

Dear student,

Now that you have been admitted to our *Postgraduate Programme Environmental Physics*, a lot of questions may arise concerning your further preparations to arrive in Bremen in time to attend our classes. With this information letter we would like to help you with the most pressing ones.

Visa

The German Embassy or Consulate in your country will give you the information needed for the visa application procedure. For studying in Germany, you definitely need a “study visa” which can only be issued by your local German Embassy! If you enter Germany with any other visa than a “study visa”, you will be sent back to your home country by the German authorities to apply for the appropriate visa there!

The German Embassy in your country might need some time until they are satisfied with the documents you have to present them. In some countries the waiting time for your first interview might be very long as well. Please apply as early as possible for the appointment for the visa interview to avoid any time pressure. From the moment you receive your visa you will have three months to enter Germany.

Please note, in recent years, a few applicants for a “study visa” were rejected because they were not in a position to prove sufficiently that their financial situation will enable them to live in Germany on a decent level!

Furthermore, you will need a health insurance for the visa. A travel insurance for 2 or 3 months will be sufficient because you will have to join a German health insurance provider to get enrolled at our University (see below).

If you have problems to get the visa because of objections due to the form of the Admission Letter from the University of Bremen, please contact us. We will inform the German Embassy that it is the usual document.

Living Costs

The German Embassy in your country will probably ask you to prove that you have the means to live in Germany on your own money for at least one year. They will set you a limit of about € 720,00 a month. Make sure that you really have the money and note that € 720,00 is the minimum amount you can live on in Germany.

The average prices a month are about:

Rent	300,00 €
Health insurance (compulsory)	70,00 €
Food, clothes + other living expenses	285,00 €
Books, telephone etc.	<u>65,00 €</u>
	720,00 €

You also might have to get some extras like (winter) clothing, stationery etc. Furthermore, you have to be prepared for some initial expenses. In Germany it is customary to pay a deposit of two monthly rents for your apartment, which you will get back when you terminate your contract and leave your apartment (unless you have done damage to it). You will have to pay enrolment fees, and if you have to join a private health insurance (see next chapter), you will have to pay in some cases several months in advance.

Deposit	600,00 €
Enrolment fees (twice a year) approx.	320,00 €

Please be aware that our university – apart from offering the lectures free of tuition fee – do not offer a regular scholarship. The so called “Deutschlandstipendium” is strictly limited and covers just a part of all costs for studying. Your study visa will allow you to work for 120 full days or 240 half days a year, but it will be very difficult to find a job on the labour market that will not affect your study performance, as lectures and example classes are challenging. For almost all jobs you need to speak German on an advanced level.

Accommodation

As you will need a place to stay when you arrive in Germany, we recommend that you should try to find an apartment before you arrive here. There are several ways to get an apartment. You can either apply for one at the “Studentenwerk” (<http://www.stw-bremen.de/en/wohnen/student-accommodation>), the local organization that manages the dormitories in Bremen, or you can try to find one via the local newspaper (<http://www.weser-kurier.de/verlag/anzeigenmarkt/immobilien-2.html>), the online platform of the [City of Bremen](#) (look for “Wohngemeinschaftsangebote + Wohnungs-/Mietangebote”) or via offers from estate agencies, private landlords or flat communities (www.wg-gesucht.de, www.immowelt.de, www.immobilienscout24.de, www.immopool.de, www.planethome.de, www.immonet.de).

There are two private student dormitories on the campus but they are more expensive than most alternatives: <http://www.galileoresidenz.de/en/home/> or http://www.the-fizz.com/student_accommodation/locations/bremen.html.

If you want to apply for an apartment at one of the university's dormitories, please download and fill in the relevant application form from the homepage of the "Studentenwerk" (<http://www.stw-bremen.de/en/rooms-available-shared-flats/important-forms-and-information>). Further information can be found <http://www.stw-bremen.de/en/rooms-available-shared-flats/fag>. As there are only apartments for a small number of our 20.000 students, you are very lucky if you get an apartment. The waiting list for an apartment is very long, but as foreign applicants are favoured, it is always worth trying to get one there. You will have the best chances if you fill in the form and send it to the address stated on the form as soon as possible. To get a room in a shared flat you need to contact the flat community directly. The homepage of the "Studentenwerk" provides the information about free rooms and whom to contact.

In case you do not get an apartment in one of the dormitories or in case you do not want to live there, you can try to find one on your own. You can come here and stay in a hostel (approx. 15,00 – 30,00 € per day, however, individual prices to be checked on the relevant homepages / see <http://www.jugendherberge.de/en/youth-hostels/bremen578/portrait>, www.southendhostel-bremen.de, www.townside.de, www.bremen-hostel.com or www.bremer-backpacker-hostel.de/). You should make a reservation in a hostel as soon as you know your arrival date if you cannot stay with friends while looking for an apartment.

Be aware that estate agents take between 1 ½ and 3 monthly rents brokerage.

Health Insurance

A requirement for enrolment at a German university is a legal health insurance.

Students who are younger than 30 years (and have not finished their 14th university semester in Germany) are protected under the compulsory insurance act. You can join one of the many German compulsory health insurances. Membership is about € 70,00 / month (close family members (wife, children) who live in Germany are included).

In case you do not want to join the compulsory health insurance scheme, you can ask to be released from your compulsory membership. Please note that you cannot switch back to the compulsory health insurance scheme as long as you remain student. We highly recommend joining a compulsory health insurance.

Students who are 30 years plus or have finished their 14th semester may join a compulsory health insurance only under certain conditions. Notwithstanding, there are many private insurance companies that provide a big portion of the services of a compulsory health insurance. The prices for a membership vary and family members have to be insured separately. Accident insurance, liability insurance and luggage insurance are sometimes included.

Applications for insurances will only be accepted when sent from inside Germany. You have to check with your local insurance company for an interim (travel) insurance while you have not signed a contract.

Please make sure that you choose the insurance most suitable for you. We highly recommend a compulsory health insurance. Private insurances do not cover all of the services of a compulsory insurance and usually ask you to pay "minor" bills (up to € 200) in cash in advance. It might take up to 2 months until you get your money refunded.

It is also advisable to have a private liability insurance. Insurance fee is about € 80 a year. The insurance will pay for any unintended damage you cause to other persons or things.

We hope that we have answered your main questions with this letter. For further information please have a look at <http://www.uni-bremen.de/en/international/your-stay-in-bremen.html> (note: if pieces of information differ, take ours for your situation).

When to come to Bremen

You should come to Bremen as early as possible! Please contact us if you will not be in a position to arrive before the start of the lectures (mid of October). The best option would be to arrive in time before our introductory courses start (beginning of October) or - at least - before the start of the lectures.

May we please ask you to keep us informed by e-mail to pep@uni-bremen.de (status of your visa procedure, accommodation, date of arrival etc.).

It is not possible to commence studies in our programme in the summer semester.

If the Letter of Admission is not arriving, please contact the International Admission Office to send out a new one. If you have a reliable contact person in Germany they can send it to their address and this person can send it with courier to your place. This is faster than waiting for the regular mail.

Please do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail if you have any further questions. We will always try to help you, so that we will all meet late September or early October to start the first semester with as little trouble on our minds as possible.

Best regards

Your PEP team
Postgraduate Programme Environmental Physics