

Checklist for arrival and during your stay in Frankfurt am Main

This checklist will help you determine the tasks that you still have to complete. However, please note that this checklist is not a complete list of all necessary tasks, but is a summary of the most important pieces of information. The tasks do not need to be completed in the order in which they are shown in the list. Please contact us if you need assistance with any of the formalities described here; we would be glad to help you!

1. Fill in Goethe Welcome Centre's questionnaire

You should complete the Goethe Welcome Centre's online check-in questionnaire latest by the time you arrive in Frankfurt (http://linkto.eu/GU_welcome)

We can provide you with important information and inform you about special events and advisory programs only after we have received the completed questionnaire. All information that you provide is kept confidential.

2. Register with the city of Frankfurt

You must register at the Residents' Registration Office (*Bürgeramt*) in Frankfurt within two weeks after arrival. This rule applies to all German citizens as well as to international researchers who will stay in Germany for more than three months. In order to register, the GWC might accompany you. You need to bring your personal identity card, a valid rental contract and a lessor confirmation to the Residents' Registration Office (www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/45726554/Registration)

For later visits you may choose between different Residents' Registration Offices depending upon your place of residence in Frankfurt (www.meldebox.de/Umzug-Frankfurt-am-Main/Einwohnermeldeamt).

3. Opening a bank account

Because monthly rental payments, electrical bills, and insurance fees are normally directly charged to a bank account and salaries and scholarship funds are directly deposited to one's account, it might be advisable especially for Non-Europeans to open a German bank account (*Girokonto*) for the duration of your stay in Frankfurt. The GWC may accompany you when opening your account. Please find more information on our homepage (www.uni-frankfurt.de/gwc/Bank-account).

4. Visa and residence permit

Non-European foreigners generally require a visa to enter Germany and also a residency permit if they are planning to stay for an extended period of time. The entry visa can usually be obtained through German consulates located abroad. Depending upon the length and purpose of the stay in Germany, a Schengen-Visa is required (research stay in Germany for up to three months) or a national visa (research stay exceeding three months). Foreigners who require an entry visa must also receive permission to stay in Germany if their planned stay exceeds the length of the issued visa. In this case, a residence permit is required. This applies to foreigners who are permitted to enter and stay in Germany for up to three months without a visa, too. **However, if you are a non-EU citizen planning to take up gainful employment in Germany we strongly recommend applying for a work-visa before coming to Germany. Starting this process only upon arrival will most probably delay the starting date of your employment at Goethe University.**

These varying regulations depend upon the country of origin of the person traveling to Germany. If you are planning to stay in Germany longer than three months, you must apply for a residence permit at the Foreigners' Office (*Ausländerbehörde*).

We are happy to assist you in arranging an appointment with the *Ausländerbehörde* and possibly accompany you, too.

Note the importance of a prompt arrangement right after your registration with the city to meet the visa deadlines!

The following documents are required at the time of the appointment:

- Valid passport
- Residence permit application form
- Proof of financial support: employment contract/ scholarship certificate
- Proof of health insurance coverage
- Rental contract
- 2 biometric passport photos
- service fee of 100-130 EUR
(the fee depends upon the length of the granted residence permit)

Please find further information on our homepage (www.uni-frankfurt.de/gwc/Visa).

5. Rental contract and security deposit

A written rental contract is usually signed with the landlord before moving into an apartment. By signing the contract, you legally recognize and accept the conditions of the contract; therefore, the entire contract should be read very thoroughly. It is common in Germany that the landlord requires a security deposit amounting to about two months of rent. This money will be set aside and returned to you once you move out if no damages have been made to the apartment or you do not have any outstanding payments to the landlord. A security deposit should amount to three months' rent at the most. If you live in one of the university's guesthouses, you will receive further information and the rental contract upon move-in. Before moving into your new apartment/house you should insist on a hand over record/ walk-through report to avoid any unjustified damage claims once you move out again.

6. Health insurance

If you will be staying in Germany for an extended period of time, you and your accompanying family members should obtain health insurance coverage in Germany. German health insurance companies generally reimburse medications, doctor's fees, and hospital fees. It is also very important that the health insurance also covers medical treatment for acute illness and accidents. Health insurance coverage is also required by the *Ausländerbehörde* in order to receive a residence permit. Please find further information on our homepage (www.uni-frankfurt.de/gwc/Health-insurance).

7. Further important types of insurance: liability insurance (*Haftpflichtversicherung*) and accident insurance (*Unfallversicherung*).

We strongly recommend obtaining private liability insurance at the latest shortly after your arrival in Frankfurt. This insurance coverage compensates for damages to another person, for example through carelessness (causing an automobile accident while riding a bicycle). Please inform yourself if your liability insurance in your home country remains valid in Germany. Accident insurance (*Unfallversicherung*) is a component of the compulsory German state social insurance. This insurance covers you in case of an accident at work but does not cover any private accidents. If you have an employment contract in Germany, you do not have to personally apply for accident insurance because your employer is fully responsible for the accident insurance coverage. You should consider if you would like to take out a supplemental private accident insurance. Scholarship recipients are usually exempt from the obligatory German state social insurance. Further information can be found on our homepage (www.uni-frankfurt.de/gwc/Insurances).

8. Obtain a tax ID

If you have an employment contract with the Goethe University you will have to submit a tax ID to the human resource department. This confirmation will be sent automatically to your new address about 3-4 weeks after your registration with the *Bürgeramt*.

9. Goethe-Card

International researchers and guest researchers receive a card from the Computer Centre (*Hochschulrechenzentrum/HRZ*).

This personal “Goethe-Card” allows you to perform several procedures that will certainly be useful throughout your stay:

- Employment and services card
- Identity card used for research and taking out books or other media from the university’s libraries.
- Access to various buildings
- Cash-free payment in the university cafeteria
- Copy card
- As a service card, the Goethe-Card allows you to participate in university sport courses.

Your inviting school or institute at the Goethe University will have to apply for this card. Only international researchers staying longer than four weeks at the university or at associated institutions may receive the Goethe-card. More important information about the Goethe-Card card can be found on the Computer Centre’s website (www.uni-frankfurt.de/hrz).

10. Internet and e-mail

International researchers and guest researchers have free access to internet and e-mail on the university’s premises. In order to gain access you will use the username given to you by the Computer Centre (HRZ). Access has to be applied at the Computer Centre for by the secretary of your host institute/faculty.

11. Language Courses

Basic German skills will be greatly useful in handling day-to-day tasks and activities. The Goethe Welcome Centre offers language courses at basic levels for international researchers. If you are interested, please inquire at the Goethe Welcome Centre. In addition, numerous language schools in Frankfurt and the surrounding area offer the opportunity to learn German or to improve one’s German skills. More information can be found on our homepage (www.uni-frankfurt.de/Language-Courses).

12. Transportation

Frankfurt’s public transportation system of city buses and trams is very well organized. You can find information about tickets, fees, and transportation connections on RMV’s website (www.rmv.de). Employees of the Goethe University may apply for a so-called “job ticket,” which allows further reductions on public transportation costs. Additionally, it is also easy to reach many locations in Frankfurt by bicycle and there are many possibilities to buy used bicycles. If you will be bringing your car to Germany, you can find more information about this topic on the EURAXESS Germany website (www.euraxess.de/portal/home_en.html). Further information may also be found on GWC’s homepage (www.uni-frankfurt.de/gwc/Transportation).

13. Events and Activities

Events for international researchers and their families are organized every month, such as small trips and excursions to museums and historical sites in Hessen. Current event information can be found on GWC’s homepage (www.uni-frankfurt.de/gwc/Events).

(last update 16.06.2016)