WAS IST HIER ÜBERHAUPT LOS?

A Study Abroad Survival Guide – Part 1
Darmstadt Edition 2018

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!*
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The Year Before

Information session

Attend the Info session on both TU Braunschweig and TU Darmstadt— you will have to choose your preference today, but can change your mind until you will need to apply to one of them in the Spring of 2018. We will also collect your student data and interests, in order to help you make the most out of your year abroad, and find suitable scholarships for you. Please go to the following link and fill out the form during the meeting:

http://web.uri.edu/iep/survey

Keep in touch

Join the “German IEP Abroad 2018/19” WhatsApp Group for German IEP students who are in Germany during the academic year 2018/19 by opening the following link on your phone:

https://goo.gl/ku2KYu

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.

Opportunities for students with a high GPA

If your GPA is 3.6+, come see Dr. Berka to get yourself set up for a research institute project in Germany (see page Error! Bookmark not defined.) and for DAAD scholarship application (see page 4).

If you have a 3.3 GPA, and would like to earn 3 credits of MCE, CHE, ELE etc. 491 professional elective credits, talk to Dr. Berka about research institutes in Darmstadt (see page Error! Bookmark not defined.) or the IREP (page 7).
Apply for scholarships

Here are the biggest scholarships you should be aware of. Also check: http://web.uri.edu/iep/scholarships/.

Beatrice S. Demers Foreign Language Fellows Program
This scholarship is for “Rhode Island residents and anyone who is a student at a Rhode Island college or university who wishes to pursue foreign language study. Preference will be given to applicants from the University of Rhode Island who meet qualifications.” All IEP students who study a foreign language, especially those going abroad should apply. Successful applicants will all share one thing: a passion for developing fluency in another language, and a plan of study which is designed to increase language proficiency by a significant margin. This is a scholarship set up by a former URI professor and IEP students have won a lot of money, which you can use for tuition, rent, or anything else as you need during your time abroad. Fellowships are expected to be in the range of $1,000 to $25,000 with numerous awards given each year. Award decisions will be announced in March/April of each year.

The Demers Info Session with Kathleen Maher The Demers info session with Kathleen Maher (kmaher@uri.edu) will take place on Thursday 11/9 at 5pm in the Doody Auditorium in Swan Hall. Be sure to start early so you can give time to people writing letters of recommendation. While the deadline for application submissions is on January 13, 2018, the internal deadline for URI students to submit drafts of the application and to request recommendations is on December 4th. http://www.rifoundation.org/WorkingTogether/ForScholarshipSeekers/ScholarshipFellowshipOpportunities/BeatriceSDemersForeignLanguageFellows.aspx

DAAD Study Scholarship
The DAAD (Deutscher Akademiker Austausch Dienst) is a German government-run program “for the support of international academic cooperation.” For the undergraduate study abroad scholarship this comes in the form of ~€750 per month. This is an involved application, so you will need to be working on it during the fall semester to have it done by the end of January deadline (check the website for the exact date). Along with letters of recommendation and a full application, you will need to have an institute placement in Darmstadt, so you’ll need to e-mail institutes and find a place willing to take you in and give you some sort of project. This is not something you can do during break, because people in Germany just won’t email you back during the holidays. You also need a German professor to fill out a language evaluation form, and to get an official transcript to mail in with the application. Long story short, start early. https://www.daad.org/undergrad

Benjamin A Gilman Scholarship
The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program provides awards for U.S. undergraduate students who are receiving Federal Pell Grant funding at a two-year or four-year college or university to participate in study abroad programs worldwide. Awards from $3,000 to $5,000.

IEP Scholarships
The IEP also has a number of in-house scholarships which are just for you. Some are based on language, some on engineering major, and some others. These are awarded in the spring and are obviously just for IEP students, so definitely apply: http://web.uri.edu/iep/scholarships/
Apply for your Passport

Be warned at this point that this is the first of the many discussions of paperwork in this guide. But to start it off slowly, just make sure you apply for a passport as soon as possible. Apply at Wakefield post office for new passport if you do not have one yet NOW, as it can take up to 8 weeks to receive it....International students apply for a visa through the German Consulate Boston. Make an appointment soon! And while you’re getting your picture taken, wear something respectable and get at least 6 extra copies of the passport picture, and scan one in so you have it digitally. If you already have a passport, you need to get (several of) this type of picture anyway (why you need these will come up again later).

Bring a copy of your valid American (or other) passport to GER 201 on November 30th 2017 (12:30 pm in Washburn Hall 309)! If you are not taking GER 201, please join us for this session.

Optional: Apply for the DAAD RISE

RISE Germany offers summer research internships in Germany for undergraduate students from North America, Great Britain and Ireland. In their internships, students are carefully matched with doctoral students- whom they assist and who 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. All interns are invited to the three-day RISE Germany meeting in Heidelberg at the beginning of July and will receive an allowance of 160 Euros for travel to the meeting. About 300 scholarships are available each year. The extensive RISE Germany database offers a wide range of internships in Science and Engineering. The internship database opens between November 1, 2017 and December 15, 2017.

https://www.daad.de/rise

Optional: Apply for CBYX

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals (CBYX) is a yearlong fellowship to study and work in Germany. Students traditionally underrepresented in study abroad opportunities are especially encouraged to apply. The fellowship is funded by the US and German governments through a grant provided by the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, under the authority of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961, as amended.

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, 5-month internship with a German company in the participant’s career field, Transatlantic airfare, health insurance, and monthly living expense stipends.

Applicants should have clear career goals and some relevant work experience in their career field, which may include summer, part-time, or internship work. Participants must be between the ages of 18-24, possess a high school diploma or equivalent, and be US citizens or permanent residents.

https://culturalvistas.org/programs/abroad/congress-bundestag-youth-exchange-young-professionals/
Take care of URI Paperwork

The next step it to apply for study abroad through OIE@URI. Michael Forster will come to the TI House on January 25th at 5 pm to introduce you to the Study Abroad platform and helps you start your application. Please bring your laptops.

The next very important paperwork you need to do at URI is the prior approval form. 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 and given to the OIE at URI will be much more difficult to transfer. 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 website (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 course 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 TUBS, extra grammar courses would be especially helpful for the internship part of the year. You should also put a research project on this form; these transfer as “special projects” generally. 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 with his assistant Wendy; she will notify you when the form is signed by him ready to be picked up. Then get it in to Sigrid and to Tom Hospod and keep a copy of it for your own records.

Take GER 202 and finish your internship applications

Now you might be wondering: How do I know which courses I can take at the TU Darmstadt? And which ones do I add to the aforementioned prior approval form? We will talk about it during the first two weeks of classes.

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. No worries. We will discuss all this in GER 202. In this course, we will learn about possible companies for your internship, write your cover letters, and develop skills needed to be successful during your year abroad. So, take GER 202 in the Spring semester. Audit the course, if you already have 19 credits. 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

If you take GER 202 or not, submit the final internship application(s) to Dr. Tracksdorf by the end of April.
Optional: Apply for IREP

If you have a GPA of 3.1 or higher, you can apply for the International Research Experience Program (IREP) at the TU Darmstadt. The main objective of the program is to enable undergraduate and graduate students from TU Darmstadt partner universities in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to acquire an insight in research in your field through active participation, gain intercultural experience, and transfer credit points home. The IREP program offers a scholarship of 400 EUR per month for a total of three months, and also pays the enrolment fee for you.

Please be aware that the project supervisor will select and there will be other applicants. So we suggest to apply for three different projects - even if they have the same supervisor because only one student can work on one project. Talk to Sigrid also who can advise you in the process.

https://www.tu-darmstadt.de/international/inbound/short_programmes/irep/index.en.jsp

Apply for your semester at the TU Darmstadt

TU-DA’s deadline is April 15. You must use the following steps to apply at the TU Darmstadt:

1. register through this site: https://tuda.moveon4.de/form/55b8849b84fb96032c000000/eng
2. print out the filled in PDF and have me sign
3. fill out 4 pages of a fillable PDF (housing, visa info etc.) and print and sign/ have me sign
4. drop off at TI house or send in scanned

Sigrid and Niko will then scan everything in to create a combined application package which includes the applications, prior approval form, transcript, the TUDA paperwork you filled out earlier, your passport copy, and send this to Herrn Patrick Stärke from the International Office (staerke.pa@pvw.tu-darmstadt.de) via e-mail attachment.

Final deadline for going abroad in 2018/19

Ideally, submitted your applied at the TU Darmstadt (see page Error! Bookmark not defined.) and submitted your URI paperwork (see page 6) by March 31st, and already sent your internship application(s) to Niko. If you haven’t, please note: April 30th is the absolute deadline to submit everything in the StudioAbroad platform @URI/ all materials must be received for TU Darmstadt as well. Dr. Berka and Dr. Tracksdorf have to send your application package to the partner universities by this date. You may not be able to go abroad if your materials were not ready to be send by this date!

Optional: IEP German Summer School

When summer course enrollment is available: enroll in the German Summer School (GER 215) offered in first summer session! Talk to Dr. Berka to apply for scholarships through the Max Kade Foundation.
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/universitaet/profil_forschung/index.en.jsp

Note: This does not work in English; you have to deal with it in German. If you are applying for the DAAD scholarship, you will have to take care of this much earlier, and meet with Sigrid November 6th, 2017 (see page 3)

Plan ahead

Another thing to do during your junior year is figure out exactly what you still need in order to graduate. There are two good resources for this: one is a “Graduation worksheet” that Sigrid will give you during one of your preparation meetings, the other is your curriculum sheets. You should meet with Sigrid and your COE advisor to make sure you are clear on which gen-eds you still need. Curriculum sheets: http://web.uri.edu/iep/curriculum/#german.

It is a good idea to have a decent idea of what you need to take your 5th year. You will be registering for classes in February/March while you are at your internship, and you’re not going to be in the mood to think about Rhode Island. (-Seriously) So make some basic notes about what you need to take to make your job a bit easier; this will help you double check that you have all your graduation requirements handled as well.

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
  - Buddies (recommendation: go once a week)
  - Tandem
  - Kaffeestunde
  - Movie Nights

Outside of URI
  - 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.
  - 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: http://online.seterra.net/en/ex/104.
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. Google Translate (http://translate.google.com/) is getting better, and some people like the dict.cc (http://www.dict.cc/) layout, but LEO is the king here, so go ahead and bookmark it now.

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!

You can also download apps like Duolingo (http://www.duolingo.com/) for free!

Deutsche Welle (http://www.dw.com/de/themen/s-9077) is also a great news site geared for people learning German. It’s also a great way to stay up-to-date on current events.

www.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. Here are some Germans saying *Eichhörnchen* (squirrel), which is definitely a tough one for Americans: http://de.forvo.com/word/eichh%C3%B6rnchen/#de

Listen to some German music! This is obviously dependent on your taste, but here are a few artists and some of their best-known songs to get you started.

- 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.
- 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.

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: http://german.about.com/od/pronunciation/a/tonguetwisters.htm
- Falsche Freunde - words that may seem similar to English words, but aren’t: http://german.about.com/library/bfalsef.htm
- Konjunktiv II - Everyone’s favorite tense! http://german.about.com/od/grammar/a/konjunktivII.htm
- The passive form - not quite as fun as Konjunktiv II, but still up there: http://german.about.com/library/weekly/aa012901a.htmPreparing your internship applications (German resume and cover letters)
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<td>Apply for Scholarships</td>
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<td>High GPA? Talk to Sigrid</td>
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