A Study Abroad Survival Guide – Part 1
Darmstadt Edition

University of Rhode Island
German International Engineering Program
HELLO AND WELCOME

to the URI German IEP Study Abroad Survival Guide – Part 1! Congrats for making it this far and take a deep breath - it will all make more sense soon (hopefully). The purpose of this guide is to answer as many questions as possible about Germany, Germans, the IEP, Darmstadt, and lots of other things you might be wondering about. It was made by students who studied abroad and want to help you avoid any big issues with your year abroad. This doesn’t mean everything will always go perfectly, but what’s a year abroad without some stories to tell? So without further ado,

*lass uns doch mal anfangen!*
**Table of Contents**

THE YEAR BEFORE 3  
Information session 3  
Keep in touch 3  
Apply for scholarships 4  
Optional: Apply for preliminary experiences abroad 5  
  USA Interns-Program 5  
  DAAD RISE 6  
  CBYX for Young Professionals 6  
  University Summer Course Grant 6  
  J-Term in Germany 6  
  UROP International 6  
  ThinkSwiss Research Scholarships 7  
  International Research Experience Program (IREP) 7  
Optional: German-STEM Summer School in Berlin 7  
Take GER 202 and finish your internship applications 8  
Apply for your semester at the TU Darmstadt 9  
Setup a research project 10  
Jump-start your year abroad 10  
Practice your German 11  
Appendix 13

---

**THE YEAR BEFORE**

**Timeline for Preparing for your Year Abroad**

Visit the [German International Engineering Program](#) page to view a timeline and learn more about how to prepare for your year abroad. Part of this preparation will include mandatory paperwork that you need to fill out in URI Abroad for your application and permission to study abroad, your application to the host university, as well as pre-departure orientations, and visa advising. Be sure to pay close attention to the deadlines listed in the timeline and to follow all the processes and guidelines so that you stay on track to
complete everything. IEP works very hard to ensure that you are selected to attend your chosen program, however, you’ll need to stay on top of completing your URI Abroad and other preparation tasks in a timely manner.

**Information session**

Attend the Info session on both TU Braunschweig and TU Darmstadt— you will have to choose your preference but can change your mind until you will need to apply to one of them.

**Keep in touch**

You will receive an invite to join the “GIEP/IBP Abroad” WhatsApp Group for students who are going to Germany in their academic year. There are many application deadlines in the next months. You will have to apply to study abroad, register at the German university, get your courses pre-approved, apply for student housing, and find your internship in Germany. You are therefore required to check your URI email and WhatsApp groups on a regular basis, and reply to any email messages from the IEP program within 48 hours, and WhatsApp messages within 24 hours.

Also join the “German IEP Support” WhatsApp Group if you are in your 3rd, 4th or 5th year of the program by reaching out to the IEP Coordinator, Melissa Schenck.

Here you can exchange ideas with students going abroad, those who are in Germany right now and those who have returned from Germany. Returning students are an excellent resource to have to answer any questions you might have!

**Apply for scholarships**

Trust us, you’re going to want to have all of the money you possibly can when you are abroad. Whether it is $20,000 or $20, any amount of scholarship money helps you immensely. Apply to any scholarship in which you are eligible because you never know what may happen! Keep in mind that the majority of scholarship applications require recommendation letters. Make a note of the deadlines and ask for references at least a month in advance. This is not something you can do over break, because people in Germany will not email you back during the holidays. You know how you dislike it when professors give large assignments at the last minute? Well professors and other mentors would appreciate more advanced notice, too. You probably will not get the best recommendation letter if the writer is chugging coffee and rubbing their eyes the night before it’s due. That is, if they agree to write you one at all!

Make sure to occasionally check the IEP specific scholarship website (https://web.uri.edu/engineering/academics/iep/scholarships/) as there may be new scholarships posted for which you all could be eligible.
Optional: Apply for preliminary experiences abroad

For students enrolled in the German IEP, it is crucial to get some short-term immersion experience in the country in which they will spend their senior year. Please review the following internship, research and study opportunities that are available in Germany to gain preliminary experience, and to foster professional and personal relationships that will serve you later during your official term abroad.

USA Interns-Program

The program assists the development of future global leaders by encouraging students to do a summer internship (8 weeks to 6 months) with a German host employer. Selected candidates may expect a wide range of services including employment matching, post-match coordination, information on German work permit waiver, orientation seminar and assistance in writing a professional cover letter and resume. A payment of 250 Euros must be arranged with the application before any further plans may be made. For more information regarding the program and application please visit: https://www.steuben-schurz.org/usainterns/applications/applications.htm

DAAD RISE

RISE (Research Internships in Science and Engineering) Germany offers summer research internships in Germany for undergraduate students from North America. In their internships, students are carefully matched with doctoral students- whom they will assist and who will serve as their mentors. Interns receive a monthly stipend of 750 EUR to cover every day costs. DAAD provides health insurance, accident and personal liability insurance. About 300 scholarships are available each year. Letters of reference are due by early January. For more information regarding the program and application please visit: https://www.daad.de/rise/en/rise-germany/find-an-internship/application-portal/

CBYX for Young Professionals

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals (CBYX) is a yearlong fellowship to study and work in Germany. The CBYX program annually provides 75 participants with 2 months intensive German language training, 1 semester of study at a German university or university of applied sciences, 3-month internship with a German company in the participant’s career field, transatlantic airfare, health insurance, and monthly living expense stipends. For more information regarding the program and application please visit: https://culturalvistas.org/programs/abroad/congress-bundestag-youth-exchange-young-professionals/

University Summer Course Grant

This specialized Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) program provides scholarships to attend a broad range of three- to four-week summer courses at German universities which focus mainly on German language and literary, cultural, political and economic aspects of modern and contemporary Germany. Applications are open to undergraduates who have completed at least two academic years at the start of the scholarship period and requires German language skills equivalent at least to level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. For more information regarding the program and application please visit: https://www.daad.org/en/find-funding/undergraduate-opportunities/university-summer-course-grant/
J-Term in Germany
This program led by URI’s German IEP/German Section will allow students to explore the culture, technology environment and communicate with their budding language skills. Students must be enrolled in German during the academic year to be eligible to apply for this program. Students will earn 3 URI credits for GER 497: Directed Study. View Winter J-term courses for more information on how to apply.

UROP International
RWTH Aachen’s Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP International) is designed for students from North America universities who have a GPA of 3.2 or higher and wish to gain research experience by conducting research projects at RWTH Aachen University. The program during a ten-week research summer school between the middle of May and the end of July. A total of 60 students can participate but only 30 scholarships of 1,850 Euros each are available. If you do not receive a scholarship, you should estimate around 2,000 Euros for your living expenses. In addition you need to include three months’ rent (ranging from 220 and 300 Euros a month) and the cost of enrollment, which is approximately 230 Euros and includes a ticket for public transportation in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Additionally, there is a deposit of two months’ rent, which is reimbursed when you move out as long as the dorm is left in good condition. US or Canadian citizens usually do not need to apply for a visa if their stay does not extend a duration of 3 months. For more information regarding the program and application please visit: http://www.rwth-aachen.de/cms/root/Studium/Im-Studium/Angebote-fuer-Studierende/UROP/UROP-International/~wnr/Informationen-fuer-Studierende/lidx/1/

ThinkSwiss Research Scholarships
ThinkSwiss Scholarships support highly motivated and qualified U.S. undergraduate students to get a research experience or to participate in a summer school course in Switzerland. This program provides a monthly scholarship of CHF 1,600 (approx. USD 1,650) for a period of 2 to 3 months (CHF 4,800 maximum), which covers the majority of the average student’s living costs. For more information regarding the program and application please visit: http://thinkswiss.tumblr.com/About

International Research Experience Program (IREP)
If you have a GPA of 3.1 or higher, you can apply for the International Research Experience Program (IREP) at TU-DA. The main objective of the program is to foster research insights in an intercultural context. The IREP program offers a scholarship of 400 EUR per month for a total of three months, and also pays the enrollment fee for you. TU-DA suggests to apply for three different projects - even if they have the same supervisor because only one student can work on one project. For more information regarding the program and application please visit: https://www.tu-darmstadt.de/international/inbound/short_programmes/irep/index.en.jsp

Optional: German-STEM Summer School in Berlin
Spend the summer in Berlin, immerse yourself in German language and culture, and learn from experts in the STEM fields about the role of Germany in the sciences, technology, and engineering. The program includes 4 credits in German and 4 credits in Advanced Technical German (a graduation requirement) Talk to Dr. Tracksdorf (tracksdorf@uri.edu) to apply for scholarships through the Max Kade Foundation. For more information please visit: uri.edu/Berlin
Take care of URI paperwork

The Prior Approval Form
The next very important paperwork you need to do at URI is the prior approval form on the URI Abroad Portal. This is going to have a list of all courses you want to take (and those you will definitely take). Putting courses on this list doesn’t mean you have to take them, but transferring credits from courses you take that are not on the sheet is risky because they are not pre-approved and may not fulfill certain requirements; an additional approval form may be required. You will only get credit if you amend the form and have the amended form signed by your advisor. So put anything that you think you might take or are remotely interested in taking on the list. There is also a stock list of classes that have been approved in the past, and an explanation of how you actually find the times and places in the “Classes” section later. If you want to try something new, you need to go onto the main TU Darmstadt (TU-DA) website www.tu-darmstadt.de (which you might want to bookmark while you’re at it), translate the description of the course to English, and take it to your engineering department head. Continuing with the prior-approval form, the first thing you need to do is figure out which courses you need to take. Then you need to start getting signatures from the head of the department that the credits are being transferred to. All the IEP and German classes everyone will take get approved through Niko or Sigrid, but some engineering courses may need a signature from the respective engineering department head. If you want to take an extra German grammar or conversation class (which is a great idea and a lot of students do), that also goes through Niko or Sigrid. Since there are so few required classes to take at TU Darmstadt, extra grammar courses would be especially helpful for the internship part of the year. You should also put your research project on this form should you choose to complete one; these generally transfer as “MCE 491 etc. special projects”. You would also need to get a math department signature if you want to take a math course. Once all the classes are added, get it signed by your advisor and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Jared Abdirkin by dropping the form off or sending it to his assistant Wendy Gallo; she will notify you when the form is signed by him ready to be picked up. Then get it into Sigrid, upload a copy of it to URI Abroad and keep a copy of it for your own records.

Take GER 202 and finish your internship applications
You need to make a Lebenslauf (resume) and a Bewerbungsschreiben (cover letter) in German, which you will use for institutes and internships. There are different norms for both of these in Germany, so you can’t just translate something you have in English. For example, it is customary to put a professional picture of yourself on your resume, as well as details like age and marital status. In this course, you will learn about possible companies to complete your required internship at, write your cover letters, and develop skills needed to be successful during your year abroad. If you take GER 202 or not, submit the final internship application(s) to Dr. Tracksdorf or Dr. Berka by the deadline given in the GER 202 syllabus.

You can get some examples of previous students from either Dr. Tracksdorf or Dr. Berka, but here are some other resources for them:

- https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-speak-business-german-4072786 (with English explanations of some terms)
- https://www.ego4u.de/de/cram-up/writing/cover-letter (this one is actually for Germans applying abroad, but has some helpful stuff) "Wortlisten und Wendungen" (word lists and phrases) at the bottom is a reeeaaallly nice list of translations, but be careful about using things that are too fancy and very unrealistic for your German level
- https://www.bewerbung-tipps.com/ (Anschreiben on the side also refers to cover letter, that and the Lebenslauf tab are the main things to look at here)
Googling “Lebenslauf Beispiele” or “Lebenslauf Tipps” (yes, 2 P’s) will also get you lots of examples to look at.

Additional guidance is provided in this link from the Steuben Schurz Gesellschaft, an organization which places US students into internships in Germany https://goo.gl/De5vGA

Apply for your semester at the TU Darmstadt

To register at TU-DA please visit: https://tuda.moveon4.de/locallogin/55b8849b84fb96032c00000/eng and follow the following steps:

1. Print out the completed application as a .PDF file
2. Dr. Tracksdorf will send you a link where you will then upload the application PDF along with:
   - Learning Agreement = Prior approval form
   - Copy of your URI Student ID
   - Your transcript
3. Either Dr. Tracksdorf or Dr. Berka will then create a combined application package which includes the applications, prior approval form, transcript, the TU-DA paperwork you filled out earlier and your passport copy. Please send this application package to Julia Fitzthum from the International Office julia.fitzthum@tu-darmstadt.de as an e-mail attachment.

Apply for Housing

- Consult with Dr. Tracksdorf or Dr. Berka as to whether you wish to stay in TU Darmstadt’s dorms or find a room of your own through wg-gesucht.de, the Darmstadt city Facebook page or other platforms.
- If you plan to stay at TUD, you will apply for housing as part of the study application above.

Plan ahead

Curriculum sheets can be found here:
https://web.uri.edu/engineering/academics/iep/curriculum/german/.

Setup a research project

For students with a GPA of 3.3 or higher, there is the chance to engage in a research project at one of the unique TU institutes in Darmstadt. You will work there for 10 hrs. a week, present a final report and write a summary in English for your URI advisor. That way you can earn 3 special problem credits. If interested, you need to have prior approval for it from a URI faculty in your engineering department who also serves as a mentor skyping/emailing with you about your progress. If you haven’t looked into that yet, here’s the list of research institutes or profile areas, with links to more information: https://www.tu-darmstadt.de/international/inbound/short_programmes/irep/index.en.jsp
Jump-start your year abroad

FISITA Travel Bursary Work Experience Programme

FISITA offers student engineers the opportunity to apply for a travel bursary, of up to 2000 Euros, to help with the costs of taking part in organized work placements (internships, exchange programs etc.) in automotive companies and research institutions overseas. To be eligible to apply, you must: be studying engineering at undergraduate or postgraduate level at a recognized college or university, have arranged an industry or research placement in an automotive company or organization overseas and be a member of a FISITA member society (in U.S. it would be SAE-International) Student membership costs $25. For more information please visit: https://www.fisita.com/yfia/academia-industry/workexperience

Practice your German

Feeling Nervous about German? - *Mach keinen Stress!* If you already spoke perfect German, you wouldn’t need to go anyway. But if you start to get nervous, here are a couple things you can use to practice a bit beforehand.

AT URI

o Buddies (recommendation: go once a week)
 o Tandem
 o Kaffeestunde
 o Movie Nights
 o German Club

ON-LINE TRANSLATORS

o If you haven’t been introduced to it already, LEO (www.leo.org) is just about the best German-to-English dictionary on the web.
 o Google Translate (http://translate.google.com/) is getting better, and some people like the Dict.cc (http://www.dict.cc/) layout.
  **Download the dict.cc app to your smartphone and install the German/English dictionary – this will let you look up vocabulary on your phone on the fly without an internet connection**
 o Linguee (www.linguee.com/) – unlike LEO, Linguee incorporates a search engine that provides access to large amounts of bilingual sentence pairs found online.

GAMES, MEDIA, & HOW-TO

o There are tons of games and quizzes on www.sporcle.com and some other quiz sites. Here’s one for example: http://www.sporcle.com/games/McFly/essentialgermanverbs. These are a nice easy way to practice some basic vocab.
 o Mein Weg nach Deutschland (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMj9kUPrnBk) – A YouTube video series published by Goethe-Institute provides an excellent resource for those to imagine what it’s like to be an Ausländer in Germany
 o MrWissen2go (https://www.youtube.com/user/MrWissen2go) – a great YouTube Chanel that talks about current topics in word affairs and in pop-culture auf Deutsch.
- Learn German: Deutsch für Euch (https://www.youtube.com/user/DeutschFuerEuch) - a great YouTube Chanel that can serve as a good refresher on your basic grammar and vocabulary
- Get Germanized (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCesZBmr56lgZ3uuiB8RdX0A) – a great YouTube Chanel that talks about German culture and language auf Deutsch and in English.
- And here’s another nice one so you can ask Germans where they are from and not have to awkwardly nod when you have no idea what they are saying: https://online.seterra.com/en/vgp/3014
- You can also download apps like Duolingo (https://www.duolingo.com/) for free!
- Coffee Break is a popular language podcast on Spotify. Listen to Coffee Break German when you are on-the-go to hear some great lessons in the context of situations you may encounter abroad (https://open.spotify.com/show/3QiX0ZkjlLyGWmpemackW)
- Deutsche Welle (https://www.dw.com/de/themen/s-9077) and Tagesschau (https://www.tagesschau.de/) are also great news sites geared for people learning German. It’s also a great way to stay up-to-date on current events.
- Forvo.com is a site where native speakers from all languages put up clips of themselves pronouncing words. So use this if you see a word but don’t know how it’s pronounced.
- www.about.com has a surprisingly good German learning section, with a lot of well-written articles about grammar and pronunciation. Here are a couple interesting ones:
  - Zungenbrecher (tonguebreakers a.k.a. tongue twisters) with audio: https://www.thoughtco.com/german-tongue-twisters-zungenbrecher-1444645
  - Falsche Freunde - words that may seem similar to English words, but aren’t: https://www.thoughtco.com/french-english-false-cognates-faux-amis-1364675
  - The passive form - not quite as fun as Konjunktiv II, but still up there: https://www.thoughtco.com/the-passive-voice-in-german-4068771

MUSIC
- Seeed - Augenbling, Riddim No.1, Aufstehn. Probably the biggest act in Germany right now, they have stuff anywhere from reggae to dance music. Check out the guest verse from CeeLo Green on Aufstehn; it comes out of nowhere.
- Madsen – is a German rock band that hails from the Wendland. Their music combines elements of pop, rock, indie and punk together with lyrics in German. Songs worth listening to include: Du schreibst Geschichte, Wenn der Regen and Du bist wie du bist.
- Peter Fox - Alles Neu, Haus am See. The lead man in Seeed, he also has a really well known solo album, Stadtaffe. The whole thing is worth a listen.
- Kraftklub - Ich will nicht nach Berlin, Eure Mädchen - A rock/punk group who really don’t like the hipsters in Berlin.
- Cro - Einmal um die Welt, Du. He describes his music as “Raop,” Rap/Hip Hop. Some pretty clever lyrics and relaxing feel.
- Clueso - Gewinner, Chicago, Barfuss. Acoustic guitar music, a bit of a breather. If this is more your thing, also check out Philipp Poisel or Bosse.
- Die Ärzte - Westerland. Some old rockers, kind of like the Green Day of Germany. Not the most new/hip music, but worth a listen.
- Lena - 99 Luftballons. What, were we going to NOT put this on the list?
- Honorable Mentions: Die Toten Hosen and Fettes Brot - Two more pretty well-known German bands.