



HOCHSCHULE RUHR WEST
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Welcome to Hochschule Ruhr West - University of Applied Sciences



Guide for International Students

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Herzlich Willkommen an der Hochschule Ruhr West!

We cordially welcome you to our university! We are glad that you chose Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences (abbreviated *HRW*, from its German name *Hochschule Ruhr West*) for your semester abroad, and we would like to accompany you into your new academic and social life in Mülheim an der Ruhr or Bottrop. To make your first days in Germany a little easier, we developed this guide to provide you with information about Europe, Germany, Ruhr West and all important facts you need to know.



Ruhr West is a public university of applied sciences committed to high quality research and teaching. It is based in Mülheim and Bottrop, two neighboring cities in the heart of the Ruhr-Region. HRW specializes in the fields of engineering and business administration, such as electrical, mechanical and civil engineering, computer science and special aspects of business studies. At Ruhr West,

students benefit from small study groups and individual attention, interdisciplinary institutes with modern laboratories and well-equipped computer rooms as well as close contact with local businesses and industry.

Ruhr West was founded in 2009 and currently has a student population of around 6000 students. Our aim is to educate highly qualified graduates in engineering sciences and business administration for the German and international labour market. Consequently, HRW offers several Bachelor and Master Degree programmes in engineering and business administration and provides



students studying technical subjects with additional specialist business expertise. Students are invited to top up their curriculum by additional classes, i.e. to learn foreign languages or improve their intercultural or rhetorical competencies.

Beside these academic opportunities, there is even more to discover in the Ruhr-Region, and, of course, in Germany and Europe. The Ruhr-Region offers great cultural life with museums, theatres, different cinemas, bars and clubs. There are also a lot of parks and green areas where you can go for a walk or enjoy other leisure activities. The Ruhr-Region is situated in the middle west of Germany and is a perfect starting point for all your travels.

The closest airport is Düsseldorf airport and from there you can take flights, trains and buses going to almost everywhere. However, we would like to ask you to travel during the weekends or during the holidays. If you miss the classes too often, you might have trouble with passing the exams at the end of the semester.

We hope you will have a wonderful start and if you have any doubts, please do not hesitate to contact us!

The University

Currently, Ruhr West offers 34 study programs in the fields of engineering and business administration, leading to accredited Bachelor's or Master's degrees. After having started operating in interim locations in 2009, HRW was able to open the new Campus in Bottrop in 2014 and in March 2016 HRW moved from its interim buildings to newly built campus facilities in Mülheim, designed to provide excellent study environments and equipment for their students



All faculties work closely with regional or national industry partners on focused research projects or even in regular classes. HRW has close links with companies in various industries in the region. During their studies, students can establish contacts with potential employers, work in local companies, gain practical experience, and write their final thesis based on their work placements.

Application & Enrollment

How to apply

International students interested in studying at HRW can find detailed information on the application process on HRW's website at <https://en.hochschule-ruhr-west.de/study/international-students/exchange-students/>

Exchange Students should apply through their International Office at their home universities. If there is no contract between your home university and HRW, please contact us by mail (international.office@hs-ruhrwest.de) and we will find a solution.

Applications for a full Bachelor Degree Programme need to be handed in through the service organization uni-assist (www.uni-assist.de). Foreign graduate students interested in a Master Degree Program at HRW should apply online through our website.

Please note that you have to hand in a German language certificate (such as DSH 2 or TestDaF with at least 16 points and TDN 4 in all parts) when you would like to apply for a full Bachelor or Master Degree Program. Exchange students wanting to stay for a semester and taking courses in English do not have to prove any German skills.

Visa and residence permit

You do not need a visa if you are a native from an EU country. There are also some more non-EU countries who do not need a visa. Please check the website of the German Federal Foreign Office to see, if your home country has a visa agreement with Germany:

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service>

If there is a visa agreement, you can arrive without a visa, but you will have to register at the local foreigners' office within 14 days after your arrival.

If you are from another country, you need to apply for a student visa at the German embassy in your home country. To apply for the visa you need a letter of acceptance from Ruhr West University.

It is important that you do **not** apply for a visitors' visa!



International students from non-EU countries have to apply for a residence permit after their arrival and before their visa expires (If the visa covers the full stay, there is no need for a residence permit). The residence permit is valid for one year and has to be extended regularly (once a year). Ruhr West's International Office will help you arrange appointments and will assist you with all documents.

Please be aware that the processes at the Foreigners' Offices in Germany can take a long time, in which you might not be allowed to travel outside of Germany.

If you are a non-EU national, but you already have a visa / resident permit issued for studying in another EU country or a country affiliated to the Erasmus Program, it is possible that you do not have to apply for a visa. Please contact us for further information.

Documents to bring to the Foreigners' Office

- Application form
- Valid passport
- One biometric passport photo
- Certificate of enrollment from Ruhr West University
- Health insurance certificate
- Proof of finances (non EU-students)

If you stay in Germany for longer than three months, you also have to register at the registration office of your town within one week after your arrival.

If you need help with arranging the appointment please ask your buddy or the international office.

Semester fee

HRW does not charge tuition fees. However, every student is obliged to pay a student service fee, which is a contribution to the services the *Studierendenwerk* provides for all students such as subsidized housing or discounted food at the canteen. It also includes financial support for the student parliament and a ticket for public transportation in all Germany for the entire semester.

The total of this fee is currently € 306,40 (per winter semester 2024/25) and has to be paid by money transfer before arrival. It might increase slightly for the next semester. All exchange students will receive further information on how to pay this contribution by email shortly. If you have problems transferring the amount from your home country, you may pay it after arrival to Germany when you had a chance to open a German bank account. However, this may lead to a delay in the registration of courses and receipt of your public transportation ticket.

At the first day of the Welcome Week, we will organize your enrollment at HRW. Please be there on time! You will need your passport or a similar ID and the certificate of your health insurance.

Health Insurance

At the day of your enrollment at Ruhr West University you need to show a proof of adequate health insurance coverage. According to German law, your health insurance must not be limited to a certain amount of coverage for general treatment. You have two options: 1. You can get student health insurance from a public health company in Germany or 2. Get an insurance in your home country. We strongly recommend you to get public health insurance in Germany, as this is the only way to be sure, that you will have the correct coverage. In case you prefer to get health insurance in your home country, it will have to be checked in Germany and in case it does not fulfill the requirements you will have to change it or get additionally a health insurance in Germany.

The price for the public health insurance in Germany is about 110 € per month. Due to positive experiences, we recommend the following two big German health insurances:

- **“Techniker Krankenkasse (TK)”**: 92,73 Euros health insurance per month and 27,61 Euros long term care insurance, [TK membership application students | TK](#),
Your benefit: You can easily sign in without a German address or IBAN.
- **“AOK”**: 82,99 Euros health insurance per month (plus 8-15 Euros additional fee, that varies regionally) and 27,61 Euros long term care insurance, [For international students | AOK](#).

For our non-EU students: To smoothly fulfill visa requirements and navigate Germany's bureaucracy, **Expatrio** offers various packages:

- Blocked Account
- Health Insurance
- Value Packpage including a blocked account, health insurance and additional benefits like an international student ID Card

For more information see also: [Proof of Student Health Insurance - Study in Germany for Free \(studying-in-germany.org\)](#).

If you are from an EU-country/ an ERASMUS student, please confirm with your local health insurance, that they cover your stay as an exchange student in Germany (normally that is the case.).

Courses in English at Ruhr West

As an exchange student, you do not have to have any German language skills, if you only want to choose from the (small) selection of courses held in English at our university. You should, however, have a minimum level of B2 in English. The general list of available courses is published on our English website:

<https://en.hochschule-ruhr-west.de/study/international-students/exchange-students/>

The incoming coordinator at Ruhr West will send you an updated list of the actual courses in English for the semester you are accepted.

Erasmus students are required to either send us their filled in Learning Agreement as a PDF by e-mail or via the Erasmus App. The Learning Agreement should be finalized by beginning of August (for the winter semester) or beginning of February (for the summer semester) at the latest.

If you would like to learn German, please let us know in your learning agreement. Whether or not such a class can be offered depends on the number of students registering for the class.

Accommodation

Our main campus is located in Mülheim an der Ruhr. Mülheim a.d. Ruhr is right between the bigger cities of Duisburg and Essen. For going out in the evenings, restaurants etc. both bigger cities (especially Essen) provide more opportunities than Mülheim an der Ruhr, but then you will have a longer commute to the campus by train/bus. Our second campus is located in Bottrop. As there is no dormitory directly in Bottrop, we recommend you to stay in one of the dormitories in Essen. For students who will study in Mülheim, we recommend a room in Mülheim, Essen or Duisburg.

Dormitories

Studierendenwerk Essen-Duisburg is responsible for the local student halls of residence/dormitories. The *Studierendenwerk* is a public non-profit company that provides services for universities. They are located in different cities of the Ruhr area like Mülheim, Essen and Duisburg. There is a great demand for these rooms. If you are interested in a room, you can apply online here:

<https://www.stw-edu.de/en/accommodation/for-applicants/accomodation-offer/semester-abroad/exchange>

We strongly recommend to stay at the dormitories of the *Studierendenwerk* as it's an easy and reliable provider.

Your benefits:

- furnished rooms
- (eco-)electricity, water, heating, TV and internet connection included

- support from tutors
- events such as games nights, dinners, trips
- on-site support from our caretakers
- washing machine and dryer
- parking spaces, bicycle cellar
- community rooms, barbecue areas

Please be aware that the dormitories available to short-term/exchange students are usually a little older and simpler, compared to those for full-time students. Please note that we do not recommend the dormitory on Duisburger Str. 445 - 447 in Mülheim as the standard and reputation are below average.

The assignments of the rooms normally take place around 8-4 weeks before the start of the rental period/start of the semester. Please note that you will have to pay a deposit of around 850 € for a room (onetime payment or payment in three rates). You will receive a confirmation of your application by email, including information on the deposit. You will only receive your rental contract after you paid the deposit. The money has to be transferred (by bank transfer) to the account of the *Studierendenwerk*. When you leave your room in order upon your departure, the *Studierendenwerk* will transfer the deposit back to you.

For a single room with your own bath rooms the costs are around 400 Euros (can be more or less, depending in which dormitory, how the room is equipped etc.). You can see all availabilities and prices at the website.

You should only sign the rental contract, when you are sure, that you will do your exchange semester. After signing the contract, you are obliged to pay the rent for the entire semester / six months. You cannot cancel the contract (before). In case you are still waiting for your visa, we recommend to apply for a room, but not sign the contract yet, because otherwise you will have to pay the full rent, even though you can not come, because you did not get the visa.

Shared apartments

Many students in Germany share their apartments to save the money for the rent. One established website to look for an appropriate room is <http://www.wg-gesucht.de/en/>.

Apartments

You can rent an apartment in Germany if you are planning a longer stay. You can have a look at the notice board at Ruhr West University or start your research on the internet. There are a lot of websites, offering free apartments and apartments.

For furnished apartments look at <http://essen.homecompany.de/en>

Or look for apartments with no furniture at <http://www.immobilienscout24.de/wohnen/>

When you rent an apartment, it is also common to pay a deposit. The deposit can be between 500 and 1000 €.

Hostels

In case you do not find an apartment immediately, you can stay in a youth hostel for a couple of days. You can get an overview of hostels on these websites:

<http://www.hostelworld.com/> (Hostels worldwide)

<http://www.chillten.de/> (Hostel in Bottrop)

<http://www.in-hostel-veritas.de/startseite/> (Hostel close to Mülheim)

<https://www.jugendherberge.de/en/youth-hostels/duisburg-sportpark/> (Youth Hostel in Duisburg, well connected to Mülheim and Bottrop)

Bank Account

Opening a bank account in Germany is quite easy and as a student, many banks do not charge any fees. In Germany, it is common to pay the costs e.g. for the apartment or for health insurance by bank transfer.

Within your first days of your arrival, HRW's International Office can assist you with opening a bank account.

For our NON-EU-country students: Expatrio offers an all-in-one solution for your visa in Germany. Check the chapter [Health Insurance](#) or explore their [homepage](#).

Getting started

Buddy Program

Since we know that the start in a different country is sometimes a little bit complicated, we would like to recommend you to take part in the HRW Buddy Program. A Buddy is a student from HRW, who will help you with all the questions you have about everyday life in Germany.

Your Buddy will contact you before your arrival via social media or E-Mail. He or she will be your first contact person in Germany, will also pick you up at the airport or train station on your date of arrival and will try to make your start in Germany as easy as possible.

Should you not feel the need to receive assistance by a Buddy, please let us know during the application process.



Welcome Week

Before the beginning of the lecture period, HRW offers a Welcome Week for all exchange students. The Welcome Week is organized by the International Office and the HRW Buddy Team. In addition to formal activities like registration at the Foreigners' Office or opening a bank account, we will invite you to several cultural events.

In the past years we organized trips to regional sights, museums, or even typical German breweries. During that week you will get an introduction to German culture and language and meet some students from HRW who would like to welcome you at your new university.



Semester Dates

Please note that our semesters start late in comparison to many other countries.

Officially the academic year starts with the winter semester on September 1. The summer semester begins on March 1. However, lectures only begin in the last week of September and the last week of March respectively. The Welcome Week will usually take place in the week before the lectures start, so please arrange your arrival the week before the Welcome Week.

Please have a look at our Fact Sheet for more information on the dates!

Registration for courses/ eCampus

eCampus is the electronic campus management system at Ruhr West University. Here you can register for the courses you want to attend, print out a transcript of records, find documents for your seminars and much more. You will get an introduction during the Welcome Week.

German language and culture classes

The Center for Competence Development (*Zentrum für Kompetenzentwicklung, ZfK*) offers a beginner-friendly German language course (A1), specifically designed for our exchange students. The class usually takes 4 hours per week during the semester. The course is offered if a minimum of five students register and participate in the course.

The ZfK is a central institute which conveys key qualifications to students, also called soft skills, in seminars, workshops and series of events. Most of the seminars and workshops are held in German.

If you are interested in their program you can find more information here (in German):

<https://www.hochschule-ruhr-west.de/studium/studienangebot/zentrum-fuer-kompetenzentwicklung/> (in German)

Living in Mülheim & Bottrop



HRW's campuses are located in Mülheim an der Ruhr and Bottrop – in the heart of the Ruhr region. The Ruhr region is situated in the most western part of Germany, and, with a population of over 5 million, is one of the biggest urban conglomerations in Europe. It is named after the river “Ruhr”, which runs through Mülheim and

which, in the past century, provided a most effective way of transporting goods between the industrialized cities on its borders. Until the 1980s, the region was a center of coal and steel industries; since the decline of these industrial branches, it has shifted its focus to develop its cultural and service industries, leading to many socio-economic and ecological changes.

The success of these developments was rewarded many times. In 2010, for example, the Ruhr region was chosen as the *European Capital of Culture* under the motto “Change through culture – culture through change” by the European Union. The city of Essen was awarded the European Green Capital Award (EGCA) in 2017 by the European Commission.

The cities of the region are home to museums, cinemas and theatres as well as a thriving culinary scene that also mirrors the heritage of the many people of European and non-European descents now living in the region.

Green spaces account for 50 per cent of the Ruhr region, and there are many parks and recreation areas. The Rhineland, with its attractive cities Cologne and Düsseldorf, the Sauerland and the North Sea are also within easy reach. Moreover, the Ruhr region has several airports, train stations and bus stations that will take you to all the cities that you would like to visit.



However, the influence of the industrial past and the huge economical shift is still very visible in all cities of the Ruhr region. It is a region that has suffered from high unemployment, has attracted migrants from everywhere and is still undergoing tremendous economic change. Do not expect quaint cities like the ones in tourist brochures on Germany which you might connect with Bavaria in the south of Germany. The former coal mining and heavy industry in the Ruhr region certainly left their trace. But if you are willing to immerse yourself you can expect a vibrant region willing to move ahead and shape its future.

Mülheim an der Ruhr – a green city of trade, science and industry



With a population of 177,000, the city of Mülheim an der Ruhr is one of the “smaller” cities of the Ruhr region. The city’s roots reach back 1200 years, when the still standing castle Broich was built. Due to its location at the intersection of an ancient trading route with the waterway of the Ruhr river, the city was and still is an important economic location in the Ruhr Region.

Today it is both the site of heavy industry like the FWH steel works and Vallourec steel tube plant as well as the base for global trading companies like ALDI Süd and Tengelmann Group, and research institutions like two renowned Max Planck Institutes. With over 50% green and forested areas, the city on the river Ruhr is known as an attractive place to live, that is well connected to all major cities in the Rhine Ruhr Area.

Bottrop – a good foundation for a strong economy

With a population of 118,000, Bottrop has developed into a modern industrial city: a future-oriented mix of industry, trade enterprises and service providers, with innovative companies including many family businesses. They form the basis of a stable employment market. Besides the classic area of the capital goods industry, modern sectors such as environmental protection technology or the leisure industry form the basis of the economic future of the city.



Because of its geographical location on the northern edge of the Ruhr region, Bottrop combines two different, almost contradictory types of landscape. With the infrastructure of a big city in the south, Bottrop offers the recreational opportunities of the beautiful Münsterland in the rural north.

Living Costs

The living costs in the Ruhr region are relatively low, compared to the north or the south of Germany. German students normally need about € 850 per month, including the usual living costs like rent for a room, food or clothes. International students who would like to travel a lot during the weekends have to plan for more money per month.

Public Transport and travelling through Germany

Since Sommer semester 2024 you will get as a student at Ruhr West a digital public transport ticket which enables you to use all buses, trams, subways and local transport trains for free in ALL GERMANY (fast trains like IC and ICE are **not included!**).

The regional transport association is *Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Ruhr* (<https://www.vrr.de/en/homepage/>). On this website you can plan your trips and find timetables, tram and bus lines etc.

If you want to travel through Germany by train you can search for connections, schedules, and prices on the website of German Rail (Deutsche Bahn) on <https://www.bahn.com/en>. Deutsche Bahn also offers for the fast train connections like IC, ICE reductions for young people, if you book well in advance.

Contact us

International Office	
Head of International Office and Erasmus Institutional Coordinator	Ms. Christiane Hinrichs
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