

Check list for International Visiting Professors

I. Preparations at Home

Passport

Visiting professors require a valid passport when entering Germany. Visiting professors from European Union countries require only a valid identity card in order to enter Germany. **This passport must be valid at least until the end of the stay in Germany and - if the research stay is extended – must include this period as well.** Citizens of certain countries are required to have a passport which is still valid at least three months after the research stay has come to an end. Please do not vary the spelling of your name.

Documents, vaccination certificate

When applying for a residence permit for yourself and any family members accompanying you, you are frequently required to submit the originals of birth certificates and, if applicable, marriage certificates. Please bring these documents with you to Germany. If you have vaccination certificates, bring them with you as well. They may be important in case of illness.

Residence permit, entry visa

In order to stay in Germany citizens of non-EU/EEA countries must have a valid residence title. Detailed information on this subject can be obtained from the **Cultural Sections** of the [Responsible German Mission Abroad](#) in your respective home countries or countries of residence. You must apply for the visa to be issued for the place in Germany in which your stay initially begins. You must allow several weeks for the application to be processed. Please remember to take this into account when making your plans. Regulations determining whether or not a visa is required differ according to each country of origin. Residence permits must also be obtained for spouses and/or children accompanying visiting professors during the research stay. It is advisable to submit your applications together with those for their family members. Visiting professors should bear in mind that many visa offices only accept applications after making an appointment. This should be done well in advance as it may take several weeks to arrange a date.

Important:

→ Do not under any circumstances enter Germany on a visitor's (tourist) visa. It cannot be extended and is only valid for a maximum period of three months. People entering the country on a tourist visa are thus required to return to their home countries at their own expense to apply for the appropriate visa.

→ Visiting professors planning to take part in academic conferences in a European country for which they need an entry visa may also have to wait several weeks before obtaining a visa from the diplomatic mission in question.

→ If you are intending to travel to one of the Schengen countries during the first 90 days of your stay, please indicate this in the visa application. The German foreign mission will then examine whether you can be issued with a so-called "hybrid visa" entitling you to do so.

Passport photographs

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that you can save a considerable amount of time settling formalities if you bring four to six passport-size photographs with you of yourself and any family members accompanying you.

Arranging health insurance and other insurances

It is recommended that professors get in contact with an insurance company before entering Germany to ensure that any problems can be clarified in good time and that insurance cover is valid from the very first day. In order to issue a residence permit the relevant Foreigners' Registration Office ("*Ausländerbehörde*") requires proof that you have a [health insurance policy](#) of this kind. All visiting professors are strongly recommended to take out accident and private liability

insurance coverage for the duration of their stay in Germany. The [International Office](#) can provide advice on a number of specialised health insurance policies.

Accommodation

International visiting professors may stay in the [Guesthouse](#) run by the University of Osnabrück. Families with children can also live at the centrally located, Art Nouveau-style building. However, the capacity of the guesthouse is limited: your German host should therefore sign you up as early as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact the guesthouse. The management ([Gästehausverwaltung](#)) will be pleased to help you.

If you do not wish to live in the guesthouse, or if it is overbooked, the International Office will help you find private housing. Please contact your host institute to find out if they provide housing assistance.

If you are looking for lodgings on your own, you will find advertisements in the [Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung](#) on Saturdays and Wednesdays. You might also want to consider taking out an ad or hiring a real estate agent to help you. If you need to find temporary housing quickly, you might try [Zweitraum Osnabrück](#). They can help you to find a room to rent quickly. They will, however, charge a fee for their services. The amount charged depends upon the length of the lease and the amount of rent you pay.

Weather

The weather in Osnabrück is changeable. You have to be prepared for cold and rain, even in summer. Thus it is certainly recommendable to bring some warm clothing with you from home.

Welcoming Family Program

In Osnabrück you have the chance to take part in the 'Welcoming Family Program'. In this program you will be placed in contact with a family from Osnabrück who will support you during the first stage of your stay in the city. This support can take on different forms, depending on the needs of each applicant. You can thus choose to be collected from the railway station or the airport, to receive accommodation for the first few days, to get into contact with people from outside of the University and to find a contact person for organizational questions and issues related to everyday life.

But at first the guest family would like to welcome you to life in Osnabrück and to give you an insight into the German culture and 'way of life.'

In order to take part in the 'Welcoming Family Program' you need to complete and return to us the Welcoming Family Program [questionnaire](#) punctually **before your arrival in Osnabrück**. We will then endeavor to place you with a suitable family, which will then take up direct contact with you.

II. The first few days in Germany

Cash

You will need money the moment you arrive. You can bring any amount of German or foreign currency into Germany - but remember to check your own country's foreign exchange regulations. Currency exchange offices are open at airports and main railway stations in the evening and at weekends. Here you can change large-denomination Euro notes acquired in your home country into coinage or you can cash traveller's cheques. You need cash to make telephone calls, deposit luggage, pay taxis, or buy bus tickets.

Banks are open from Monday to Friday from approx. 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Afternoon opening hours differ but banks remain in most cases open longer on Thursdays (until approx. 6 p.m.).

Currency

The Euro is the only valid currency in Germany; there are 100 Cents in each Euro. The Euro is also valid currency in many EU countries.

Tourist Information

The [Tourist Office](#) (Bierstraße 22-23, 49074 Osnabrück) is where guests, visitors, and citizens can obtain information about places of interest and events taking place in and around Osnabrück. The Tourist Office can also provide street maps. Small maps are usually free of charge but, for a

lengthy stay, it is worth buying a detailed street map with a full street index. This is essential if you have to look for accommodation. The Tourist Office will also give you a leaflet showing the main places of interest in the town and surrounding area.

❑ **Contact with the research institution**

As a better and swifter means of introducing yourself at the research institution, it is worth bringing a sufficient amount of documentary material (e.g. slides, transparencies etc.) from your home country or institute, enabling you to give a presentation or lecture, preferably at the beginning of your stay in Germany. If your academic host does not ask you to give a lecture, you could offer this as a way of introducing yourself to colleagues.

❑ **Contact with the language institute**

If you attend an intensive language course before taking up research work, you will go first to the Goethe Institute or another language institute. Once in Osnabrück, visiting professors may make arrangements with the [Language Center](#) (*Sprachenzentrum*) to take part in 'German as a foreign language' courses, which are held during the semester. In addition, a number of private language schools in Osnabrück offer students the chance to learn or improve their German. The [Volkshochschule Osnabrück](#), a publicly funded education center, offers low-price courses for all levels. Many initial problems and questions can be solved best if you seek the advice of your new colleagues at host institutes. Many Germans are rather reserved at first but you will often meet with helpfulness if you take the initiative.

❑ **Necessary formalities**

In the first few days you will have little time for desk or laboratory work. Plenty of unavoidable formalities will command your attention. If you are not sure of your German ask someone at your host institute or the International Office to accompany you to the various authorities as not all staff at public offices have sufficient knowledge of English. You are obliged to register with the public authorities in the first week after your arrival.

Registration:

The following formalities must be dealt with during the first few days:

→ Registration at the [Foreigners' Office](#) ("*Ausländerbehörde*"). Visiting professors are required to report to the Foreigners' Registration Office at their new place of residence within one week of entering Germany. (Stadthaus 1, Room 229, Natruper-Tor-Wall 2, 49076 Osnabrück, Tel.: 0541 323 4610; Opening hours: Mon, Fri: 8 - 12 hrs, Tues: 8 - 16 hrs; Thurs: 8 - 17.30 hrs) This also applies to professors who may initially enter Germany without a visa. The Foreigners' Office issues residence permits. Be prepared for long waiting periods and overworked staff! Proof of health insurance cover is essential!

In order to apply for a residence permit ("*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*"), you will need a valid passport, proof of finance, in certain cases the originals of birth certificate(s) and, if applicable, marriage certificates, a recent passport-size photograph and completed application forms.

In certain cases, a health certificate, issued by a registered physician in Germany, may be required to register. Since a health certificate is not always required, professors should first make enquires at the Foreigners' Office. (Only go to a doctor for an examination if you are specifically asked to do so.) In general, foreign health certificates are not accepted. X-ray pictures are only accepted if they are less than three months old. In many German towns there is a Public Health Office ("*Gesundheitsamt*") which will carry out the examination at a relatively low charge.

→ Opening a bank account ("*Girokonto*") in a bank. In some banks (including the Post Bank) you have to present your registration from the Foreigners' Office and your residence permit in order to open an account.

→ Registration of your children at [Kindergarten](#) or [School](#), if applicable.

❑ **Opening a bank account**

Banks and the Post Bank offer almost identical services, although the fees vary considerably. Many banks now provide online banking via the Internet. In many banks you can choose between several current accounts with various facilities (e.g. online banking, interest, credit card at no charge, etc.) but the fees also differ. You should seek personal advice on this. You need your passport or comparable identity document to open a bank account. With a bank account you are able to

→ withdraw money from your bank using an EC-card. About three weeks after opening an account, you will receive an EC-card enabling you to withdraw money at cash dispensers using a personal identification number. This is normally free of charge if effectuated at one of your own bank's cash dispensers, but a fee of several Euros may be charged for withdrawing money from other banks' dispensers;

→ transfer money to other bank accounts to pay bills, using transfer forms ("*Überweisung*");
→ have payments which recur regularly and are for a fixed amount (e.g. your rent) paid by banker's order ("*Dauerauftrag*");

→ have regular payments (even of variable amounts, e.g. telephone bills and health insurance contributions) effected by direct debit ("*Einzugsermächtigung*"). The respective direct debit forms ("*Lastschrifteneinzug*") are usually attached to the first bill. To avoid problems: apart from the normal EC-card, there is also a Eurocard/Mastercard: this is a credit card connected to the Master Charge System and valid world-wide. You can also use the credit card to withdraw money from cash dispensers but this can involve an expensive processing charge. The most common credit cards in Germany are Eurocard/Mastercard and Visa. But despite this people usually make card-payments in German shops with EC-cards; credit cards are not accepted everywhere. Unfortunately, some banks make difficulties about issuing credit cards for limited stays in Germany. It may thus be advantageous to open an account abroad through your bank at home.

- It is possible to use the [library](#) to read or copy materials without having a library card. If you would like to borrow books, however, please ask your German host for a duplicate of his/her library card.

- ID for student welfare canteens**
Obtain a yellow card from the International Office to enable you to use the student welfare canteens ("*Mensa*").

- De-registration and change of German address**
Before leaving Germany visiting professors must de-register at the Foreigners' Office.

You can find more practical hints for your stay in Germany at www.euraxess.de/portal/home_en.html

revised: November 2011