



International Max Planck Research School for
Astronomy & Cosmic Physics at the University of Heidelberg



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Foreword

This manual contains information that is relevant for a PhD student starting at one of the astrophysics institutes within the IMPRS-HD, whether of German citizenship or from abroad, an IMPRS student or not. IMPRS-HD is the acronym for *International Max Planck Research School for Astronomy and Cosmic Physics at the University of Heidelberg*. The idea of making a manual resulted from many of the PhD students having similar experiences when trying to find a flat, signing up at the university, figuring out health insurance etc. It was then decided to write down all the important information for the generations to come.

The information presented here is only useful if it is continuously updated. Therefore we ask the reader to tell us if he/she has experienced anything different from what is written here.

A further information resource for expatriates living in Germany - kind of a manual for Germany – is provided by the German Foreign Office: “*How to Germany*”. You can either find all the information on the internet <http://www.howtogermany.com> or look for a copy at the MPIA information desk.

When the IMPRS manual was first issued (2007) the authors copied and adapted a major part of the existing MPIA “*Students Pamphlet*” which had been produced by Anders Johansen, Nadine Neumayer, Sascha P. Quanz, Florian Rodler and Jutta Stegmaier. We are still thankful to all of them!!

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Chapter 1

1 Heidelberg, Germany

1.1 Before you arrive: Entry visa

It is of utmost importance that you have the proper visa that allows you to stay in Germany for your PhD. To ensure this you should definitely take care of your visa before your arrival.

EU nationals

No visa and no residence permit for students who are a member of the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA) states Lichtenstein, Iceland and Norway.

Non-EU nationals

Generally speaking, all other foreigners *require a visa* for stays in Germany. Exceptions are: Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea, the United States of America and Switzerland provided they are a stipend holder.

Nevertheless: PhD Students with work contract should apply for an entry visa directly even if you do not need one for entry. Reason: you are not allowed to start with your work immediately but need an appointment with the local immigration office to get the work permit and therefore your starting date may be delayed. Therefore, we strongly recommend applying for the visa before you enter Germany. For more information go to: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/visabestimmungen-node>

Both students with a stipend and a work contract need to apply for a residence permit ("Aufenthaltstitel") based on their entry visa once arrived in Germany and when they intend to stay longer than three months.

Applying for a national visa in your home country or the country you are staying at

Once accepted by the IMPRS, you should set up an appointment at the German embassy or consulate near your home residence/ residence you are staying at the moment. You must apply for this before coming to Germany well in advance.

Visa / residence permit for researcher (§18d Residence Act):

PhD students with employment *contracts (over 50%)* must apply for the "researcher visa" (Visa Type-D) and residence permit for the purpose of research (§18d). In order to apply for a researcher residence permit according to §18d of the Residence Act, the research organization must sign a *hosting agreement* with the visiting scholar. **You will need to submit the hosting agreement with your visa application to the German embassy** in your home country. Please note, an invitation letter from your host will not be accepted anymore for the "researcher visa". Please contact your new employer for the host agreement.

PhD students with a research stipend have to apply for a student visa (§16b) and later also a residence permit for students (§16b immigration act). When applying for a visa at a German embassy/consulate, an invitation letter of the institute should be presented.

Note: Do not travel with a Schengen visa, which is a tourist visa as it is valid only for less than 3 months and cannot be changed. You have to travel back to your country in order to apply for another visa.

Travel health insurance

Please make sure that you do have health insurance that is valid in Germany and covers your travel and at least your starting period here in Heidelberg. Accidents, medical treatment and stays in hospitals all need to be covered.

1.2 Transportation to Heidelberg

Traveling by plane

The nearest airports to HD are

Frankfurt (Main): One of the most important airports in Germany providing all international connections. Going there by train takes approx. 1 hour, usually one has to change in Mannheim. The Lufthansa Airport Shuttle needs approximately an hour and goes every hour from morning to evening (<http://frankfurt-airport-shuttles.de/en/home-2/>) There are additional transfer services like TLS.

Stuttgart: Many international connections and also low-cost airlines. Trains take approx. 40mins to Stuttgart main station and then you can use the S-Bahn which takes another 30mins.

Hahn-Airport (Frankfurt/Hahn): Small airport (not near Frankfurt!) where Ryanair offers low-cost flights. There is the Hahn Express bus leaving from the main train station HD taking 2h: https://www.hahn-airport.de/default.aspx?menu=by_bus&cc=en

Baden-Airpark (Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden): Small airport Ryanair serves. The Hahn Express also provides a bus there taking 1h30: https://www.hahn-airport.de/default.aspx?menu=by_bus&cc=en

City Airport Mannheim: small airport in Mannheim that serves only very few destinations inside Germany.

Traveling by train

From the HD main train station (Hauptbahnhof) you get all kinds of train connections. The company that generally provides all train services is Deutsche Bahn (DB). On the website www.bahn.de you find the dropdown view “Deutsch” which should lead you to the English version.

If you travel often by train you can buy “Bahncard 25” or “Bahncard 50”. Bahncard 25 offers you 25% discount in any train ticket even if the ticket is in an early-booking offer. Bahncard 50 offers 50% discount on the original price of the ticket. There are also a lot of offers if you book early, if you are travelling with more people or during the weekend. More info you can get from the website of Deutsche Bahn.

If you already have the semester ticket then you can use it to travel with the regional train or the S-Bahn in a region around Heidelberg. This region is quite big, so each time you travel

around, check if you are covered with the semester ticket. The most popular destination covered by the semester ticket is Mannheim but you will find a lot of nice places to visit around Heidelberg.

In HD the S-Bahn is a regional train system that provides fast connections to outer areas of HD and reaches as far as Kaiserslautern, Karlsruhe etc. The connections are included in the DB system.

1.3 Your first steps in Heidelberg

After your arrival, you have to take care of the following:

- Sign your work contract / stipend contract (if not done before)
- Registration at the city authorities
- Open a bank account
- Register for health insurance
- Register as PhD student and enroll at Heidelberg University
- Look for a permanent accommodation

For most of these steps you can get help either from IMPRS, from your institute colleagues and secretaries, so feel encouraged to ask for help. In the next sections you will find useful information about these issues.

IMPORTANT HINT!!! Keep in mind that some contracts in Germany can be automatically renewed (e.g. mobile phones, internet, subscription to a gym etc.). If you do not want your contract renewed, you should go to the company some months before the end of your contract (usually at least 3 months in advance) and cancel it. They often ask for a written cancellation. Do not forget to get a written statement that they accepted your cancellation.

Prepare your working Contract

Once you have been accepted as an IMPRS Fellow, you should agree on a starting date with your supervisor so that the personnel department can prepare your contract. Pick it up after arrival.

Registration at the city authorities

Regardless of whether you are a member of the EU or not, everyone, including Germans, staying in Heidelberg; Mannheim and in the surrounding area, more than three months must register with one of the city's administrative offices (Bürgeramt) within ten days (free of charge). There,

- you will have to present your passport/ ID card,
- to proof your current address in Heidelberg (or Mannheim, Leimen, etc.), i.e. a proof of your landlord to confirm where you are staying at (Wohnungsgeberbestätigung). If you do not have a permanent address yet, you can give them the address of the guest house you are staying at, but have to report them once you have moved to your own apartment.
- and fill out a form called "Anmeldung" (Registration) which is available at the City Administrative Office

At which city administrative office to register depends on where you are staying. Please go to the Office corresponding to your residential district. After registering, you will receive a

certificate of registration that you need for further administrative tasks. The staff at the City's Administrative Office usually gives you further instructions what to do to get your residence permit if needed.

Heidelberg: <https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/Lde/HD/Rathaus/Buergeraemter.html>

Eppelheim: <https://www.eppelheim.de/pb/Lde/1089384.html>

Leimen: <https://www.leimen.de/index.php?id=4>

Mannheim: <https://www.mannheim.de/de/service-bieten/buergerdienste/buergerservice>

Residence permit (Aufenthaltstitel)

A residence permit is a permit or a visa that you have to apply for to stay in Germany for a specific purpose. There are different types of residence permits you can apply for: student visa (§16b) and a researcher visa (§18d).

With a researcher visa, you are e.g. entitled for parental allowance (Elterngeld) and child benefit (Kindergeld). It also includes mobility privileges within the EU. A researcher's spouse who accompanies the researcher to Germany is entitled to take up gainful employment. No work permit is required. There is no German language requirement for the spouse.

Further information can be found on the following homepage of the Heidelberg University: https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/research/international/heidelberg/researchers_directive.html

To apply for a residence permit is a several-stage-process:

Usually, at the registration at the Bürgeramt office corresponding to your residential district, the staff will tell you what further steps you should take to get your residence permit. If you live in Heidelberg, once registered, you have to make an appointment at the Foreigner's office by emailing the corresponding person according to your family name since it takes several weeks to get an appointment. Just for your information, most of the staff does not speak English very well.

Local Foreigners' Office (Zuwanderungsbehörde/ Ausländeramt)
69115 Heidelberg
Bergheimer Str. 147 (Landfriedgebäude)
Phone: 06221/58-17524
Email: zuwanderungservicepoint@heidelb.de
Internet: <https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/-/Behoerdenwegweiser/zuwanderungsrecht-auslaenderbehoerde/oe6011005>

Business hours:

Mo: 8 – 12 h, Tue: 8 – 16 h, Wed: 8 – 17:30, Thu: 8 – 16 h, Fri: 8 – 12 h

If you live in i. a. Eppelheim, Gaiberg, Dossenheim (on the webpage you can find the area that the Local Foreigner's Office of the Rhein Neckar Kreis Amt is responsible for), you have to contact the corresponding person according to your family name at the Local Foreigner's Office of the Rhein Neckar Kreis for an appointment.

In Eppelheim, you have to go to the “Bürgeramt” in the first place. There the personnel will contact the Local Foreigner’s Office of the Rhein Neckar Kreis Amt for your residence permit.

Rhein Neckar Kreis
Local Foreigners’ Office (Ausländeramt)
Kurfürsten-Anlage 38-40
69115 Heidelberg
Phone: 06221/522-1478
Email: auslaenderamt@rhein-neckar-kreis.de
Internet: <https://www.rhein-neckar-kreis.de/Lde/1877852.html>

Business hours:
Mo, Tue, Thu, Fri: 7:30 – 12 h, Wed: 7:30 – 17:00

Required documents:

- ✓ 1 biometric passport size photo
- ✓ Hosting agreement
- ✓ Proof of sufficient financial resources (your contract)
- ✓ Proof of your health insurance coverage (you will receive a proof of your membership from the insurance)
- ✓ A valid passport
- ✓ The application form
- ✓ The form for enrollment at Heidelberg University to be signed by the Local Foreigners Office (Immatrikulation ohne Aufenthaltstitel zu Studienzwecken) / later enrollment certificate

Students on a stipend applying for a residence permit do not have to pay a fee if they are funded by the government. Others, e.g. with work contract, do have to pay a fee of approx. 100 Euro. Usually, the residence permit is valid as long as your contract is valid. In addition, it is only valid when displayed together with your national identity document.

If your passport expires while you are in Germany, once you receive your new passport, you will have to go through the whole residence application process again. If your passport is due to expire in the near future, renew it in advance to avoid the hassle of applying twice for residence. The image shows what a residence permit looks like.



Aufenthaltstitel: Unlike the previous permit that was attached to a passport page, the new eAT chip-card residence permit, issued since 2011, is a credit-card-sized plastic card with biometric data. PHOTO: bamf.de

Open a bank account

One of the first things you should do on arrival in Heidelberg is to open a bank account, the “Giro-Konto” which is the most common one in Germany. This is essential as it is needed for many other future steps like getting paid by your institute, of course, but also getting health insurance, for example.

Some banks offer free or cheaper accounts for students, so have this in mind before choosing. You can ask your fellow students about the different banks. Most banks are located close to the Adenauer-Platz in Heidelberg.

To open a bank account you will need the following documents:

- 1 Your Passport
- 2 A mailing address
- 3 Verification of employment (a letter from your institute which confirms that you are a PhD student for the next 3 years with a certain net income).
- 4 Residence Permit (Aufenthaltstitel)
- 5 A German mobile phone for online banking

After a few days, your Bank Card and PIN will be sent separately by postal mail. Most of the banks are close to the Bismarckplatz in the city center. Before you go, please check the opening hours as most of them close early in the afternoon. Many students prefer to open an online bank account in Germany. For **online Banking**, you will also be required to verify your identity via the computer with a webcam. PIN number: For online banking, two PIN numbers are sent – one for the ATM and one for online banking. For online Banking, you will also be required to verify your identity via the computer with a webcam.

Hint: Before going to the bank, check the opening hours. Usually they open late and close early. Some, however, stay open late once per week. Almost all banks have English-speaking personnel at their main stations.

The EC Card

Once you have opened an account the bank will issue you a card commonly referred to as an “EC-Karte”. You can use it to get cash from the automatic teller machines (Geldautomat), and it is commonly also accepted for withdrawing money and payments at supermarkets, payments at gas stations, ticket offices, department stores, and so on. Payment is made either with a signature or with the four-digit PIN number assigned to your card.



The Credit Card

From our experience, a credit card is necessary for paying conferences fees and accommodation or booking flights. The credit card is also accepted at many stores and restaurants, and can be used to get cash from the Geldautomat. Payment is made either with a signature or with the four-digit PIN number assigned to your card.

You can order one when you open your account or even later. However, it takes around 2-4 weeks before you receive your credit card, depending on the bank you choose. A few banks offer the credit card for free; others only charge you approx. 20-30 Euro per year.

Your first accommodation

For your first days/weeks in Heidelberg, while you will be looking for your own accommodation, you can probably stay in one of the guesthouses of the university or institute (depending on availability). Now the Ukrainian refugees occupy most of the guesthouses, so please contact the secretary of your potential home institutes for further information. More information about living in Heidelberg is given in the next chapter.

Health System

There are two kinds of insurance systems, the “Gesetzliche” (compulsory) and the “Private” (private) Krankenversicherung (health insurance).

a) For students under a **work contract** as employee, it is compulsory to be insured under a public, statutory health insurance scheme. You may choose an insurance provider once you have signed your contract.

After a few days, your provider will send you an insurance card (Gesundheitskarte) with a chip, much like in a credit card that you must present at every doctor’s visit. Ask the insurance company to issue a certificate stating that you have bought insurance as you need this certificate for admission at University. If you forget to obtain an issued certificate at the beginning, it is quite easy to order one online and print it right away.

b) Doctoral students financed through a **research stipend** can join a statutory health insurance scheme or take out private health cover. Private insurance coverage has certain advantages in terms of service. International students may choose an inexpensive private health insurance, while Germans cannot.

Please note: Health insurance is a MUST-HAVE during your whole stay in Germany as it is a legal requirement, so please make sure that you have insurance upon your arrival until you have bought a new one in Germany.

A few things that you should check before choosing:

- ✓ If you have a family you should check if the rest of your family is also covered.
- ✓ If you will be covered when you go back home or what are the conditions when you are travelling.
- ✓ Some companies offer travel insurance only up to a certain number of days. When you can start making use of your insurance.
- ✓ Some private companies ask you e.g. to wait 6 months before they cover your dental treatments. Do you have to pay the doctor by yourself and afterwards ask them back from the health insurance?

For more information you may find somebody from your institute responsible (e.g. the personnel department) for guests that can offer you more details on the private health insurances. However, note that we are not legally allowed to recommend a health insurance, as this is considered as private business.

When you need a doctor



How to choose a doctor? You can look online, but the best way is to ask a colleague or a friend. Do not worry, most of the doctors in Heidelberg speak English. The office hours are usually from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 1 pm and then from 3 pm to 6:30 pm, except Wednesday and Friday afternoons when most doctors' offices are closed. A "Hausarzt" (equivalent to a General Practitioner) may be able to refer you to a specialist if you require one. Nevertheless, it is also fine to see a specialist directly.

If there is an emergency outside the opening times, please contact the Ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst, Im Neuenheimerfeld 410, 69120 Heidelberg, Telephone: 116117. Or go to one of the hospitals in Heidelberg.

The phone number for all kind of emergencies is 110 and for the ambulance 112. The phone number of the Poison Center for Baden-Wuerttemberg is 0761 – 19240.

English speaking Doctors

Allmost all medical doctors in Heidelberg speak English. But better check with your colleagues for recommendations (which we are not allowed to do).

Note that there could be quite some waiting time for an appointment, if you feel pain, you must tell, it will lead to an earlier / immediate appointment.

Chapter 2

2 Living in Heidelberg

2.1 (Initial) temporary accommodation

Moving to Heidelberg is usually at your own expense. But some institutes or supervisors may have funding available in order to reimburse your first travel to Heidelberg. Please ask your home institute about this. Before you arrive in Heidelberg, the initial, temporary housing must be defined.

Guest Houses

The University owns several guesthouses in Heidelberg, with one-room flats for about 720 Euros per month (approx. 27 m²). You can stay there for a limited amount of time (maximum one year), depending on availability. It is important to reserve a place in the guesthouse in advance. For further information, please check the following page: <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/institutions/guesthouses/>

Also the institutes on the hill (MPIA, LSW, and MPIK) have guesthouses up there. Prices and conditions are more or less the same as for the university guesthouses, and if you work in one of these institutes, you can ask the secretaries to reserve a room for you. Be aware that transportation connecting the hill and downtown (including supermarkets etc.) is quite poor (see chapter on transport) so that the accommodation in these guesthouses is usually convenient only for a short time.

Hostel

If you cannot manage to find place in a guesthouse, you can consider going to a hotel. On this website, you can find a list of the hotels in Heidelberg: <http://tourismus.meinestadt.de/heidelberg/hotel>

A cheaper solution would be the Youth Hostel, Steffis hostel, or Lotte-The Backpackers. The Hostels cost approx. 26 euro per night in a 4-bedroom, including breakfast.

Youth Hostel (located near university campus)

Tiergartenstr. 5, 69120 Heidelberg

Tel: 06221 - 651190; Fax: 06221 - 6511928;

E-Mail: info@jugendherberge-heidelberg.de

<http://heidelberg.jugendherberge-bw.de/de-DE/Portraet>

Steffis hostel (located near main station)

Alte Eppelheimer Str. 50, 69115 Heidelberg

Tel: 06221 - 7782772

E-Mail: steffi@hostelheidelberg.de

<http://www.hostelheidelberg.de/de/index.html>

Lotte – The Backpackers (located in the Altstadt)

Burgweg 3, 69117 Heidelberg
Telefon: +49 (0)6221 - 735 0 725
Email: info@lotte-heidelberg.de
<https://lotte-heidelberg.de/>

Important: Even if you spend a very short time in the guesthouse, you must in principle register at the Bürgeramt (Resident's Registration Office) relative to the city area where the guesthouse is. When you find a place and move there, you will have to register again at the new office (see chapter below about registration).

AIRBNB

Booking your initial accommodation Airbnb may be most convenient. Most of you are familiar with that service. Once the host accepts your request, your payment method will be charged for the entire amount at that time. Whether the reservation is two days or two months away, AIRBNB holds the payment until 24 hours after check-in before giving it to the host: <https://www.airbnb.de/>

Temporary rent: "Housing Anywhere"

Several ads carry the label "Housing Anywhere" This means that the flat or room is only temporarily available for rent, because the person who lives there is out of town for some time (it could be for a month, several months, even one year) and does not want to waste rent money.

Even if it is not the most convenient situation, you can consider this option as well, at least as temporary accommodation while you keep looking for your own place. For further information, please visit: <https://housinganywhere.com/>

2.2 Looking for a place to live

House hunting is not always easy and usually requires some time. The main source of information is the local newspaper: Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, www.rnz.de. Ads come out on Wednesday and Saturday. You have to be very, very fast: usually in the afternoon of the same day on which the ad comes out in the newspaper, the best flats are already taken. Therefore, try to get the newspaper early in the morning and start calling right away!

You can also have a look at the University Cafeteria or at one of the websites listed in the "shared flat" section because there are also several ads for 1-room or 2-room flats to rent.

If you feel very desperate, you can contact an estate agent (in German: Immobilienmakler), but usually you have to pay a fee of 1-3 month rent.

In addition, of course, the IMPRS office and the secretaries of your home institute can help you in finding accommodation as well. Let us know if you have any questions.

The abbreviations used in accommodation advertisements are often as confusing to Germans as they are to non-native speakers. In the appendix you find a table of the most common ones and also brief descriptions of the city areas and the suburbs.

Shared flat or your own?

There are two main options: you look either for a room in a shared flat, which in German is called Wohngemeinschaft (WG), or for a flat of your own, which is usually more expensive. There are also dorms for students in several areas of the city.

Price overview

On average, a room in a WG can vary between 200 and 400 euro per month, depending on the city area you choose (but not only!); a flat of your own can cost at least 300 euros per month, and can be much more expensive if the area is more central and, obviously, if it is bigger. Rooms in a dorm are usually slightly cheaper than in private flats.

Depending on the flat, the rental costs can be “warm” (=warm) or “kalt” (=cold): this means that they include (warm) or do NOT include (kalt) additional costs such as electricity, water, heating, internet, telephone, garbage, and so on. Remember to ask your landlord if the rent is “kalt” or “warm” and, in this case, exactly which fees are included (more details in later sections).

Furniture

In most cases, the room or flat is not furnished. However, this is not a major problem, since it is very easy to find furniture at a reasonable price: there are department stores close to Heidelberg or you can look for second hand things, which are usually in good condition.

Buying furniture

There are some large stores close to Heidelberg where you can find cheap furniture, i.e. IKEA, XXXL Mann Mobilia, Möbel Höffner). You can ask them to deliver the furniture to your place, but sometimes it is more convenient to rent a car and do it on your own. There are several car rental shops in Heidelberg - you can find them in the telephone book or on the internet.

Second hand stuff

It is also very easy to find second hand furniture, since there are many people who live in Heidelberg for only a few years during their PhD or Postdoc, and they want to sell their furniture when they leave. You can have a look at the magazine Sperrmuell (<http://www.sperrmuell.de/>) and also ask around at your institute.

One second hand furniture store is the “Heidelberger Dienste Möbelhalle”. Besides furniture, they also offer dishes, books, clothes, toys and much more.

Address:

Oftersheimer Weg 1

69124 Heidelberg

Tel: 06221/ 141054

E-Mail: moebelhalle@hddienste.de

Internet: <http://www.hddienste.de/service-fur-buerger/diemoebelhalle/>

Rooms and flats in the old center (Altstadt) and in the other central neighborhoods are on average more expensive than in the suburbs. You should however consider that if you choose to live in one of the suburbs, the connections to the centre are not always optimal.

This is important, especially if you are going to work at one of the institutes on the hill. In this case, you will need to take the science bus 30 to go to work (see section about transport for details).

If you choose to live in one of the suburbs, you have to take into account the additional time that you need to arrive at The Universitätsplatz in time for the bus, which could well be another half hour. Obviously, this does not apply if you use your own car.

Rental Contracts

The contracts for renting a house are usually very standard. You generally need to pay some deposit (Kaution), which you will get back after you leave the flat if everything is in order. In the contract it is specified how many months before (usually three) you have to tell your landlord that you want to move out. Some contracts may have a blocked period, i.e. you cannot leave the flat before a certain time, decided by the landlord. Sometimes landlords may ask for your financial details: in that case a letter from your institute secretary stating that you will be employed there for three years and will receive a certain salary is enough.

If you need help, you can ask your colleagues or the secretary at your institute. If you feel that you need expert advice, there is a tenant association (“Mieterverein”), which provides legal advice about rental issues for reasonable prices. They mainly speak German, but some of them speak English and can provide you a translation or at least a better explanation of what is written in the contract. You can have a look at www.mieterverein-heidelberg.de or visit them (Poststrasse 46; opening times Mo-Thu 9-12 and 14-18; Fr 9-14; telephone 06221/20473).

A room in a shared flat – Wohngemeinschaft - WG

Usually students live in these flats, so the best time to find a room would be at the end or beginning of one of the semesters, i.e. March-April, and July-August-September. There are usually a considerable number of offers at all times of the year, though it can be more difficult after the semester has begun.

Websites

www.zimmer69.de (Heidelberg only), www.wg-suche.de, www.wg-gesucht.de, www.homecompany.de, www.housinganywhere.de, www.vierwaen.de, www.immonet.de, www.rnz.de, www.immobilienscout24.de

The first website is specific for Heidelberg, the others are for any city in Germany, so you have to specify that you are searching in Heidelberg.

There you can find ads or put your own ad for free. These websites are in German. There is a list at the end of this chapter with all the words and abbreviations which may be useful while you are browsing ads.

Advertisements at the Mensa



Another place to look for advertisements is the University cafeteria. There are two: one in the Altstadt (Triplex Mensa, Uniplatz) and another on the University campus (Im Neuenheimer Feld). There you can find many “home-made” ads on the walls, where you directly find the telephone number you have to contact.

There are also several “professional” ads where you do not see the telephone number to contact.

They belong to a service offered by the University, called Zimmervermittlung.

<https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/international/erasmus/zimmerboerse/heidelberg.html>

The opening times are:

Info Center

Triplex-Mensa – Universitätsplatz

<https://www.stw.uni-heidelberg.de/de/servicecenter>

Mo-Thu 9:00-17:00, Fr 9:00-15:00

InfoCafe International – ICI

Zentralmensa - Im Neuenheimer Feld 304

<https://www.studentenwerk.uni-heidelberg.de/de/node/365>

Mo-Thu 10:00-17:00, Fr 10:00-15:00

Contact the following number/ email for searching a room.

Tel: 0 62 21 / 54 5400

E-Mail: info@stw.uni-heidelberg.de

Important: Remember that when you apply for a shared flat and when you visit it, in most cases the contact is directly with the people who are already living in the flat, because they are usually those who choose the new tenant. Usually you meet the landlord only in the second step. Sometimes the appointment with the people who already live there is like some sort of “interview”, so do not be scared if they ask you things like your favorite music or movie!

2.3 Student accommodation (Dorms, “Wohnheime”)

Only around 13% of all new students at Heidelberg University find accommodation in a student hall. Heidelberg student union (Studentenwerk Heidelberg) provides around 4,800 rooms in flat shares in around 65 halls of residence to students at Heidelberg. The rental price of rooms in flat shares is between €170 and €350 according type and facilities.

Many of them are located on the campus (Im Neuenheimer Feld), and there are several others in other areas (Altstadt, Neuenheim, Rohrbach, Pfaffengrund, Schlierbach; and in the suburbs: Leimen, Dossenheim). Some dorms with a limited number of rooms (Europahaus) are located in the old centre, but it is very difficult to get a room there:
https://www.studentenwerk.uni-heidelberg.de/de/wohnheime_neu

In most of the dorms, you can find flats for one, two or more people. They are on average cheaper compared to private flats. You can have a look at the website: www.studentenwerk.uni-heidelberg.de, under the section “wohnen” which means “living”.

To apply for a room in one of the university dorms you need to be registered at the university, which may not be a quick process (see further chapters). For further information about dorms: Tel: 0 62 21 / 54 542706, E-Mail: wohnen@stw.uni-heidelberg.de

Collegium Academicum: A group of about 30 volunteers, working since 2013 wants to create a self-managed collective housing project for 250 young people. For further information, visit their homepage: <https://collegiumacademicum.de/>.

If you are interested, you can apply for residence on the following link: <https://collegiumacademicum.de/bewerbung/>

2.4 Setting up your flat

If you get a room in a shared flat, usually the main settings (electricity, telephone, and so on) have already been taken care of. If you get your own flat, you have to take care of these issues. Different contracts may or may not include additional costs, such as electricity, water, heating, television, etc. Ask your landlord which services are already included; for those which are not included, you have to start your own contract.

Electricity, Water, Heating

The electricity, water and heating is not included in the rent in the end of the month. You have to choose a company which will provide you the service and make a contract with them. There are several private companies, and there is the “Stadtwerke Heidelberg” (Municipal Service), located on Kurfürsten-Anlage, close to the main station.

In general, you can make a cumulative contract, including all the services you need. In general, they ask you to pay a certain amount per month at the beginning; then after some months they check your average monthly load and may modify your monthly costs.

At the end of the year they always check whether you paid more or less than what you consumed and you will get some money back or have to pay more.

Telephone and Internet

There are several companies providing many different services and offers, with or without flatrates (one price with unlimited usage). They all have shops located in the central area of

the city. You can have a look at the different shops and choose which company is the most convenient for your needs.

Radio, Television

If you own a radio or television, you have to pay a tax which is called GEZ (even if you do not use it). You can find the form to pay this tax at the post office (see below). If you have cable television, you have to pay an additional fee; it is sometimes included in the additional costs of the flat.

As an owner of a television set and/or radio (including a car radio) and/or PC sound card, video/TV software, you are required to register and pay a quarterly user fee (“*Rundfunkbeitrag*”). There are penalties if caught not paying it. For any number of radios, TV's, tablets or computers with TV/ sound cards in one household, you will have to pay €55.00 quarterly. The Rundfunkbeitrag has to be paid by each apartment/ house, regardless of the number of persons.

Applications to register your TV, radio or computer (for a household or company) can be downloaded at the Rundfunkbeitrag website:

https://www.rundfunkbeitrag.de/formulare/index_ger.html

Things that may sound weird – but are not!

Some things, which are absolutely normal in Germany, may sound weird to you because things work differently in your country.

It can happen that in the flat there is no washing machine, and maybe there is not even a place to put one, if you want to buy it. Some apartment blocks have a shared laundry in the basement, with washing and drying machines for which you have to pay a few euros. If there is no washing machine in your flat nor block, there are several laundry shops where you can do the laundry yourself.

Unfurnished flats in Germany may be completely empty, without light fittings or a kitchen (cup- boards/sink/stove). For many contracts (rent, electricity, telephone, tv, etc) money can be directly taken from your bank account. You have to give them your bank details and sign a paper.

2.5 Transportation in Heidelberg

Local public transport

The VRN is the regional public transport syndicate. Searches can be done on www.rnv-online.de or www.vrn.de, where flags link to international forms.

One of the places where you can buy tickets and get information is at the service center at the Hauptbahnhof (main station). There are many tobacco shops, newspaper stands that also sell tickets. If you are enrolled at the Heidelberg University, you can buy the Semesterticket, which allows you to use the buses, trams (including the Bergbahn to Königstuhl) and regional trains (S-Bahn, R, RE, not valid for: EC, IC, ICE) in a fairly large region around HD for one semester (six months).



The prize is 175,00 Euros (March 2022). You can get the Semesterticket even if you did not receive your University ID card yet, but you have to display (and get a stamp on) the enrollment document you get when registering as a student at Heidelberg University (you should ask during the registering process which is the right document to use). Later you can display the stamp on it again and they will also put the stamp on your University ID card, which is the normal place.

The **VRN-Semesterticket** can be shown on a Smartphone through the VRN-Ticket-App of the Deutsche Bahn. The Semesterticket is only valid in conjunction with your student ID, so please always take your ID with you! The ticket is not transferable.

If not enrolled, you can purchase a monthly ticket for approximately 77,00 Euros (March 2022), but the Bergbahn is not included in this.

Science Bus

If you are going to work at one of the institutes on the hill, you will need to take the science **Bus 30** to go to work. The bus leaves from Altstadt (in the old town), Universitätsplatz every hour (7:27am to 7:27 pm) and takes 8 minutes to get to HITS and 13 minutes to get to LSW and 15 minutes to MPIA.

Bus # 39

You can also take the Bus 39, departing from Bismarckplatz (the first stop of the 39 bus route is Hd Hauptbahnhof (main station). The last stop is „Königstuhl“. The trip duration for this route is approx 30 minutes.

Bergbahn / Funicular

The Heidelberg funicular railway is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the town. It starts at Kornmarkt in the old town and runs via the Castle (Schloss) station as far as Molkenkur. From there you can continue with one of the oldest electric funicular railways to the Königstuhl, the town's highest point at more than 550 metres. The fee for a return ticket (old town-Königstuhl-old town) is 14 Euro. ***With the Semesterticket you can take the Bergbahn for free.***



Car Sharing

The principle of Car sharing is simple: Individuals gain the benefits of a private car without the costs and responsibilities of ownership. Instead of owning one or more vehicles, a household accesses a fleet of vehicles on an as-needed basis. Car sharing may be thought of as organized short-term car rental. For further information, please go to: <https://www.stadtmobil.de/>

Bikes

Having a bike in Heidelberg is very useful. Bikes are a fast, practical way to get around the city year-round. Bike shops are prevalent in Heidelberg, offering all types of bikes and accessories for a broad spectrum of prices. For around town, a simple city bike would work fine, and there are several bike shops that specialize in second hand bikes. In the downtown area, you can find Radhaus on Nadlerstrasse and Radhof Bergheim at Bergheimer Strasse 101. Radhof also has a self-repair work- station. There are several shops along Rohrbacher Strasse that sell new bikes and gear. Another shop with used bikes is Madame Velo, close to the main train station. Check the opening hours before you go there (<http://www.madame-velo.de/>). In Germany, your bike has to be equipped with functioning lights and brakes.

Bike Rental in Heidelberg

VRNnextbike is a regional system, which means that you can pick up a bike in Heidelberg and return it to an official location in Mannheim for example. Once registered with VRNnextbike, you can use all bike sharing systems operated by nextbike – worldwide. You have to sign up first, send nextbike the identification number of the bicycle you would like to use, via app, at the station terminal or via the hotline. You will then receive a code with which you can open the combination lock of the bike. Return your VRNnextbike to the bicycle stand at one of the rental stations. Go to: <http://www.vrnnextbike.de/it/heidelberg/>



2.6 Sports

If you wish to do some sports, there is a large offer at the University sport center. All courses are free for students, apart from some special courses, for which you have to pay (but still very cheap with respect to private sport centers).

If you are registered at the university, you only need to show your university ID card to enter; if you are not registered, you can ask the secretary of your institute to write you a letter to say that you are employed there, and then you can get a card from the University sport center for with a special price which is valid for one semester and allows you to do all the sports offered. We are not certain about the prices. For further information an online registration: www.issw.uni-heidelberg.de

Chapter 3

3 Financial issues

3.1 Grant versus contract

There are different ways to pay a doctoral student, a funding contract like a work contract for an employee, or a doctoral grant like a research stipend. Most doctoral students are paid via a contract. After your interview you should know what kind of payment your supervisor is offering.

Funding contract:

The funding contract for doctoral students is signed directly with the institute. Besides the research conducted as part of the individual doctoral studies, it is also expected that the student devote some of his/her time to work for the institute. Moreover, the student is bound by the directives of the institute: he or she must be present at the institute during certain core hours. The institute will pay the employer's part of health, nursing care and unemployment insurance and pensions; the employee's part to be paid by the student is deducted automatically from wages.

Doctoral Grant:

There is also the possibility to give grants to talented junior scientists. The doctoral students are not employed by the institute, which means that there are no requirements for attendance, and vacation and travel need not be approved. The grant is an "allowance for living costs" and, as such, is not subject to taxes or social security deductions. Students receiving the grant must therefore take out their own health insurance. We also recommend purchasing personal liability insurance. The Max Planck Society group accident insurance covers all grant holders of the Max Planck Institutes.

3.2 Taxes

If you are on a contract you usually have to pay taxes which are automatically deducted from your salary. How much you pay is listed in detail in the letter you get every month from your institute. Get advice on how to fill out a German tax report from your fellow students.

There is also information about tax declaration on the IMPRS webpage. **However, we are legally not allowed to advise you in these matters** (as we do not have a formal education in this).

3.3 Pension funds

If you are on a contract you automatically pay part of your income to the "Deutsche Rentenversicherung", the German pension fund. You can see the exact numbers on your monthly income statement. If you leave Germany after your PhD, and especially for foreigners from non-EU countries, it may be possible to ask for the money back from the pension fund after 5 years. Since this

is usually a substantial amount of money you should check whether or not this is possible. Here we have no experience.

3.4 Liability insurance

It might be a good idea to get liability insurance, just in case. Normally, they are rather cheap and might help you in case you get into trouble (e.g., flooding, explosions and fire in your apartment, or when you break or damage things and/or people). It is possible that some landlords ask for such insurance.

Chapter 4

4 Academics and studying

4.1 IMPRS & non-IMPRS curriculum and requirements

When doing a PhD on an astronomy-related topic in Heidelberg, the membership of IMPRS-HD is the default. PhD students of the Department for Physics and Astronomy of Heidelberg University are in general required to join the HGSFP, the Heidelberg Graduate School for Physics. That school consists of several topical branches, astronomy is one of them with the IMPRS-HD representing that branch.

Note that the doctoral degree is awarded by Heidelberg university and not by the IMPRS-HD, so the last word on acceptance for PhD studies has the Department. However, the pre-selection for the shortlist of applicants is done by an IMPRS-HD panel.

The Department has defined some general rules for PhD students (“Promotionsordnung”, in German). In addition to the Department’s conditions for acceptance, IMPRS has some further requirements, as we will discuss below.

The general agreement is that IMPRS-HD is an independent part of the HGSFP implying that IMPRS-HD students are members of the HGSFP as well, and that a graduate school education in astronomy/astrophysics in Heidelberg is not possible outside IMPRS-HD.

4.2 PhD requirements of the Department for Physics & Astronomy

The doctoral degree is granted for a (i) corresponding PhD thesis and (ii) passing the final PhD examination (called “Disputation”). For the latter, there are principal options:

- (1) a PhD examination in Physics, or
- (2) a PhD examination in Astronomy.

However, your final degree and also the degree certificate will be the same. You will be awarded with the doctoral degree “Dr. rer. nat” (thus, in natural sciences). On your degree certificate the title of your PhD thesis is mentioned. What is different between the two options is, to some extent, the topics of your final examination, and the examination committee. Most IMPRS-HD fellows opt for (2).

Option (1) does not provide a new qualification, as the physics degree has been granted already with your Masters. However, you have to attend a couple of lectures or seminars to advance your knowledge in the field. This could e.g. be achieved by attending the Graduate Days of the Department.

Option (2) seems rather unique in Germany. It formally provides you with the qualification of being an “Astronomer”. Option (2) therefore requires following the Astronomy PhD curriculum (“Studienplan Astronomie”). It is expected for your final examination that you have a broad and deep knowledge of astronomy - a natural requirement for your qualification as an astronomer.

When you apply for acceptance as a PhD student at the Department you have to declare which route you like to follow (Physics or Astronomy). It is in principle possible to change your decision later.

There might still be different versions of the “Promotionsordnung” around. You should always ask the Department for the latest version of the PhD rules and have a look in the Promotionsordnung, especially in “zu §6 Abs. 2” in the appendix.

http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/courses/download/examination_rules_regulations.html

When you sign your application for acceptance as a PhD student at the department, you also state that you will prepare yourself properly for the final disputation (for either option 1 and for option 2).

The requirements of the HGSFP are compatible with the IMPRS requirements. A potential, but unlikely conflict may appear if an IMPRS-HD student arrives with a complete astronomy education, thus all courses required attended already. In that case, IMPRS-HD would not require attendance to any other lecture, but the HGSFP requires 16 hours per week of course attendance distributed over the PhD.

As said, such a case is unlikely since a student will naturally attend some lectures just because of his/her interest. In addition, attendance to the IMPRS seminars, the summer school, or institute seminars, the 16 hours will be reached easily.

Doctoral degree examination in Astronomy

If you go for option (2) a thorough knowledge is required in all fields of astronomy. This is covered by the 4 advanced lecture courses (“Kursvorlesungen”):

- Instruments and observational methods
- Stellar astronomy and astrophysics
- Galaxies
- Cosmology

These courses build up on the basic lecture courses (“Grundvorlesungen”):

- Introduction to Astronomy I and II
- Astronomical Lab Course (“Astronomisches Praktikum”)
- Theoretical Astrophysics

In addition to that, you should give (at least) two seminars: one “normal” seminar (“Astronomisches Seminar” or “Fortgeschrittenenseminar”, maybe on your specific research topic), the other one an advanced seminar (“Oberseminar”, literature seminar).

When you finally hand in your thesis and register for the final examination/disputation, the department requires you to see your course certificates for the two seminars and the lab course. If you have already done an astronomy lab course somewhere else, you should ask the department to accept the previous lab course instead (do this early enough). The department does not check attendance at the other lecture courses.

Doctoral degree examination in Physics

If you go for a PhD examination in Physics there is no detailed plan of studies as it is for Astronomy. You are, however, obliged to attend a certain number of lectures per semester improving and deepening your education in Physics. You are free to decide which lectures are most important/ interesting for you and your PhD work. You should discuss your curriculum with your thesis committee.

If you do Astrophysics related thesis work, the final examination/disputation will probably cover astronomical topics as well. One of your examiners will be an astronomer besides the three physicists. Questions during the exam will probably go deeper into the Physics background.

Teaching obligation

As a PhD student at the Department of Physics and Astronomy you also have the obligation to support the university by teaching. This is not detailed in the “Promotionsordnung”, but is an additional condition defined by the Department that you “have” to sign when you register.

The teaching duties are counted in units of a “Semester-Deputat” - counted in “2SWS” (= 2 Semesterwochenstunden) corresponding 2 hours/week a semester. The teaching requirement depends on the teaching load of your institute. The minimum requirement when registering for the final examination is

- 2 SWS (2 hours per week during the semester) when supervising e.g. a two-hour lecture exercise during the semester plus preparation/ corrections.

Equivalent to this are other options such as

- 6-8 SWS (2 afternoons each 3-4 hours) lab course during the semester, or
- Similarly a lab course is a block course (4 weeks) between the semesters (“Ferienpraktikum”).

The teaching duty required depends somewhat on the institute you are joining. The reason is that your institute may be required to do a certain amount of teaching and your director may ask you to help his/her institute.

The current rules (as of 2022) are:

- PhD at the ZAH: three “Deputate”, thus 6 SWS during your PhD. Note that on your registration form for acceptance, the number of Deputate is specified.
- PhD at MPIK: two “Deputate”.
- PhD at MPIA: two “Deputate”.

You could do your teaching within astronomy related exercises or lab courses, but also in the physics area.

When you finally register for the thesis disputation, you have to prove participation in teaching, in German: “Bei der Anmeldung zur Disputation ist die Mitwirkung in der Lehre nachzuweisen”. Independent of teaching duty at your institute, when you finally register for your disputation the department requires “at least two Deputate” (only). In German: “Unabhängig von den instituts-internen Regelungen ... ist von ... jedem Doktoranden ... zumindest 2 einsemestrige Lehrtätigkeiten nachzuweisen“.

There are several options for teaching:

For example, the MPIA offers two astronomy lab courses in the advanced lab program (“FP2”) for undergraduate physics students:

- FP 30: CCD photometry in modern astronomy
- FP 36: Wave-front analysis with a Shack-Hartmann sensor

You may supervise the astronomy lab course (which you have to do yourself beforehand) at the LSW.

The MPIK has similar (nuclear physics related) lab courses in the advanced lab program for undergraduate physics students.

You may also do a tutorial for one of the lecture exercises for undergraduate physics students (e.g. lab quantum mechanics, general relativity etc.). You may also do a tutorial for one of the basic undergraduate physics lab courses (“FPI”). Topics include “Electronics”, “Sound”, “Microscope”, etc..

4.3 Additional requirements by IMPRS-HD

Membership in IMPRS-HD implies certain obligations in addition to what is “required” by the faculty for the traditional (i.e. non-IMPRS) PhD student. Essentially there are three additions:

- The thesis committee
- The IMPRS seminar
- The IMPRS curriculum

Thesis committee

The IMPRS thesis committee supervises the PhD project as a whole, i.e. it monitors the progress of the PhD project itself, but also the scientific development of the PhD student.

The existence of a thesis committee for each student is an essential ingredient in the IMPRS program, defined as a condition not only by our local IMPRS-HD, but by the Max Planck Society itself.

The thesis committee is expected to convene at least once a year to meet the student for discussion and review. A half page (informal) report should be written for the thesis committee members and the student and a copy should go to IMPRS-HD for reference.

The committee evaluates the status of the student both concerning his/her PhD project AND his/her overall education. The committee is thus able to decide on details of the student’s curriculum, if necessary. This is particularly important in the case of conflicts between the project’s time schedule and the lecture schedule.

In addition to the thesis supervisor, each thesis committee should consist of two (independent) scientists familiar with the research topic (this is different to the MPIA PAC for e.g.). One of them could be a colleague from the same institute, the other one must come from a different institute. Colleagues from institutions outside Heidelberg are welcome; however, IMPRS cannot reimburse travel costs for their trips to Heidelberg.

Further information about the thesis committee can be found on the IMPRS-HD webpage.

IMPRS seminar

The IMPRS seminar is intended to provide a central meeting opportunity for all IMPRS students in order to exchange ideas and experience and to provide an opportunity for students from different institutes to socialize.

During the first year, the IMPRS seminar is held weekly during the semester term. In the winter semester, the IMPRS seminar is an “Oberseminar”, i.e. literature seminar, discussing

current re- search highlights or fundamental/classical papers of the literature. In the summer semester, the IMPRS seminar is an advanced seminar (“Fortgeschrittenenseminar”) with students presenting their on-going thesis project.

By attending both the first-year IMPRS seminars you fulfill the Faculty seminar requirements.

In the second year, the IMPRS seminar is held as a workshop seminar over a few days (retreat) and an update on the thesis progress is presented.

IMPRS-HD curriculum

The general experience with final PhD examinations over the years has proven that some PhD students appear to the final exam rather unprepared. They might have done a great job on their PhD research project; however, they may have concentrated solely on that to the exclusion of general astrophysical knowledge. The result may be an unfortunate examination.

Therefore, IMPRS-HD decided that IMPRS students must attend certain lecture courses to gain a broad foundation in astronomy. Attendance is sufficient for IMPRS. Note that since attendance certificates are not issued, it is actually difficult for IMPRS/HGSFP to approve attendance.

IMPRS students do not need to pass the final exam for the lecture, only the course attendance is essential. It is also not needed (but encouraged) to attend the exercises of the lecture course. When handing in for the PhD examination, an informal list of the attended courses that is signed by you and your supervisor is sufficient.

If a student can prove that he/she has attended certain lectures already, this will be accepted by IMPRS. It is not required to repeat the course. Approval could be obtained by showing your past transcripts and should be agreed upon by the thesis committee.

All lectures in astronomy/astrophysics are offered in English.

In the end, you will receive an “IMPRS certificate” besides your PhD certificate, stating that you have successfully followed the IMPRS graduate program, and listing your thesis committee and all courses/schools/etc. you have attended.

Note that the IMPRS curriculum is the same, irrespective whether you do a final examination in astronomy or physics.

(The only exception is that for a physics examination you do not have to do the astronomy lab course that is required by the Department for astronomy students only).

IMPRS-HD curriculum

The IMPRS curriculum in Astronomy is composed of the following lectures:

- Introductory Astronomy block course. This is offered to all new students before the start of their first winter semester and is composed of three weeks of full day lectures and exercises.
- Theoretical Astrophysics: A general overview of the main topics in Astrophysics. This is offered as a semester course every winter term.
- Advanced course lectures: Offered as semester courses periodically on a 1-year cycle and also (anti-cyclic) as block courses before or after the semester.
 - Galaxies
 - Cosmology
 - Observational Methods
 - Stellar Astronomy and Astrophysics

Of those course lectures, an IMPRS-HD student has to attend at least two courses, but two outside of his/her research field.

The curriculum also includes attendance of at least one specialized course, i.e. a lecture more focused on a specific topic, further away from the student's research field. Several different courses of this kind are offered every semester by the university. Participation at a dedicated summer school of your choice can also be considered as a "specialized course".

One has to meet the requirements set by the Faculty (astronomy lab course (Praktikum), two seminar talks and teaching duty).

Every year IMPRS organizes a summer school on a specific astronomical/astrophysical topic. The attendance of this school is not mandatory, though it is warmly encouraged at least once during your PhD. For more information refer to:

HGSFP curriculum requirements

Since IMPRS-HD students are members of the HGSFP, the curriculum rules of HGSFP apply also for the IMPRS students. The general HGSFP curriculum requirement is that a PhD student within HGSFP has to attend 16 SWS (semester units) during his/her PhD. These can be seminars, lectures, journal clubs, summer schools, or the Graduate Days of the HGSFP.

Usually, this requirement is easily met by fulfilling the IMPRS-HD conditions. In the unlikely case that the thesis committee of an IMPRS-HD student decides that the student does not need to attend any lecture since he/she has attended all lectures before, a conflict of rules may arise. However, this is maybe not the typical student for whom IMPRS-HD is intended and such a student may graduate outside of IMPRS-HD.

After each semester the HGSFP requires students to fill in an online form with the courses they have attended that semester.

As pointed out above, a signed, informal list of course can also be handed in when registering for the final exam (if you "forgot" to fill the online form).

This makes sense in particular if you attended courses or schools during your PhD that were offered NOT at Heidelberg University.

4.4 Admission to Heidelberg University

Admission to the IMPRS-HD

Applicants who applied via the IMPRS-HD application procedure and have been offered a position will be asked formally to join IMPRS-HD upon arrival. Please return the IMPRS membership form, signed by you and your supervisor. Forms are online on the internal IMPRS webpage.

Registration in heiDOCS

Before registering and submitting your application to the Faculty, the University asks you to register in the heiDOCS, a web portal that will accompany you throughout your doctoral studies. On this portal, you will create your online doctoral file (elektronische Promotionsakte), you will receive your Uni ID and stay informed about services for doctoral candidates at the Heidelberg University.

Admission to the Department via the HGSFP

Registration at the Department for Physics and Astronomy

ALL IMPRS students have to register at the Department for Physics and Astronomy. If you are accepted as an IMPRS fellow, registration at the Department has to be done at the secretariat of the Heidelberg Graduate School for Physics (HGSFP). Only with that registration, you can be accepted as a PhD student at the Heidelberg University. Further information can be found at the IMPRS (<https://www.imprs-hd.mpg.de/3364/Admission>) and HGSFP homepage. <https://hgsfp.uni-heidelberg.de/?SUB=HTA#FAI>
Registration for Ph.D. has to be done at the secretariat of HGSFP:

Graduate School of Fundamental Physics
Im Neuenheimer Feld 226
room 02.304
69120 Heidelberg

What you need:

✓the form “Agreement on doctoral studies and application for admission (see below), incl. the signatures from you, your supervisor, and (part of) your thesis committee. Important note: you have to select whether you are applying for a PhD in astronomy or physics, because this changes the requirements and forms.

Promotionsvereinbarung und Antrag auf Aufnahme als Doktorand:in
 Agreement on doctoral studies and application for admission as a doctoral student

An der Promotionskommission der Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie
 an der Universität Heidelberg
 Im Neuenheimer Feld 228, D-69122 Heidelberg

Name: _____ Vorname: _____ Matrikelnummer: _____
 Geburtsdatum: _____ Geburtsort: _____
 Heimplatz: _____
 E-Mail-Adresse: _____
 Telefon (privat): _____
 Fax (privat): _____

Ich beantrage die Aufnahme als Doktorand:in in der Fakultät für _____
☐ Physik (Physics) ☐ Astronomie (Astronomy)

Ich beantrage die Aufnahme in den Bereich _____
☐ Astronomie und Kosmologie (ACOS) ☐ Astronomie und Kosmologie (ACOS)
☐ Fundamentale Teilchen und Kosmologie (FTK) ☐ Fundamentale Teilchen und Kosmologie (FTK)
☐ Quantenphysik und Komplexes Quanten ☐ Quantenphysik und Komplexes Quanten
☐ System (QS) ☐ System (QS)
☐ Computer-Systeme (CS) ☐ Computer-Systeme (CS)
☐ Experimentelle Physik (EP) ☐ Experimentelle Physik (EP)
☐ Mathematische Physik (MP) ☐ Mathematische Physik (MP)
☐ Medizinische Physik (MP) ☐ Medizinische Physik (MP)
☐ Biophysik (BP) ☐ Biophysik (BP)
☐ Computer Engineering (CE) ☐ Computer Engineering (CE)
☐ Computational Physics ☐ Computational Physics

Für die Aufnahme als Doktorand:in in der Fakultät für _____
 Ich beantrage die Aufnahme in den Bereich _____
☐ Astronomie und Kosmologie (ACOS) ☐ Astronomie und Kosmologie (ACOS)
☐ Fundamentale Teilchen und Kosmologie (FTK) ☐ Fundamentale Teilchen und Kosmologie (FTK)
☐ Quantenphysik und Komplexes Quanten ☐ Quantenphysik und Komplexes Quanten
☐ System (QS) ☐ System (QS)
☐ Computer-Systeme (CS) ☐ Computer-Systeme (CS)
☐ Experimentelle Physik (EP) ☐ Experimentelle Physik (EP)
☐ Mathematische Physik (MP) ☐ Mathematische Physik (MP)
☐ Medizinische Physik (MP) ☐ Medizinische Physik (MP)
☐ Biophysik (BP) ☐ Biophysik (BP)
☐ Computer Engineering (CE) ☐ Computer Engineering (CE)
☐ Computational Physics ☐ Computational Physics

✓the form “Requirements for Doctoral Students of Astronomy and Cosmology” (see below), incl. the signatures from you.

HEIDELBERG GRADUATE SCHOOL OF FUNDAMENTAL PHYSICS
UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG ZUKUNFT SEIT 1386

Requirements for Doctoral Students of Astronomy and Cosmology

The final doctoral examination encompasses three different fields in Physics and Astronomy, in accordance with §10 of the Faculty Regulations for Doctoral Studies. In order to fulfil these requirements, the examination candidate must have an in-depth knowledge of theoretical or practical astronomy or both.

1. The candidate is required to register for the final examination. Upon registration, he/she must provide written proof of the following:

- Attendance of the astronomical practical
- Lecture within a seminar on Astronomy
- Lecture in an advanced seminar on Astronomy ("Oberseminar")

✓ the application form “Antrag auf Annahme als Doktorand” for Germans (left document) and “the form for Admission for Ph.D. studies” for international students (right document), as an original, not a photocopy or scan.

- ✓ curriculum vitae
- ✓ secondary school leaving exam degree/ certificate
- ✓ Scan/copy of your passport or ID
- ✓ PDF of your master thesis (unless you have earned your Master from Heidelberg University)
- ✓ Certified copies of your Master diploma (Masterurkunde) in German or English
- ✓ Certified copies of your Master transcript of records (Masterzeugnis) in German or English
- ✓ Certified copies of your Bachelor diploma (Bachelorurkunde) in German or English
- ✓ Certified copies of your Bachelor transcript of records (Bachelorzeugnis) in German or English

Usually all of the relevant documents below must be printed out, signed and brought to the Central Office of the HGSFP in Neuenheim. Please submit certified translations into English or German, if the certificate has been issued in a foreign language. Note that it would be great if you bring along certified copies. If this is not possible, the HGSFP can make certified copies for you as well if you have the original documents. This would, of course, take more time. Keep this in mind.

The Dean will sign the two documents “Agreement on doctoral studies and application for admission” (within about 14 days). The secretariat of Heidelberg Graduate School of Physics will then contact you and you could pick up all documents.

Admission to University

Now that you are accepted at the Department, you must submit the two documents (see above), your certified copies of your bachelor and master certificates and secondary school leaving exam degree/ certificate at the Graduiertenakademie, Im Neuenheimer Feld 370, 69120 Heidelberg. So, it would be good to have the certified copies double. It is good to submit the documents in person as you will receive further instructions directly from the staff of the Graduate Academy. Please DO NOT send original documents to the Graduate Academy.

Note: A certified copy is not simply a normal photocopy of an original document. A certified copy is a photocopy of an original document that has on it the confirmation that it is a true

copy of the original. The certified copy must bear the seal and the signature of the person who is authorized to make the certification. Certified copies can be made by the educational institution that issued the document (University), by German diplomatic missions, by the embassy of the country in which the document was issued, by notaries and by other public authorities who are authorized to carry out such certifications. In Germany, certified copies can be obtained at the Bürgeramt, the local municipal offices, among other places (3 euro per document). We recommend certifying the documents in your home country, i. e. at the University.

Further steps for Non-German citizenship after admission to the Faculty

You, as a non-German applicant/ international applicant will also receive the 2 documents “Agreement on doctoral studies and application for admission” (within about 14 days) signed by the Dean from the secretariat of Heidelberg Graduate School of Physics, and also the acceptance letter to the HGSFP programme, and information about completing your enrollment and a brochure about studying in Heidelberg. You must as well submit the two documents at the Graduiertenakademie, Im Neuenheimer Feld 370, 69120 Heidelberg.

Enrollment at the University takes place at the central administration building (Serviceportal-Studierendenadministration) downtown Heidelberg (close to "Universitätsplatz"):

Akademisches Auslandsamt

Then, as a non-German citizen with a work contract (above 50%) and a work visa, you have to go to the Akademisches Auslandsamt, Seminarstraße 2, 69117 Heidelberg. (<https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/studium/kontakt/auslandsamt/aaa.html#Abt71>).

There, you will receive a document (“Enrolment: Residence permit for study purposes at Heidelberg University for a certain course of studies”) which has to be signed and stamped by the Local Foreigners’ Office (Zuwanderungsbehörde) stating that the student will receive a residence permit (visa) once they have enrolled at the University.

The image shows two versions of a form titled "Immatrikulation: Aufenthaltstitel zu Studienzwecken an der Universität Heidelberg". The left version is in German and the right version is in English. Both forms contain fields for personal data, study program, and a section for the student's declaration. The German version includes a section for the student's declaration and a section for the university's declaration. The English version includes a section for the student's declaration and a section for the university's declaration.

To complete your enrolment, please hand the signed document signed by the Local Foreigners’ Office (Ausländeramt) back to the central administration building (Serviceportal-Studierendenadministration). You will then receive a preliminary enrollment

certificate (by postal mail), that you have to show the Local Foreigners' Office (Ausländeramt/ Zuwanderungsbehörde) in order to get your residence permit.

NOTE:

In order to get enrolled at Heidelberg University you must have a valid residence permit/visa. Unfortunately, you will only get a residence permit/visa if you are enrolled at university or have a work contract already. The procedure is therefore that you have to visit the Akademisches Auslandsamt and the visa office twice (in most cases). After your first visit to the Akademisches Auslandsamt you will receive a preliminary admission certificate (by postal mail), that you have to show to the visa authorities (Zuwanderungsbehörde). They will provide you with a form for the university for enrollment. After full enrollment, you have to go to the Zuwanderungsbehörde again to pick up your residence permit/ visa.

Enrolment at the Heidelberg University

After a processing period of approximately three to four weeks, you will receive your letter of admission (Zulassungsbescheid, this is not the Annahme als Doktorand,) by regular mail.

All PhD students must then enroll at Heidelberg University. You can enroll at any time during the year although it is recommended that enrollment take place before the end of the re-registration period (July 15 for the summer semester and February 15 for the winter semester). Request for an exemption is possible, for that you need to contact the Zentrales Doktorandenbüro (zdb@uni-heidelberg.de).

For German citizens, enrollment can be done online via the following website.
<https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/studium/bewerben-einschreiben/einschreibung/einschreibung-in-die-promotion>.

For the Heidelberg University you need to provide THE SAME documents that you already showed the Department. This includes original documents and copies.

What you need for enrollment (Immatrikulation)

- ✓ a normal photocopy of your letter of admission to the University (Zulassungsbescheid)
- ✓ enrollment form “Admission and Immatriculation at the University of Heidelberg”, filled out and signed



The image shows a form titled "Antrag auf Immatrikulation an der Universität Heidelberg" (Application for immatriculation at Heidelberg University). The form is divided into several sections with checkboxes and text boxes for personal information, academic background, and study plans. A box on the right is labeled "Matrikelnummer" (Matriculation number). The form includes fields for last name, first name, date of birth, place of birth, citizenship, gender, secondary school leaving certificate, name of school, place of school, date of issue, application for summer or winter semester, study course, type of study, anticipated degree, and various other academic and administrative details.

- ✓ a certified photocopy of your passport and a certified copy of your valid visa or residence permit (EU/EEA nationals only require a certified copy of their identity card/passport). Regular photocopies will not be accepted.
- ✓ your Uni ID which you have received from the heiDOCS
- ✓ the health insurance certificate
- ✓ passport photo (4 cm x 5 cm)
- ✓ proof of sufficient financial resources (a copy of your work contract)
- ✓ about 171,80 Euro (as of 2022) to pay your registration fee
- ✓ your passport incl. your new visa
- ✓ Work contract/hosting agreement

These documents should be sent to the following address:

Central Administration Office

Serviceportal-Studierendenadministration

Seminarstrasse 2

69117 Heidelberg

Business hours: Mo – Thu: 10 – 16 h, Fr: 10 – 14 h

After receiving and processing your enrollment documents, the enrollment office will send you, by postal mail, your multifunctional student identification card, proof of successful enrollment and other important information about paying the semester fee and about setting up an online student account in LSF to manage your enrollment.

The university will send you reminders about the payment of your semester fees (171,80 Euro) to the email address that you receive through enrollment. Therefore, please remember to check this email regularly. Additionally, the university will send notifications to you by postal mail to the mailing address that is in the enrollment system.

Once you are registered and enrolled at Heidelberg University and have received your student ID card (Studierendenausweis), you may go and buy your "Semesterticket" (175,00 Euro as of March 2022) for public transport in the Heidelberg area and use of all university services (refectories, accommodation service, email, etc.) if you want.

Benefits of being enrolled to the University:

Enrolment has some benefits: These benefits include a student ID card that can work at the dining halls/mensas around campus, a student ID card that gives you free access to the public transportation on weekends/ holidays and after 7 pm on weekdays, the possibility to buy a Semesterticket, and other benefits that are mentioned later on.

Semesterticket

The Semesterticket (175,00 Euro as of March 2022) for the transport lasts exactly for 6 months. It is not bound to the "semester" itself, it starts at the day you buy it. When using public transport, it is important to always bring both your semester ticket AND your student ID card with you.

These two things together allow you to use public transport. You have to re-register every semester at the University to continue being enrolled as a student (Rückmeldung). This means you have to pay the semester fee again, and re-validate your student ID card for it to

continue working. It can easily be done online, but be aware of the deadlines because there are certain windows of time to do this.

Student ID card (Studierendenausweis)

The student ID card is used for the following: University computer center and library services, Payment card for student services (cafeteria, copier, etc.).

With your student ID card, you can also use the public transport FOR FREE after 7 pm on weekdays, and during all days during weekends and holidays. You do not need a Semesterticket for this. This benefit is included by just paying your registration fee (178,00 Euro) for the semester and being a regular student at the University. In case a transport inspector shows up, you only have to show your Student ID card.

You have to re-register every semester at the University to continue being enrolled as a student (Rückmeldung). This means you have to pay the semester fee again, and re-validate your student ID card for it to continue working. It can easily be done online, but be aware of the deadlines because there are certain windows to do this.

4.5 German courses

There are several German courses at different levels offered free of charge to students. Courses are available at ARI, MPIA, and MPIK, but you are not restricted to take the course offered at your institution. Ask Christian Fendt for the times and locations of the IMPRS German classes that are appropriate for your level or see the webpage. Course textbooks can be found at local bookstores or online. If you prefer (maybe because it fits your time schedule better), there are also many language schools in town which offer cheap German courses. Here we can suggest two:

A. The Max Weber Haus, which belongs to the university, has a very large offer of courses, covering all levels. For information:

Max-Weber-Haus, Ziegelhauser Landstrasse 17, 69120 Heidelberg
Tel.: +49 (0) 62 21/54 - 59 49; Fax: +49 (0) 62 21/54 - 59 56
e-mail: sekretariat@isz.uni-heidelberg.de

B. There is also another large school, the “Volkshochschule”, which offers many courses (language, arts, and so on), among which are several German courses for foreigners. Students have a discount price. For information:

vhs Heidelberg, Bergheimer Strasse 76, 69115 Heidelberg
Telefon: 0 62 21/91 19-11, Fax: 0 62 21/16 51 33
Webpage: www.vhs-heidelberg.de

4.6 Problems, pressure and anguishes

If you feel like talking to somebody not in the institute about your fears, problems and anguishes there are office hours and a telephone hot-line of the “psychologische Beratungsstelle” of the Heidelberg University:

<http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/studium/beratung/pbs.html>

In each institute, there is somebody that you can talk with if you have problems related to women equality at work. Please inform yourself about this at the administration.

In each institute there is (should be) a person you may contact in case of suspicion of scientific misconduct. This might concern problems related to publications, but also behavior to you as a scientist. That (elected) person is called “Ombudsmann”. He/she acts strictly confidentially and may help clarify things.

For other problems such as legal issues with worker’s rights or, say, social misconduct (harassment at work, stalking, pressure by employer etc.) there is the (elected) “Betriebsrat” (worker’s council) who will help you and/or inform you.

Appendix 1

A.1 Heidelberg, its neighborhoods and suburbs

Altstadt

The old centre. On average houses and rooms are very expensive. It is very difficult to find a flat and a parking space here, a bit easier to find a room in a shared flat. There are a lot of restaurants, cafes and cinemas in the Altstadt. There is not a very large supply of supermarkets and grocery stores. Connections are very good: from Bismarckplatz you can get a bus to go everywhere, and if you work on the Königstuhl you can also consider the Bergbahn (mountain railway) to go to work instead of taking the science bus.

Bergheim, Weststadt, Neuenheim

Close to the center (walking distance). Houses in these areas are very expensive, more or less the same as in the Altstadt. Maybe somewhere in Bergheim you can find cheaper flats. There are a lot of nice restaurants and cafes. Connection to Bismarckplatz is very good (by tram/bike it takes approx. 5-10 min).

Bergheim: very close to the main station, convenient if you need to travel a lot; very convenient for shopping because there are several supermarkets and grocery stores; maybe a bit noisy, lots of traffic.

Weststadt: The area is very exclusive. Neuenheim: More peaceful than Bergheim and Weststadt. The connections to Bismarckplatz and elsewhere are a bit worse, but still ok.

Handschuhsheim

Northern part of Heidelberg. Expensive, but on average less than i) and ii). Very close to Neuenheim, but a bit less lively. Peaceful, but also enough supermarkets, shops and some good restaurants. The connection to Bismarckplatz is very good (tram/bike: approx. 10 min).

Südstadt, Rohrbach, Kirchheim

Southern parts of Heidelberg. Cheaper than the central areas. Good offer of supermarkets and grocery stores. Very few locations to go out in the evening. Connection to Bismarckplatz is good (tram/bike: approx. 15-25 min).

Boxberg, Emmertsgrund

Southern suburbs of Heidelberg. Quite cheap, but not very nice. These suburbs are located on a hill. There are no restaurants or bars. Connection to Bismarckplatz is ok (one bus, approx. 25-30 min). There is a path leading to the MPIK which takes only 5 min walking.

Wieblingen, Pfaffengrund

Very western parts of Heidelberg, industrial areas. Cheaper than the central areas, but there are no locations to go out. Connection to Bismarckplatz is good (approx. 20-25 min).

Schlierbach, Ziegelhausen

Eastern suburbs of Heidelberg. These two small villages are located close to the hills in the Neckar valley. Cheaper than the central areas. Very peaceful, still ok for supermarkets but no locations for going out. Connection to Bismarckplatz is ok (bus: approx. 25 min).

Dossenheim, Eppelheim

Small towns near Heidelberg. Cheaper, more peaceful, less lively than central Heidelberg. Good public transport connections to Heidelberg (approx. 30 min).

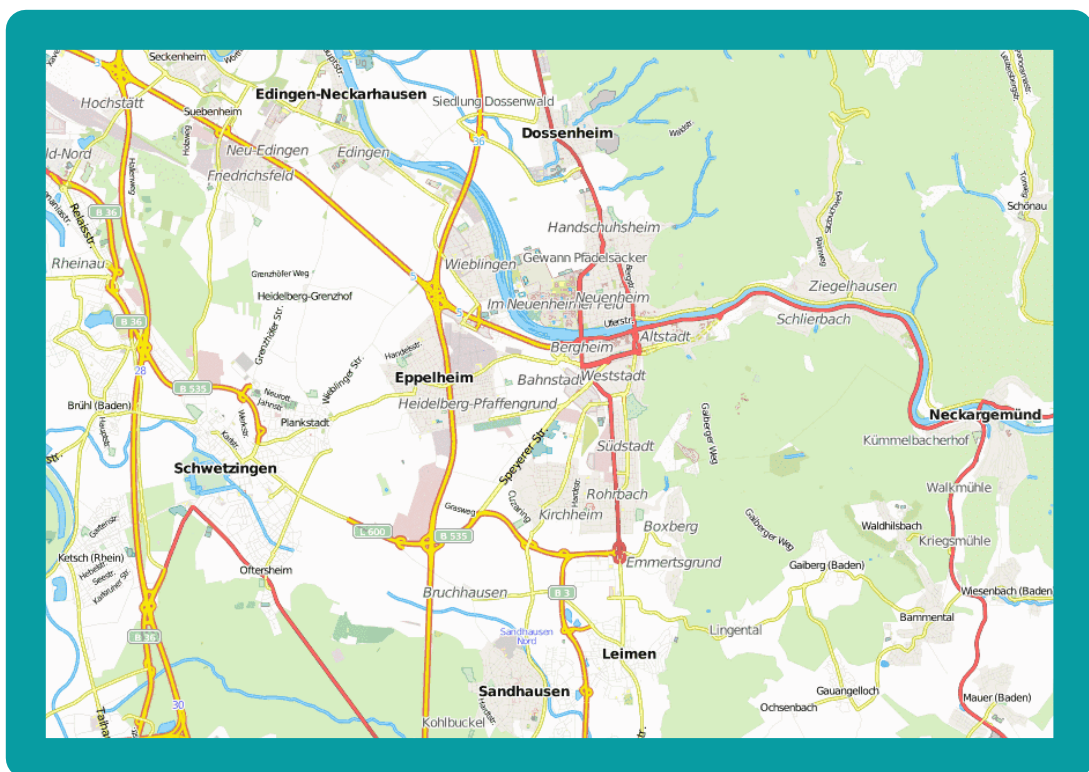
Edingen, Leimen, Neckargemünd, Plankstadt

Towns close to Heidelberg. Public transport connections to Heidelberg ok (approx. 30 min).

Sandhausen, Nussloch, Mückenloch, Schwetzingen, St. Leon- Rot

Villages further away from Heidelberg. You may be able to find a cheap flat, but you probably will need a car to get to the institute (public transportation to Bismarckplatz: rarely, takes at least 40 min).

Heidelberg's districts



Appendix 2

A.2 Renting a flat: List of useful words and abbreviations

To get familiar with the websites

Angebot	offer
Gesuch	search
Suchen (suche, suchst; gesucht)	to search



Types of houses

WG, Wohngemeinschaft	shared flat
2er (3er, 4er...) -WG	shared flat with 2 (3, 4...) people
1(2,3)ZKB	the flat has one (two, three) room(s) + kitchen + bathroom
Wohnheim	student dorm
Verbindungszimmer	room in some sort of student fraternity association

Rooms and other things

Zi (Zimmer)	room
Kü (Küche)	kitchen
möbl. (möbliert)	there is furniture in the flat
n. möbl (nicht möbliert, unmöbliert)	there is no furniture in the flat
qm (m ²)	square meters

Costs

Miete	rent cost
NK, Nebenkosten	additional costs for water, waste removal, electricity, gas, heating...
Miete kalt (KM)	means that the NK are not included in the rental fee
Miete warm (WM)	means that the NK are included in the rental fee
zzgl. Nk, plus Nebenkosten (NK)	additional costs are not included in the rental fee (like kalt)
inkl. NK	additional costs are included in the rental fee (like warm)
Kt, K., Kaution	deposit money you have to pay to the landlord when you move in. When you move out, you should get this money back unless you caused damage to the flat. Usually, this Kaution is approximately 1.5 times rental costs per month.
Abstand	you have to pay money for renovations or purchases done by previous tenant

Additional costs

Strom	electricity
Heizung	heating
Wasser	water

Other facilities

Parkmöglichkeit, Garage, Stellplatz	parking place for a car
Keller	cellar
Waschmaschine (WaMa)	washing machine
Trockner	clothes dryer
Spülmaschine	dish washer

Timescales

frei ab ... bis ...	free from ... to
ab sofort	immediately
bis unbegrenzt	indefinitely
Zwischenmiete	the flat is only temporary available for rent (see section above)

Location

Nahe...	close to...
Ruhige Lage	peaceful location

Other useful words (for WG mainly)

nur Frauen/Männer	only women/men
nur Nichtraucher	only non-smokers
Bad-Mitbenutzung	shared bathroom
Mitbewohner	person who lives in a shared flat
Zweck-WG	people share the flat only for dividing the costs
keine Zweck-WG	people share the flat and do not mind interacting with each other

Appendix 3

A.3 Further links and addresses

- ✓ Promotionsordnung
http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/courses/download/examination_rules_regulations.html

Lectures in Physics & Astronomy

<https://lsf.uni-heidelberg.de/qisserver/rds?state=wtree&search=1&trex=step&root120221=140004|139926&P.vx=mittel>

Department of Physics and Astronomy

Dean's Office

Im Neuenheimer Feld 226, R. 2.105t, 69120 Heidelberg-Neuenheim

Tel.: 06221/54 19546

Email: dekanat@physik.uni-heidelberg.de

<http://www.physik.uni-heidelberg.de/>

International Relations Office (Akademisches Auslandsamt)

Seminarstraße 2, 69117 Heidelberg

Tel.: 06221/54 5454

E-mail: studium@uni-heidelberg.de

<http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/courses/contact/aaa/index.html>

UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG



Appendix 4

A.4 Useful and important telephone numbers

Last update: April 2022

Emergency numbers

Non-medical

Police / Emergency: 110 (nationwide)

Fire department: 112 (nationwide)



Medical

Emergency Medical Services: 19222 (“Rotes Kreuz”)

Poison Control: 0761 - 19240

Medical Emergency Service Heidelberg: 06221/116117

Ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst, Im Neuenheimer Feld 410, 69120 Heidelberg

Go there if you need medical aid after the office hours of doctors and on the weekends.

Crisis line: 0800/1110111 or 0800/1110222

Car break-down: 01802/222222 (ADAC) or 0711 530 33 66 77 (Auto club Europa - ACE)

University

Central University Administration: 06221/54-0

Hotline concerning studying at the University of Heidelberg: 06221/545454

(Mo - Thu: 9am - 4pm, Fr: 9:00am - 1pm)

University – Department of Physics and Astronomy: 06221/54-19648

Taxi and Pizza services

Ruftaxi: 06221/302030 or 73 90 90

Pizza-service La Fayette that delivers to the MPIA: 06221 – 164066/67

Credit card, Online Banking pins, ID card barring

EC cards, Creditcard, Cell phone, online banking: 116 116

American Express: +49 69 9797- 1000