, you will receive a debit card that you can use at the ATM of your bank free of charge or while you are shopping.

Health and Liability Insurance

<https://mv.hs-offenburg.de/en/nc/studium/master/energy-conversion-and-management-ecm/around-your-studies/upon-arrival/>

Health Insurance

To study in Germany, you are required to have health insurance coverage. Therefore, before enrolling at Offenburg University you need to provide proof of valid health insurance, i.e. a confirmation that you are covered by a German statutory-health-insurance provider. For more information about the German healthcare system, offered in 10 different languages, please check [here](#).

In general, statutory health insurance companies offer cheaper rates for students, at approximately € 80 per month.

International students from EU countries who have statutory health insurance in their home country can have their insurance coverage recognized in Germany. These students must bring their [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#).

[Here](#) you can download information about student health insurance.

Liability Insurance

Liability insurance is taken out if you cause damage to someone else or their property. In Germany, you are legally responsible not only for material damages, but also, for example, health damages. Therefore, liability insurance is one of the most important insurances if you travel or live in Germany!

By paying the semester fees, all enrolled students of Hochschule Offenburg are covered by liability insurance. However, this only applies to activities that have a causal connection with your studies and take place on the premises of the University, or are part of a course stated in the study curriculum. Cover is also provided during approved work-experience programs which are part of the study curriculum.

Damages declaration forms and further details on [student liability insurance](#) can be found on the website of the Studentenwerk Freiburg.

For students of the Graduate School we take out our own liability insurance, financed by the Service Contribution fee, which also covers damages that are not causally related to the University. Exchange students and others, who are studying in one of the other study programs and/or are not obliged to pay the Service Contribution, are strongly recommended to take out liability insurance on their own, at the cost of € 24 per year.

Registration in Germany

Germany has a personal registration law which requires everyone to register with their local government office. International students must report to their local foreign-nationals office within one week of arrival and register themselves. At the same office, students requiring a residence permit will have their visas converted into a residence permit for the duration of their studies. EU citizens don't need a residence permit, but are also obliged to register at the registration office and obtain a freedom-of-movement permit (*Freizügigkeitsbescheinigung*).

Please bring the following documents for registration:

- Your passport
- A passport-sized photograph
- The registration certificate from Offenburg University
- Proof of financial support
- Your signed rental contract
- Proof of existing health insurance

For students living in Offenburg, you must register with the Office for Non-German Citizens (*AusländerBüro*), which has a [website](#) in German only. For students living in other communities of the Ortenau district, including Gengenbach, you must register at the Immigration Office of the *Landratsamt* (district office).

The opening hours are as follows:

AusländerBüro: Monday-Friday 8:00-12:00 noon, Thursday 1:00-6:00 pm

Landratsamt Immigration Office: Monday-Wednesday and Friday 8:00-12:00 noon, Thursday 1:00-6:00 pm

eAT (Electronic Residence Permit)

In the past, a residence permit (German "*Aufenthaltstitel*") was issued in the form of an adhesive label placed in the ID card or passport. Since 2011, electronic residence permits (eAT) for non-EU nationals have been issued as a separate document in credit-card format.

The permit is equipped with a contact-free chip inside the card on which biometric features (photograph and two fingerprints), ancillary conditions and personal data are saved. Additional provisions relating to the residence permit are no longer printed on a label and stuck into the passport, but saved on the eAT chip and printed on a supplementary sheet that is issued along with the eAT.

Please note that the eAT is only valid for as long as the registered accompanying passport is. Therefore, please make sure that your passport is sufficiently valid or apply for a passport extension in good time. Also, travel to other Schengen-area countries is permitted only after issuance of the eAT.

eAT costs:

- Duration up to one year: € 100
- Duration of more than one year: € 110
- Extension for more than three months: € 80

How and where to get the eAT:

- Pick up the application form from the Ausländerbüro
- Fill out, sign, and return the application form to the Ausländerbüro where you will receive a checklist
- Take the checklist and other required documentation to the Bürgerbüro
- You will receive an email invitation/appointment for fingerprint scanning
- You will receive an email notification when your eAT is ready to be picked-up

Additional information:

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees has published the booklet "[All you need to know about the electronic residence permit \(eAT\)](#)," which is also available in other languages.

Orientation Events

At the beginning of the semester, several orientation events are held for international and exchange students, where they get to know the campus, professors and lecturers and fellow students, and have plenty of opportunities to clarify any remaining questions about their studies at Hochschule Offenburg.

For all new students, an Introduction Day is held the day before the beginning of classes, including a welcome <https://mv.hs-offenburg.de/en/nc/studium/master/energy-conversion-and-management-ecm/around-your-studies/upon-arrival/>

address by the Rector. New Master's degree students also meet for several orientation days at a special retreat, often in the Black Forest or at Lake Constance.

You will be notified about all relevant orientation dates and locations before your arrival.