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WELCOME

Why read this?

Finding accommodation in Cologne can be a difficult thing and you'll probably need to be patient during this process. But don't worry – By now, all our exchange students have been successful in finding a place to stay during their term abroad.

However, there are a few things we would like you to know before you start browsing through our little flat hunting guide:

1. Room offers in a city as big as Cologne are both scarce and very high in demand. Therefore, **rooms closely located to Campus and the City Center may be very expensive.**
2. **The Internet can be very useful to find places online even from a large geographical distance, but at the same time, it offers space for frauds.**

So please read our instructions on the next slide thoroughly!





1. General Flat Hunting Guidelines

WHEN to start searching for accommodation?

Finding accommodation in Cologne can be very difficult as room offers are scarce and very popular. Therefore, it is recommendable to start searching as soon as possible.

WHERE to search for accommodation?

Chapter 2 will provide you with links to some online platforms that you could use to begin with. Of course, there are plenty of more online, but please always double-check their trustworthiness before you rely on any of them. Also, you may ask exchange students or friends who've been to Cologne before as well as your buddy for advice.

Be careful with frauds!

Use Google first!

- ✓ Check if the address provided in the room offer does actually exist.
- ✓ Check where the place is located exactly and how easy it is to get from there to University via public transportation.

Do not transfer any money (especially large sums) before you arrive.

If you've got the slightest doubt about the trustworthiness of the room offer, ask your buddy or the Incomings Team for help!





1. General Flat Hunting Guidelines



Conclude a written tenancy agreement with your landlord!

Incoming exchange students should by all means conclude a **written tenancy agreement** with their landlord (ZIB WiSo will gladly send you sample contracts in German and English).

Sub-tenancy and interim tenancy arrangements in most cases involve the lodgings of students who have left Cologne for a limited time and wish to re-let their furnished rooms or flats.

Either way, please make sure you possess a copy of the contract signed by both parties before you remit the first rent. As a rule, a deposit of up to two monthly rents is required in addition; it is refunded after you have moved out.

In this context, please also bear in mind that you may also need a confirmation of your landlord, a so-called “Wohnunggeberbescheinigung” (download [here](#)) when registering with the local residents’ registration office.

Inform the Incomings Team about your Cologne address!

Please kindly let us know once you found accommodation in Cologne and feed us with your new address. That way, we can keep an updated overview of accommodation needs of all incoming students.

Keep your apartment clean at all times!

No matter where you live or how long you stay in the apartment, student dorm or individual room. On leaving, both the living quarter and the equipment must be cleaned and left in the same condition as they were on arrival! A so called “Übergabeprotokoll” (handover report for checking-in and checking out) is highly recommendable. If the landlord does not bring it up, ask for it! In so doing, you might prevent any potential problems and misunderstandings!



2. Accommodation Facts

ROOM EQUIPMENT

As a matter of fact, rooms in Germany are mostly let unfurnished (*“unmöbliert”*), i.e. without furniture, a kitchen, curtains and lamps. You need to look for a bedsit or furnished apartment (*“möbliert”*) if you want/need the aforementioned fittings.

FLAT SHARES

Furnished accommodations can, for instance, be found in flat shares (*“WGs”*), i.e. private apartments jointly rented by several students in which the kitchen and bathroom are used by all flatmates.

SINGLE ROOMS

“Single rooms” are not shared with another student. However, kitchen and bathrooms may be used jointly by all housemates. Single-room apartments are, by comparison, more expensive than rooms in flat shares.

RENTAL PERIODS

Accommodations are always let for a full month (i.e. from the 1st to the 30th/31st). Customarily, the tenant pays for the entire month, even if she/he arrives later or leaves earlier. As landlords are often interested in letting their flats for several years and not just a few months, visiting students will find it best to rent lodgings as sub-tenants of existing flat shares or as interim tenants of rooms/flats rented by students who have briefly left town.

RENT/ PRICES

The monthly rent as a rule consists of two sums: the basic or cold rent (*“Kaltmiete”*), i.e. excluding service charges, and the ancillary rental costs (*“Nebenkosten”*), i.e. water, refuse collection, municipal fees, etc. The basic rent plus ancillary rental costs make up the so-called warm rent (*“Warmmiete”*). On top of this, the tenant must also pay the monthly electricity, gas and telecommunication bills, which she/he usually remits directly to the supplier and not the landlord. Many landlords have integrated the cost of heating in the ancillary rental costs.

→ For general information on the housing market situation in Germany, please click [here](#).



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3. Student Residences

Student Residences by Kölner Studierendenwerk



The public student-service organization Kölner Studierendenwerk (KStW) runs more than 80 student residences with a total of about 4,600 places. The residences are spread across the city and, depending on the individual establishment, offer apartments, shared-flat rooms, and single rooms with shared kitchens and external bathrooms.

Can the Incomings Team organize a room offer by KStW for me?

ZIB Med has no access to furnished single rooms in residences maintained by KStW. Unfortunately, you have to apply directly at KStW for a place in a specific residence.



Please note that the **number of (furnished) dorm rooms is limited and that the dorm rooms are often allocated at short notice**. So please do not rely on getting a dorm room; look for a private room parallel to your dorm application.

How much does it cost to hire a room with KStW?

Regardless of the type of accommodation, rents are approx. €400 per month (including ancillary charges). Rents for short-term tenancy agreements comprise an additional monthly fee of €30, which you must add to the prices stated on the Kölner Studierendenwerk's respective website.



Please note that **rooms in student residences must be rented for an entire semester** and that rooms are **always let for full months only** (e.g. from 1st to 30th/31st).



Source: Morbert Jaehring, University of Cologne





3. Student Residences

Student Residences by Kölner Studierendenwerk

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STUDIERENDEN
WERK

How is the procedure after applying for a student dorm offered by KStW?

As long as your application is open and you have not yet been offered a room, you will receive an e-mail once a month asking whether you are still interested in applying for a dorm room. **Make sure to follow the link provided within the e-mail to confirm your interest and to keep your application open.**

If your application has been successful, you will receive an e-mail confirming the offer of a specific room, which you may accept or reject. Should you reject, you will not obtain another offer. At your request, ZIB WiSo will gladly send you English explanations of the offer.

To accept an offer, you must sign it and send it back by post, and remit the first monthly rent to the Kölner Studierendenwerk. You will then receive a tenancy agreement by e-mail which you must sign and send to the Kölner Studierendenwerk either.

How can I pick up my keys?

To collect your key, you must present the tenancy agreement in the student residence. Please note for your plans that the residence offices have limited opening hours and are closed on weekends. **Keys cannot be collected before the first workday of the month in which you start to rent the room.** If necessary, please ask your “buddy” to get the key for you. To do so, he or she requires your written consent (we can provide you with a draft text) and a copy of the tenancy agreement.



Most information distributed by KStW is unfortunately **available only in German**. At your request, ZIB Med will gladly send you English translations or explanations to help you better understand the contents of the documents.



4. Relevant links

List of pertinent websites for finding accommodation in Cologne:

General:

<http://www.kalaydo.de/immobilien/>
<https://www.immobilienscout24.de/wohnen/wohnen-auf-zeit.html>
<http://www.zeitwohnagentur.de/> (Private agency, charges a mediation fee)
<http://www.e-rent.de/en/> (Private agency, charges a mediation fee)
<http://www.homecompany.de/en/index> (Private agency, charges a mediation fee)
<http://www.meinestadt.de/koeln/immobilien>

Subletting:

<http://www.zwischenmiete.de/> (one of the most famous and comprehensive websites)
<http://www.gastfreunde.de/> (mainly for short-term stays)
<https://www.airbnb.de/> (mainly for short-term stays)

Shared flats:

<http://www.wg-gesucht.de/en/> (most frequented)
<http://www.mitwohnzentrale.de>
<http://www.studenten-wg.de/>
<http://www.studenten-wohnung.de/>
<http://www.easywg.de/?l=1>
<http://www.wg-liste.de/koeln/>

Some of these offerings are also shared on Social Media, such as Facebook:

<https://de-de.facebook.com/WG.Zimmer.frei.in.Koeln>
<https://de-de.facebook.com/Wohnungen.frei.in.Koeln>



Photo: Mordecai Jaehring, University of Cologne





4. Relevant links

Please check the website of the “Kölner Studierendenwerk” for further hints on flat-hunting in Cologne and room offers:

http://www.kstw.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=315&Itemid=149&lang=en

Moreover, this website provides detailed information in German about renting in Cologne:

<http://www.asta.uni-koeln.de/fairmieten/> (It covers the general situation, legal issues and portraits of the different parts of the city)

Youth hostels in Cologne (for the first nights, in case it is not possible to directly move into your flat):

<http://www.hostels.com/cologne/germany>

http://www.koeln.de/cologne_tourist_information/hostels_cologne



Many websites and guides are in German, however, modern technology now makes it easier to get a rough understanding of the text. We highly recommend using online tools to roughly translate texts from German into a language you understand better so you are not dependent on being able to get someone who speaks better German than you to help.

<http://translate.google.com/>

The Google Chrome browser includes automatic website translation.

http://www.online-translator.com/site_translation.aspx



Source: Morbert Jaehring, University of Cologne