

BAMBERG  
SURVIVAL  
GUIDE

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## About the Author:

(Enjoy this picture of me [the one on the left] and my suitemate from my time  
in Bamberg)

Hello! Or should I say... HALLO! My name is Madison Daniel. I am  
a student from the College of Charleston who completed a  
semester abroad in Bamberg, Germany. I attended the Otto-  
Friedrich-Universität and had an absolutely amazing time! While  
there I improved my German immensely, traveled across Europe,  
and made lifelong friends. With all of these amazing experiences  
also came a few obstacles to overcome. I have made this  
"survival guide" to share my experiences (good and bad) and

hopefully assist you through your obstacles and help make the  
most of your time abroad!

## **About the Program:**

I have attached the flyer describing the program below. This flyer also contains the link to the primary application.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r-nmsqYYzjP-4DQ0736qQ-KZlIBQpyPn/view>

## **Application Process**

### **Step 1: Via TRM Preliminary Application**

The link above contains the pamphlet containing a brief description of the program and an overview of the courses offered. Also located in the pamphlet is the application link. This link will take you to the College of Charleston's branch of the website Via TRM. Via TRM is the online platform where one can access information about study abroad programs, communicate with those involved with a program, and it is also where all study abroad program procedures/applications are found. Once you have created an account you can access more information about the program along with the preliminary application. The application consists of basic personal information questions, as well as, a few short-written questions pertaining to your interest in the program.

**LINK TO COFC VIA TRM:** <https://cofc.via-trm.com>

### **Step 2: Via TRM Secondary Phase**

Once your preliminary application has been approved your Via TRM account will be updated with new questionnaires and file droboxes.

### **Step 2.5: Application from Universität Bamberg**

As you are completing your second application phase in Via TRM, you will also be contacted by the Universität Bamberg

with a few other forms to be filled out. This application includes questions concerning basic personal information, your participation (or lack thereof) in the **preparatory course** (more information on pg. 5), **housing** (more information on pg. 6), your participation (or lack thereof) in the **tandem partner project** (more information on pg. 5), and other basic travel questions. NOTE: This application is in German, and you might need assistance filling it out.

**Note:** Some of the information you will find below is also listed on the University of Bamberg's website: <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/en/studies/exchange-students-eg-erasmus/next-steps/>

## **Prep Course**

Prior to the start of the semester, there is an intensive 3-week German language course you can participate in. The course is worth 6 ECTS or 3 of our credits. It is every weekday for 4 hours (with a break in the middle). This course really helps you get on your feet speaking to native German speakers and also teaches you a lot about the place you are calling home for the next semester or year. It also includes fun field trips like going to Nürnberg and München for a day.

If you do choose to participate in the prep course (which I **HIGHLY** recommend TO) you will have to mark so on your application, you receive from Bamberg.

Around a month before the course is supposed to start, you will receive an email containing a link to a timed German placement test. DO NOT PANIC. This is just to assess your German abilities, so you are placed in the appropriate prep course group. But don't worry, if you go to the first day and feel like your class level is the wrong fit in either direction, you can talk to your teacher and you can be moved.

At the end of the course there is a final exam that determines your grade in the class. As long as you pay attention in class and study you will all do great!

## **Tandem Partner**

**Note:** The official description from the Universität of Bamberg (in German) can be found at: <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/auslandsamt/tandem-programm/>

If you decide to participate in the tandem partner program you will be assigned to a native student of the University of Bamberg prior to your arrival. From there it is up to you and your partner to communicate and make plans. In theory your tandem partner is meant to assist you throughout the semester, primarily with the initial set up process. I say "in theory" because the level of involvement and the overall experience varies. In my case I only saw my tandem partner when she picked me up from the train station (which I admit was very helpful). She would occasionally answer a question for me over text, but nothing beyond that. Another student from CofC never met hers. While a different CofC student absolutely loved his tandem partner. His partner was very helpful and was readily available to assist. His partner would also invite him to hang out and to attend different events in Germany, such as concerts. My suitemate also had a wonderful experience with the program. We would go over to her dorm and cook all together. In short, the tandem partner program has mixed results. My advice would be to sign up for it as there are no negative impacts if you do.

## **Applying/Obtaining Housing**

As part of your application from the Universität Bamberg you will be asked about your housing preference. The form will provide a list of the available housing, as well as, a link with more information and pictures for some. You will then have to pick your top 3 choices. NOTE: Due to limited space you may or may not receive one of your top picks BUT as an exchange student you are guaranteed housing through the university. Majority of exchange student are typically placed in Pestheim, (where I lived) so I will give a bit more detail about it below.

Once you have been assigned a dorm you will be sent your rental contract. You will fill it out and sign it and transfer the money stated as the deposit and most likely 1<sup>st</sup> month's rent and scan it all in to the listed email. Depending on where you want your rent money to come from you will be given a form to input your **German bank details** once you set it up, and they will start automatically pulling money monthly.

Of course, you are always free to decline the university housing in favor of finding your own. Be warned that this will most likely be more expensive and will be completely up to you to procure.

**Pestheim/Pestallossistraße:**

Single	Double
<p><b>Bedroom:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bed (with drawer underneath)</li> <li>-Desk</li> <li>-Desk Chair</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">-Shelf Space</li> <li>-Nightstand</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">-Heater</li> </ul> <p><b>Bathroom:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Shower</li> <li>-Toilet</li> <li>-Sink</li> </ul> <p><b>Kitchen/Living Area:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-2 burners</li> <li>-Sink (with cupboards above)</li> <li>-Lockable Wardrobe</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bedroom X2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bed (with drawer underneath)</li> <li>-Desk</li> <li>-Desk Chair</li> <li>-Shelf Space</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">-Nightstand</li> <li>-Lockable Door</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">-Heater</li> </ul> <p><b>Bathroom:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Shower</li> <li>-Toilet</li> <li>-Sink</li> </ul> <p><b>Kitchen/Living Area (larger):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-2 burners</li> <li>-Sink (with cupboards above)</li> <li>-Kitchen Table (with chairs)</li> <li>-Lockable Wardrobe X2</li> </ul>



(I lived in a double. Here are pictures of my bedroom)

## Helpful Housing Tips

**NOTE:** This information is true for Pestalossistraße, but I am unsure about the other dormitories.

**Internet:**

- Some rooms will come with internet routers already if the person before left them behind. However, if your does not then the Hausmeister also sells some for 10 euro that work pretty well. Amazon.de also sells some relatively high-quality ones for under 20 euro, your room already comes with the necessary connectors to setup your router.

### **Laundry:**

- The buildings come with laundry facilities equipped with washers and dryers. A wash and a dry cost 1.5 euros EACH. You pay for the laundry with the money you load on your student card (this will also be explained later in the guide).

### **Temperature:**

- WINTER: Surprise, surprise...it gets cold in Germany and Bamberg is no exception. Depending on when you are there you might even get some snow. Luckily, your room is equipped with a wall radiator. Just turn the dial to your preferred level of heat and wait for it to warm up.

- SUMMER: The winters are freezing, and the summers can be blazing (perfect for taking a swim in the river). During this time, I recommend that you completely switch off your radiator and also purchase yourself a fan. They sell nice fans in the supermarkets for under 12 euro.

AFTER  
ARRIVING IN  
BAMBERG

## Housing Check-in

**NOTE:** A few weeks prior to your arrival in Bamberg you will receive an email asking you to send the university the approximate date and time of your arrival so the Hausmeister knows to be there.

The first thing you will have to do when you arrive in Bamberg is to go to your dorm and meet with the Hausmeister. You must bring a printed version of your rental contract and a passport sized picture of yourself. I also recommend knowing the number of your room as it would make the process much faster and easier. During this process he will give you a couple of documents concerning your housing, **KEEP THESE SAFE!!!** These documents are needed to register with the Rathaus. Once you have checked in with him, he will show you to your room and explain how everything works. **NOTE:** If you notice anything wrong or broken right away tell him! And if you notice anything later or any problems arise contact him.

## Registering at The Rathaus

Once you receive your documents from the Hausmeister you should go to the **NEW** Rathaus (right next to the central bus station) to register yourself. This just shows that you are in fact living in Bamberg for the semester. You will need the document from the Hausmeister, your passport, and a passport sized picture of yourself. You take all of this to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Rathaus. Take a ticket from the machine and wait for it to appear on the screen above. This appointment should be very short. They will ask for all of the documentation and ask you some basic questions concerning things such as your marital status. They will give you a document showing that you registered, you will need this to enroll at the university.

## Phone

Getting your phone set up is something I recommend doing early as it is much easier to have your German number already when filling out forms. So, the two main way people handle setting up their phones when here are:

### 1. Getting a German SIM card:

- This is what the majority of students do and it is every simple. Before you leave the United States, check to see if your phone is unlocked, meaning you are able to input a new sim card. Once in Bamberg, head to one of the local cellphone provider stores to purchase a new SIM card and data. I recommend Vodafone. You will have to make monthly visits to the shop to refill your account. Don't worry, your dorm, the university, and most restaurants have Wifi too.

## **2. Great International Plans:**

- This option is not very common in my experience, however, depending on what carrier you use in the States you might have a great international plan that will cover you.

## **Setting Up A Bank Account**

This is also one of the aspects I recommend starting early. For the majority of you, setting up a bank account in Bamberg will be the best and easiest due to withdraw and transaction fees with most American cards. The most common bank is Sparkasse. There are multiple locations across Bamberg, however, when you are initially setting up your account you need to go to the one in the middle of the city. You have to go in and set a time for the actual account opening appointment.

Once you have completed the appointment, it will take about 2 weeks for you to receive your card in the mail. With Sparkasse you get free withdraws from their ATMs all over the city and Germany as a whole, which is extremely useful as many places (especially in Bamberg) **only take cash.**

**NOTE:** The basic card that the majority of exchange students get does **NOT** do online transactions.

**NOTE:** The people you are meeting for your appointment only speak German so if you are unconfident in your speaking abilities, I recommend bringing your tandem partner or maybe a friend with more German language abilities.

## **Insurance**

The College of Charleston provides you with an insurance policy and should have sent you an email containing your information.

Print these out! You will need these to enroll at the university AND you should always carry your paper insurance card with you just in case.

Prior to enrolling at the university, you will need to take your insurance documents and passport to Techniker Krankenkasse (Obstmarkt 5, 96047 Bamberg, Germany) to get them notarized. You will receive several documents from them which you will need to provide when enrolling.

## **Enrolling**

Prior to the start of the prep course (or the start of the semester if you are not participating in the prep course) you must officially enroll with the school. I **HIGHLY** recommend attempting this as early as possible as it is easy to forget a necessary document or step and it's best to have time to correct. In addition to there being multiple steps, the office is only open from 8am to noon most weekdays (with the exception of Mondays which have additional hours from 2pm-4pm I believe) which creates an additional challenge. The enrollment office is located at Kapuzinerstraße 25, Bamberg 96047. For more information about the enrollment process and what you will need go to:

[https://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/uni/verwaltung/auslandsamt/Incoming/Exchange/MB\\_Willkommen\\_Austausch\\_WS\\_19.pdf](https://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/uni/verwaltung/auslandsamt/Incoming/Exchange/MB_Willkommen_Austausch_WS_19.pdf)  
(scroll down for English)

## **Student ID**

After enrolling you will receive your student ID. Before leaving the enrollment office, make sure you activate your card with the machine they have on their wall. This card is VERY important!

This card is used for:

- Free rides on the town's buss system
    - Paying for food in the cafeterias
    - Paying for printing in the library
  - Locking/Unlocking the lockers in the library
    - Paying for laundry
  - Getting discounts in Germany and across Europe
- And more.....

To load money onto your student ID you will have to first withdraw some cash. Then you will need to find one of the refill stations on campus, located in places like the library and cafeterias. You insert your card and then your cash. Easy!

## **Letter of Enrollment**

A couple weeks after enrolling with the university you will receive an email containing your Letter of Enrollment. Print this document off as it will have several uses later.

## **"Free" 50 Euro**

Once you receive an email containing your Letter of Enrollment, print it off. Take it back to the Rathaus where you registered previously. You will receive 50 euro in the form of five 10 euro "gift cards" or "City Schexs" that can be used at a large variety of places around Bamberg. For example: shops, restaurants, attractions, ect.

## **Visa/Residence Permit**

As a citizen of the United States you are permitted to stay in any EU country without a visa for up to 90 days. Obviously, your semester in Bamberg will last more than 90 days, and you will have to apply for what they call a residence permit. Once you have registered with the Rathaus and received your Letter of Enrollment, then you are ready to set an appointment. You have to email [auslaenderamt@stadt.bamberg.de](mailto:auslaenderamt@stadt.bamberg.de) stating that you are an exchange student from the United States who has registered with the Rathaus and needs a residence permit appointment. NOTE: It may take up to several weeks to receive any kind of response. Don't panic, but I suggest sending periodic reminder/inquiry emails.

Eventually, you will receive a response email with the time and date of your appointment. They will also attach a form that needs to be filled out prior to the appointment, as well as, a checklist of other required documents. I have put the checklist below:

## **Checklist residence permit for students**

- Passport
- Visa copy
- Biometrical Picture
- Health insurance confirmation (health insurance card is not accepted!)
- Proof of financial resources (scholarship confirmation, employment confirmation, blocked bank account etc.) 720,-€ per month / 8.640,-€ per year
- Certificate of enrolment

As long as you have all of the proper documentation the entire process should be very easy. **NOTE:** The people you are meeting for your appointment only speak German so if you are unconfident in your speaking abilities, I recommend bringing your tandem partner or maybe a friend with more German language abilities.

After your appointment it can take anywhere from 2-4 weeks to receive your actual residence permit card. You will be sent a letter in the mail telling you to pick it up.

## **Registering for Classes**

The actual processes of how to register for classes and to use the online platforms will be explained to you during your first few weeks in Bamberg. The process is somewhat complex and is much easier to understand if shown instead of me trying to explain it here, however, I just wanted to include some key points below.

- There are separate online platforms for viewing which classes are being offered and for actually registering for the classes.
- DO NOT lose your TAN numbers paper (you will have this explained to you).
- You have to register for BOTH the class AND the exam.
- You can only use each TAN number once.
- You can use one TAN number to register for all of your classes, but each exam requires its own TAN number.

Some information concerning how to register for classes can also be found at the bottom of: <https://www.uni->

[bamberg.de/fileadmin/uni/verwaltung/auslandsamt/Incoming/Exchange/MB\\_Willkommen\\_Austausch\\_WS\\_19.pdf](http://bamberg.de/fileadmin/uni/verwaltung/auslandsamt/Incoming/Exchange/MB_Willkommen_Austausch_WS_19.pdf) (Scroll down for English)

BEFORE  
LEAVING  
BAMBERG

**Note:** Some of the information you will find below is also listed on the University of Bamberg's website: <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/en/studies/exchange-students-eg-erasmus/before-leaving-bamberg/>

## **Submit a Transcript of Records Request**

In the middle of the semester, the International Office will send you an e-mail with the title "Transcript of Records." This message will contain a form (Word document) that you should fill in and return via e-mail to the International Office ([transcripts.international@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:transcripts.international@uni-bamberg.de)). This form is what allows the credits you earn while abroad to transfer back to CofC correctly.

At the end of semester, your grades and ECTS credits are entered in "FlexNow", the online portal for course and exams registration. In the event that your course is not listed in FlexNow, you will receive your grade and ECTS credits in hard copy (called a *Schein*).

You must bring your original *Schein* to the International Office plus a photocopy before you leave Bamberg. If your *Schein* has not been issued to you before you leave Bamberg, you need to request your course instructor to send it directly to the International Office. (Please be advised that a *Schein* sent to Bamberg's International Office cannot be accepted via email.)

As soon as all your course results are available, the International Office will send the Transcript of Records directly to CofC.

## **Deregister from the University**

At the end of your semester, before leaving Bamberg, you will need to go back to the enrollment/registrar's office to unenroll. All you will need is your Bamberg student ID. They will have you fill out a very short/easy form and that will be it.

**NOTE:** The form is in German, however, the staff speaks very good English and is happy to assist you if you have any troubles.

## **Notify the Citizen Registration Office**

Prior to leaving Bamberg, you will need to return to the first floor of the NEW Rathaus (again, right next to the central bus station) where you registered to show you were living in Bamberg. This appointment notifies the office that you are leaving, you should do this about a week before leaving. For this appointment, you will just need your passport and your departure dates. Again, you must take a ticket from the machine and wait for it to appear on the screen above. The meeting will most likely be extremely short as they will just have you fill out a short form and make photo copies of your passport.

## **Close Your German Bank Account**

Prior to leaving Bamberg, you will need to close your bank account. To do this you will need to bring your card and passport to the bank and ask to close your account. **If you are closing your account before your last rental payment**, be sure to notify the bank and housing organization. You will just have to provide your American bank account details and billing address for the last payment to be made out of.

## **Fill out your Return of Housing Deposit Form**

Before the start of the semester, to obtain housing you will have to pay a deposit. To get your deposit back you need to fill out the form attached below and send it to: [wohnen@studentenwerk-wuerzburg.de](mailto:wohnen@studentenwerk-wuerzburg.de). It can take several months to receive your deposit back.

Form located here:

[https://www.studentenwerk-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/Daten/PDF/Formular\\_Bank\\_Adresse\\_Kautionsrueckzahlung\\_2014\\_04.pdf](https://www.studentenwerk-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/Daten/PDF/Formular_Bank_Adresse_Kautionsrueckzahlung_2014_04.pdf)

## **Meet with Your Hausmeister**

Prior to your departure date you will need to call or email your Hausmeister and set up an appointment for a room walkthrough. Once everything is approved you will turn in your keys, concluding your time in Bamberg (minus the trip to the train station).

**Thank you for reading! Bye!**

**Danke fürs Lesen! Tschüss**