FLIEGEN WIR JETZT ENDLICH LOS?

A Study Abroad Survival Guide – Part 2
Braunschweig Edition 2018

University of Rhode Island
German International Engineering Program
HELLO AND WELCOME

to the URI German IEP Study Abroad Survival Guide! 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, Braunschweig, 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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Getting Ready for Braunschweig

What to Bring

The big question: what do I need to bring? This is obviously going to be different for everyone, but here’s a decently comprehensive list of some of the things you’ll need to bring. As far as overall allowances, head to the website of the airline you’re using and check their baggage regulations. As a general tip, really think about the things you actually need when packing - you can get things like notebooks and towels pretty easily, and baggage fees add up fast. Also, the rules are generally one carry-on and one “laptop bag/purse.” They are much more lenient with this than with checked bags, so make something like a backpack your “laptop bag” and have a checked bag and a carry-on along with that. Another tip if your bag is getting really tight is to wear your winter jacket (and biggest shoes/boots) on the flight; this can save a lot of space.

- Wallet with coin pouch. You’re going to be dealing with a lot more coins in Germany, so you pretty much need to have a wallet with a coin pouch, or just don’t bring one and plan on buying it there.
- A backpack. This is necessary for everything from travelling to buying groceries to going to school. Definitely worth bringing. They have very “European” backpacks which resemble hiking bags in outdoor stores. The prices may vary (25 to 50+ Euros), but it may be worth considering as a first purchase.
- Pictures of friends/family. Not necessary, but they’re lightweight, and your dorm room is going to look really empty the first couple of weeks. Another suggestion for room decorating is to save all the maps you collect as you travel and put these on your walls.
- Presents. This definitely isn’t necessary, but a great tip. When you meet people and they have birthdays/parties, having something small to give them from America is a really cool gift. This also has a second purpose: it frees up room in your bags to bring souvenirs back with you. If your bags are all completely full when you leave, you’re going to have to get rid of things to bring more stuff back with you. If you use vacuum sealing bags however, this won’t be an issue - just remember weight requirements.
- Pictures of yourself. You need these for your resume, visa, internship, and probably a couple other applications. This is a standard passport photo type picture, nothing else. When you get this photo done, dress up and get 8 copies of them, you will need them for all sorts of things at URI and in Germany.
- Voltage Converters. This is a somewhat complicated question, but to make is as simple as possible: there are the small adapters which only change the shape of the wall socket, and the expensive ones which convert voltage as well. German outlets have a higher wattage, which means that just something that converts the outlet shape is a ticket to frying your stuff. However, more expensive things (like laptops with AC-DC converters) generally can handle the higher voltage. So figure out what you’re bringing and what you need for it. That being said:
- Ethernet Cable. If you already have one, just bring it, chances are you will need it because most of the dorms don’t have Wifi.
- Don’t bring a hairdryer/expensive electronics. If it’s something big, it’s just not worth it, and multiple girls blew them up and needed to buy new ones within a couple days of landing. Just do yourself a favor and buy that stuff in Germany.
- Bring about 500-750 hundred Euros for the first days. We’ll talk about how the first few hours will go down later, but they will be hectic enough without you searching around for an ATM, so just bring some cash with you to start off. Part of this will be used for a housing deposit for APM upon arrival in Braunschweig. **Be sure to pack it safely; possibly break it up.**

- Before you go, make sure you have all the documents you will need, and a digital copy of them. It will be a lot easier to get this stuff scanned at home than in Germany. This includes:
  - Passport page (the one with your picture on it)
  - Prior Approval Form
  - Graduation Worksheet (you get this from Sigrid)
  - The list of preapproved classes at TUBS
  - *Lebenslauf* and *Bewerbungsschreiben* (just digital should be ok)
  - Digital copy of passport photos (good idea to scan this too)

- Bringing your driver’s license from America is nice, because it gives you something to use as an ID before you get anything German, and you won’t have to carry your passport around. You’ll also need it if you want to rent a car at any point during your time there. This doesn’t work in all situations, but it is nice before you have your visa if you want to go somewhere you might get ID’d. We’ll explain this separately

- Something to organize your documents in - You’re going to get even more paperwork once you get settled in Germany: your housing contract, bank info, phone info, insurance paperwork. Bring something that you can keep all this stuff in so things don’t get out of hand. As a side note, most documents are printed on A4 sized paper in Germany, so it may be better to wait to purchase folders.

- As a general clothes warning, things like jeans and shirts are a lot more expensive in Germany than in America, think €80 for a decent pair of jeans. These are worth bringing.

- Weather-appropriate clothing - here is a hint of the balmy weather you have to look forward to in Braunschweig: [http://www.holidaycheck.de/klima-wetter_Braunschweig-ebene_oid-id_11036.html](http://www.holidaycheck.de/klima-wetter_Braunschweig-ebene_oid-id_11036.html).
  So bring some warm clothes (gloves, hats, and scarves are all good ideas) along with a good pair of boots and a thick coat. Galleria Kaufhof has some great European jackets for sale. They’re on the expensive side (200ish Euros) but are very good quality and everyone around there wears them.

- Business casual clothing - workplaces aren’t very formal in Germany, but still remember that you are going to have an internship for 6 months, so bring more than a couple of button-ups. Guys, make sure you have a good matching belt and shoes. Girls, dress slacks/skirts and nice tops that are versatile that you can mix and match will help you pack less but still have options. Bring sensible shoes in case you need to walk/bike to work!

- For that matter, Germans in general dress up a bit more than Americans to leave the house, so be ready for that. You won’t see any Germans shopping or going to class in sweatpants, so if you want to blend in a bit be prepared to do the same.

- Continuing the clothes theme, if you plan on going out, have some decent clothes to do it in. Germans don’t usually go to bars or clubs in T-shirts. Same as the last point, you can do what you want, but expect people to be a bit more dressed up than at URI.
The Driver’s License

So back to the topic of your license. If you are planning on working for an automotive company like VW, IAV, ZF, etc. it may be possible that you are required to drive cars for test purposes. Students have also in certain scenarios found it easier to buy a cheap car rather than pay for transit. Also you will obviously need a valid license to rent a car if you so choose. An international driver’s license from AAA may be the easiest thing to get beforehand. In some scenarios, it may not suffice. Your driver’s license is valid for the first 6 months you are in Germany, but if you want it to be longer then you will need to extend the validity. This will be explained later, as it deserves its own section.

Learn to cook

Restaurants are really expensive, grocery stores aren’t, and contrary to popular belief, you can’t live on Döner alone. Your apartment will have a small kitchen, and it’s important for your wallet that you be able use it. You of course don’t have to be a 5-Star chef, but you should at least be able to cook noodles... so if you’re the type that can burn a salad, muster up some courage and ask Mom for a quick lesson or two. You’ll be glad you did. Keep it simple though, because food prices vary a lot based on whether or not it’s a “luxury” item, but more on that later. (Oh, and if you end up baking something here, don’t forget that the oven temps are in Celsius....)

Consider bringing some measuring utensils if you’re bring mom’s recipes. Unless of course you’re really good at converting metric.

Flying to Germany

We will check out inexpensive flights for you and make a recommendation for a flight to Hannover onto which you should book yourself one-way to fly with the group. The group flight is going to be the more convenient choice for you, mostly because it will get you right to the doorstep of your new dorm where you will also meet the Paten (mentors) you signed up for who will help you in many ways. TU Braunschweig starts their orientations/language testing around Sept. 1st or 2nd. So, you need to plan accordingly. You are then flexible to book your flight back when your internship ends, or after you completed some private travels. Flight back from Frankfurt-Providence/Boston is usually booked for mid/end of August to give you some time to re-adjust back to the US before the semester starts in September.

If you want to try to go earlier to travel beforehand, you will need to get yourself to Braunschweig. On the big day, get to the airport at least two hours early to make sure you have time to go through everything and aren’t rushed. Three hours is even better with air travel these days, Also, make sure you check the basics of what not to bring on an airplane if you haven’t done much flying before.

In the past, groups have generally flown to Frankfurt and then taken a bunny hop flight to Hannover, and from there some drivers will pick you guys up and drive you straight to Braunschweig.
Willkommen in Deutschland!

Upon arrival & Sommerschule

The first few days in Braunschweig are going to be quite a whirlwind, so just take a deep breath and don’t worry about it too much; it will all get done sooner or later and there will be lots of other people helping you out along the way. You just need to pay attention to what needs to get done, as the German bureaucratic machine will not be as forgiving as URI.

Hopefully you will have heard from your Pate before you get to Germany, but if not you will probably meet them at this point. This is a student who will most likely email you over the summer to introduce himself/herself, and is there to help you get set up during the first few weeks. This is the person you should go to first with questions or issues about what you are supposed to be doing (refer to the title of the handbook). In addition, please don’t hesitate to ask any question in the WhatsApp groups. The students who studied abroad last year will read the WhatsApp group and can give you some tips from their perspective.

Right when you get there, someone will bring you up to your room and you will have to sign something confirming that nothing is broken in the room, so if something breaks it’s your problem, as well as the rest of your housing contract. But the rooms have been inspected, so don’t worry about it too much. Here you’ll get your key, and then probably head to the first item on our next list! You will also get your temporary Student ID/Certificate of Enrollment (Vorläufiger Studentenausweis/ Immatrikulationsbescheinigung). Don’t lose it! This is your free pass to ride city busses and trams, as well as regional trains.

Getting to the university

There are several important locations to know about. You also have to understand how to find stuff, since they list course locations somewhat strangely here. The way they do it is by abbreviating the street name, then listing the building number, period, room number. For example, BW 74.9 would translate to Bültenweg number 74, room 9. All campus building are labeled like that, and you can find a list of the abbreviations online on the TUBS website. The most common ones you’ll see are BW (Bültenweg) and PK (Pockelsstraße), as that’s where the majority of your classes will be.

- Bültenweg 74 (BW 74) - This is one of the most important buildings. It’s home to the IO and most likely at least one of your normal classes. Get there with the M19 bus to Bültenweg or the M29 bus to Hans-Sommer-Straße.
- Altgebäude (Pockelsstraße 4, PK 4) - This is the giant old stone building located across from the library. It’s the home of the Sprachenzentrum and the Mediothek, and is where you’ll both register for the summer course and actually have the summer course. Get here with either the M29 or M19 bus to Pockelsstraße or the M1/M2 tram to Mühlenpfordtstraße.
- Katharinenstraße 1 38106 Braunschweig, Germany is the Mensa (cafeteria). This is an easy place to get lunch during the summer course and any other time you don’t want to cook yourself a lunch. The card that you use here is like a debit card, and you put money on it with a machine near the entrance. Even if you aren’t going to eat here, this is also the card you use to do laundry in your dorm, so load some money onto it. Coin operated washers are down the street at the turkish laundromat. If you don’t mind schlepping your laundry down the street, it may be worthwhile, as it
is slightly cheaper and guaranteed to work. Otherwise, keep your card loaded in case the reload machine doesn’t work.

- Pockelsstraße 11, 38106 Braunschweig, Germany is the Haus der Wissenschaft. In the first days after you move in, you have to pay a housing security deposit here. This is also where the Studienservice-Center is, another place you might have to go in order to resolve different paperwork issues that don’t concern the IO. The deposit (die Kaution) is a month’s rent, so look on your housing agreement to find out how much it is. Don’t worry, you get it back after moving out (assuming you didn’t destroy your room/apartment). This one is a bit tricky to pay. **You have to pay in cash**, thus the extra money at the beginning, and the office can be hard to find and has horrendous hours. The office is in this (enormous) building, so just talk to the IO or Studienservice-Center and ask them where it is and what the hours are.

**Things to do soon after arriving**

We know that you will be very busy during the first few days, but there are a few things here that you need to do, some of which might not have occurred to you. Just take a deep breath and get it done one by one, you should have enough time.

- IKEA or REAL. This is where you are going to buy sheets, towels, curtains, and a lot of other things. Chances are your *Patens* will take you there just after you put your stuff in your dorm. If you go to Ikea on your own it may be a good idea to get a bike first. It might be difficult, but try to check before you leave if you need pots/pans/dishes/utensils or if other people in your apartment might already have them. If yes, buy them at IKEA (you can split some of the family-size things with other students). If not, don’t bother! Also, hold on to the blue bags you get there, as they are pretty useful.

- Use the Starbucks in the Schloss until you have your internet set up. This is the place to confirm to your family that you’re alive. To set up the internet later, ask the other kids in your dorm about it, but you will have to find a student/worker whose job it is to allow your computer on the network and they will basically set it up for you.

- Eat a *Döner*. This is simply non-negotiable; it is delicious and you won’t regret it. There are a couple shops right across from the *Schloss* in the middle of Braunschweig. If you get confused, just say “Döner mit allem” (with everything) and you will get what you need. Just be warned now though, that the Döner does possess a certain addictive power which may become a problem for weaker spirits.

- Put your name on your mailbox. The mailman won’t put anything there until your last name is there (just look at the other ones there). Putting your name near your bell would be a good idea too. In Affenfelsen, be sure to speak to the landlord about that. (Frau Hoffmann)

- Your Pate has most likely already made an appointment for you to set up a bank account, so ask them when it is and don’t miss it! Another good tip here is to make sure that you can spell your name (in German). Otherwise filling out the forms at the bank is going to take a while.

- This is when your organization system from the awesome “what to bring” list starts to get very useful. You need to keep track of your bank account papers, housing contract, phone contract, insurance papers... just make sure you have everything in a way where you can access it when you need it.

- You will also be having a lot of different meetings with the IO (International Office) during the first few weeks, so just pay attention to these and make sure you bring the right papers and don’t miss them.
- Set up rent payments. Your best bet here is to just go to a local bank, e.g. Deutsche Bank, and ask them what exactly you need to do this, and then come back the next day with that stuff. They are going to need some of your TUBS ID type information, and some of the housing contract things. This will set up an automatic transfer from your Deutsche Bank account to the University on a certain day of every month, and make sure you always have the money in your Deutsche Bank account when this happens. The easiest way to do this is to just go to a Deutsche Bank Automat, use your American ATM card to withdraw money, and then put it right back in on your Deutsche Bank account (once you get this card in the mail). This isn’t something you need to do right away, but also something you shouldn’t forget about. And make sure you actually have the money in your account every month! **If you want to avoid ATM fees when you withdraw money from any German bank, set up an account with Schwab Bank through their online portal:** [www.schwab.com/](http://www.schwab.com/)

- Be careful signing things! Before you sign a phone or gym contract, make sure you know exactly what they say and what you are getting yourself into (it is okay to give the IO a bit more leeway; they are not trying to screw you over). A key for both of these things is to make sure you understand how long the contract is running and how you will cancel it. A cheap phone plan with a 2-year minimum and a big cancellation fee is not worth it. Be extremely careful when signing contracts, do not sign unless you are 100% certain you know what you are getting, what you are paying for, when the contract ends or how to get out of it.

- Go to Didi’s Bicycle Shop on Cellarstraße and look at some used bicycles. You can get a cheap used bike for 50-70 euros. Having a bicycle is a huge help in Braunschweig and will greatly increase your mobility. Note that a bell and lights are mandatory on bicycles in Germany. Not having these could get you fined! Also be aware of the bike laws, as they are treated like motor vehicles.

Check out Brian’s guide to getting around in Germany. Any info you could need on mobility can be found here: [http://www.gettingaroundgermany.info/regeln.shtml](http://www.gettingaroundgermany.info/regeln.shtml)

If you are going to be driving, be sure to pay attention to the rules. They use cameras to enforce traffic laws, so be safe, and follow the rules. Just as a disclaimer: **There are speed limits in Germany.** If it isn’t posted, it’s 50 km/hr in the city/town and 100km/hr on the Bundesstraßen.

### Cell Phones

If you want to buy a new phone, go to Saturn in the Schloss to buy a cell phone (it’s like Best Buy). Many of the American phones won’t work in Europe, unless you unlock it with your service provider in America. Most providers allow this after the phone is paid off, or two years, depending.

If you bought a phone at full price in the USA, or if you paid your phone off, you then buy a new SIM card in Germany, insert the SIM card into the phone and it’s good to go. You can get very cheap plans at Aldi or Lidl. Just ask for a SIM card. I would recommend Lidl. You can get 2 GB data for 13 EUR per month. If you have a Pixel phone, you can get Project Fi as your cell phone provider in the USA. It includes data in 135 countries (including Germany) without roaming fees.

And what about outside of Germany? There is a new EU law that requires all providers to offer EU wide use of data plans without roaming fees. Phone calls, however, cost a little more outside of Germany. For Sweden, I paid 12 cents per text (3 extra cents), and in the UK I payed 10 cents or so. Therefore you may want to stock up on credit before traveling, but in general you shouldn't have any issues, especially if you use data. Of course, don’t try calling to the USA through this line, instead use WhatsApp or Skype while in wifi (available at any Starbucks).
IO orientation/TUBS enrollment

Sometime in the first week that you're here, there will be a several hour long orientation meeting at the International Office. They'll tell you a bit about the IO and give you a schedule of welcome events (information sessions, parties, etc.); then the fun begins. You'll fill out enrollment paperwork, visa/immigration paperwork, fee payment paperwork, sign up for health and/or liability insurance, and much more. **It is crucial that you bring ALL the paperwork that you have to this meeting.** The packet from the first day, your passport, passport photos, bank account information, housing agreement, the acceptance letter that the TUBS emailed you several months before you came, everything. It will take a couple of hours, but the IO staff is good about explaining everything, and your Patens will be there too. Don't worry, it's all done in English. In the 2015-2016 group, this is also where our insurance was dealt with. A lot of us went with TK (Technische Krankenkasse) for about 80 Euros a month. They have a convenient office right on campus across the street from Haus der Wissenschaft. Insurance options change yearly so just take that for consideration.

While we’re on the topic of the IO, this should really be your first stop for any issues you have while in Germany. They have a lot of resources and experience with international students, and will be able to point you in the right direction for almost anything. Their office is in the section before this (are you even paying attention?). Here’s the IO website and email: https://www.tu-braunschweig.de/international. Email: exchange@tu-braunschweig.de.

German bureaucracy

Now is probably a good time to warn you about German bureaucracy. Expect delays with everything. Office hours are very strange (Tuesday 9.00-11.30/Thursday 9.30-11.00 is a good example) and not always reliable. No office is open later than 16.00, and leaving early without warning is very common. Someone in one office might tell you that it’s not their problem and send you to someone else, who ends up sending you to someone else, who sends you back to the first person. If they try to send you somewhere else, make sure you are not confused about where you need to go next and what you need to bring. Ask them to repeat and write things down if you need to, even if they start to get short with you. A good tip is to be as specific as possible with your problem and go to the most appropriate office the first time. Research where to go or ask the IPP partners for help- as the office workers really appreciate people making their job easier.

Health Insurance

At one point in this process you will be taken as a group to get insurance. Essentially, all students from URI get TK insurance, since virtually all American insurances are not valid in Germany because they are not as extensive. This will be set up with automatic withdrawals from your Deutsche Bank account every month, so make sure you have money there on that day of the month! (See Appendices for more money details.)
Research Opportunities/Process

Getting the research project done is a great way to get ready for your internship, make it easier to actually find a good internship, and get 3 professional elective credits, which is currently an option to all students except MCISE. For everyone else, this is a class you will not have to take your super-senior year, which is obviously very nice.

Now that you’re in Germany you should set up a meeting with your contact person. Your institute could be anywhere in the city so make sure you have good directions and give yourself plenty of time to find it. You may even want to scope it out beforehand. Once you meet with your “institute advisor” you will get a better idea of what your project will be and how many hours a week you are expected to work. It is important to know here that you should meet with your contact person before school starts, during the Sommerschule. This gives them time to set things up so you can actually start with the first week of school. If you don’t do this, it will be difficult to get the number of total hours you need. If you have a contact, let them know when you will be arriving in Braunschweig and tell them you will be able to start work when classes start.

Sommerschule Classes

On the first day of the summer course, you’ll start off nice and early with a meet and greet breakfast and an intro by some of the SZ (Sprachenzentrum) people. The Paten will probably make sure you’re aware of this, but if not make sure you know when it is. Float around and get to know the others - most of the non-URI students are ERASMUS students from the rest of Europe. Getting to know all of them early is great, especially since you'll be spending a lot with them in the next weeks, or in some cases, the next months.

There will be a test which will split all the students into levels, but don’t worry about it too much. Just focus on learning as much as you can, it is a great opportunity to make a lot of progress and ask a lot of questions. The course takes most of your time, but it helps kick you into German. Classes are early and long - usually starting at 830 and running till 1430. You'll have three 1.5 hour classes, separated by a 30 minute breakfast break and a 1 hour lunch break. The Mensa comes in clutch for lunch. Some days there are no classes, and a trip instead. On the weekends there’s also usually an optional trip. Groups in different years have done trips to Braunschweig (city tour), Hamburg, Jägermeister Brewery/Wolfenbüttel, Salzgitter AG Steel Mill, the Wolfsburg VW Plant, Berlin, and more. Go to all of them - they’re all cool and they’re free (even the weekend trip to Berlin). You'll do some kind of tour in the morning, then have a few hours of free time in the afternoon. This is great to get a feel for travel in germany, as day trips are a great way to spend an otherwise uneventful weekend day!
Basic Tips

These tips are particularly true during your first few weeks, but will never stop being true while you’re there.

Spend time with the foreigners, especially the ones looking to speak German. You’re not there to spend time only with Americans; get out and meet some new people. Try to stay in touch with some of the students from the summer school who are staying for the semester if you can.

This also applies while you’re out shopping or at restaurants. The customer is always right, so if you tell them you would prefer to speak in German, they will. Don’t be afraid to be a bit stubborn; a lot of people will assume they’re being polite by speaking to you in English, just tell them you can already speak English and don’t need to practice it.

Once you start getting a bit better, try watching German movies and TV, or go online and read about things (soccer, news, or whatever else you enjoy reading about) in German. Buying a book or two is also a great way to get better.

University Semester

This is a collection of a whole lot of different things that might help you in one way or another during your time in Braunschweig. Once again, this isn’t a totally complete list, but what’s a year abroad without a bit of adventure?

Classes (registration, what to take, etc.)

Here is a link to find times/places for classes at the TU. If this doesn’t quite work because the link changes, this is a good thing to ask a Pate about. You don’t have to fill everything in, just what you know. Click here: https://vorlesungen.tu-bs.de. After that, click “Veranstaltungen” and then “Suche nach Veranstaltungen.” Some of this is also in English, but the course descriptions generally aren’t so be ready for that.

Here is the current link to Moodle. It’s kind of like Sakai, but it is specifically for Sprachenzentrum classes, and since you’ll be taking them you’ll need it: https://external.sz.etc.tu-bs.de/moodle/login/index.php. You should also take a language class in Braunschweig. It is easy to transfer for German credit if you need it, and is really helpful to keep up on your grammar. You will need to take a levelling test in the Sprachenzentrum after the Sommerschule, and then you can sign up for them. More info about these classes: https://www.tu-braunschweig.de/sprachenzentrum. A good suggestion is one called a Basiskurs - taught sometimes by the same Sommerschule teachers. It basically is an extension of what you do in the summer courses.

You will take (and need to pass) at least one Engineering course while you are at the TU Braunschweig. For the engineering course(s) you are interested in taking, be sure to stay ahead of them, since there is no homework, quizzes, or tests to let you know how you’re doing. The entire grade is based on the final (Klausur). You should also look into when this is early because many of them are held after you will leave for your internship, but it is possible to reschedule them if you talk to the professors early. Also, please do not forget that many lecturers also have a Übung or Tutorium, sometimes both. Please make sure to attend all of them to be able to pass the exam.

Stud-ip is like Sakai for any classes you take that aren’t from the Sprachenzentrum. Here is the basic link: https://www.tu-braunschweig.de/studip. The login number you need for this is hidden deep in the papers you will get from the IO, so talk to them if you need this and are trying to set it up.

At the end of the semester, make sure to get all certificates and transcripts transferred/sent back to URI. Fill out the form at the end of this section for the courses you had to take (IPP, Landeskunde, Technisches Deutsch). Also add on any grammar or engineering courses you took. This lets the IO know what classes you took so they can find the grade you got and transfer it. The website is here (click on transcript of records): https://www.tu-braunschweig.de/international/incomings/exchange/departure.

You need to use the missing course certificates (Fehlende Scheine) option, because most of you will not be in Braunschweig anymore by the time your grades are in. That form: http://www.international.tu-braunschweig.de/download/doc_io_in_exc_missing_certificates.pdf.

Real classes (i.e. engineering courses) started a week before language courses last year.
Visa Process

During your first meeting with the IO you will fill out lots of papers. Some of these papers are for your visa appointment at the Bürgerservice located at Fallersleber Straße 1 Braunschweig 38100. There are a few things you will need to bring with you to this appointment, including your acceptance letter from TUBS, the papers the IO gave you, passport, biometric photo, and the fee or proof of scholarship. The IO has all the information about this; better to ask them about it than mess it up, because getting another appointment can be tough. **Please bring exactly what the office requests. If you do not have the necessary materials your appointment will be cancelled and getting a visa will be delayed by months, which can delay your internship. Be especially careful about the photo. They require exact dimensions and sometimes a passport photo won’t suffice.** There is a good photo studio in the Schloss on the top floor. There you can get exactly what you need for a good price and with good quality. You probably also want to bring a friend who is fluent in German because sometimes there are questions and the people at the Bürgerservice cannot/will not speak English with you. You can find more information about this process at: http://www.braunschweig.de/politik_verwaltung/fb_institutionen/fachbereiche_referate/fb32/fb32_4/auslaender/auslaenderangel.html

At your appointment you will be given instructions on what to do next. You will be sent something in the mail with instructions, which is in German legalese and you may need some help with (just check with anything that looks very official). After doing this and following the directions you will eventually be able to pick up your visa at the same place you had your previous meeting (bring all the paperwork again to be nice and safe).

Getting Sick

Unfortunately, this is bound to happen at some point. If you need medicine (both over the counter and prescription), go to an *Apotheke*. They’re all over the place and you can find anything you need. The pharmacists also give really good advice about what to do to make you feel better and will point you towards the right stuff for your problem.

If you need a doctor, do your best to get sick during the week. That way you can go to the *Schloss Carree* (next to/in front of the Schloss, Rathaus stop). It’s a giant healthcare/doctor complex, so you can find any kind of doctor you need. Hours can be found and appointments can be made online at www.schlosscarree.com. The IO also has a list of local doctors who speak a variety of languages. If you are misfortunate enough to need a doctor on the weekends, your choices are considerably more limited. Basically your only option is the *Ärztenotdienst* (emergency clinic) located between Alte Waage and Radeklint on the M4. It’s open 24/7, but you’ll have to wait in line. You can find the exact address on the Schloss Carree website.

Regardless of where you go, make sure you bring ALL your insurance information and an ID. If you have US insurance, make sure you have the card on you and expect them to take a while to figure out what to do with it. Otherwise, things should go easily as long as you have everything with you.
Another thing to know: 911 won’t get you anywhere in Germany (or the rest of Europe). **The emergency number is 112, and 110 gets you straight to the police.**
Locations in Braunschweig

- Schloss Arkaden: Ritterbrunnen 1, 38100 Braunschweig, Germany. Right in the center of the city, this is where you’re going to spend a lot of time while you’re getting settled in. Everyone refers to it as just “Der Schloss.” You can buy just about everything you need here (more details in the shopping section).
- Michaelishof: Güldenstraße 8, 38100 Braunschweig, Germany. A student bar that has international night every Thursday, definitely a good place to start as far as doing things in the city.
- Eintracht Stadion: Nordstadt, 38112 Braunschweig, Germany. This is where the hometown Eintracht Braunschweig plays. If you want to check out a game, use your student ID for a discount and head over to the Schloss Caree (across from the Schloss) and look for the store on the ground floor with all the soccer gear. There is a student discount, and ask for the standing section if you want the authentic experience.
- Okercabana: Theodor-Heuss-Straße, 38122 Braunschweig, Germany. This is basically a beach bar that was made in a park in Braunschweig. Try to check it out in the first few weeks before it closes for the winter.
- Botanischer Garten: Humboldtstraße 1, 38106 Braunschweig, Germany. This is a cool place to check out once while you’re in Braunschweig. There are indoor and outdoor sections and it is a really nice garden open to the public.

Transportation in Braunschweig

The choices for public transportation here are simple: bus or Straßenbahn (street tram). The trams are the heart of the city's transportation, and can get you to most of the main places. It would take a book to describe how you get everywhere, so we won’t do it here. It’s not hard to learn, and there’s a bunch of stuff that helps a lot. The best places to start are online:
http://stadtplan.braunschweig.de/stadtplan/stadtplan?setmode=oepnv
http://www.braunschweiger-verkehrs-ag.de/index.php
http://www.efa.de

The first link is a fantastic tool to get you around. In the Fahrplanauskunft section, put in the town (aka Braunschweig) and address or bus/tram stop (aka Emsstraße) of the start and end points, the date/time that you want to go, click Abschicken, and boom, it tells you exactly when and how to get where you want to go. The second link is the website of the transportation company, and there you can find timetables for all the busses and trams in the city (click Fahrpläne on the left). Don’t forget that on Saturday and Sunday everything runs less often and at different times, so check the times before you plan something for the weekend. They also run less often at night and not at all between ~1 and ~4 AM, so keep that in mind when you go out partying. Another good thing to know is that at night the M1 and the M3 wait for each other at Rathaus. That means that if you’re going between Weststadt/Friedrich-Wilhelm-Platz (lots of clubs there) and the Uni/Hamburger Straße area (Affenfelsen/APM and a bar or two), your best bet is to take the tram to Rathaus, where you’ll have a few minutes to get out and then switch to the other tram to take you home.
Shopping

To find grocery stores, search for any of these near your address (once you know where you’re staying): Aldi, Penny, Lidl, Edeka, Rewe, Real. This list is basically in order of cheapest to most expensive, but in some senses you do get what you pay for. So at Aldi, Penny, and Lidl things are pretty cheap but there is not a lot of selection and most of the stuff is their brand. Rewe is a better bet to find American-type things you’re missing, and Real is really the only one that is the size of an American supermarket, and also has a lot of other stuff like a Wal-Mart would, but is definitely the most expensive. It does have a foreign food section with some American stuff. Also, it would be a good idea to bring a dictionary to the store the first couple times.

- The Euro Shoppe is the dollar store of Germany, and it is a good place to find cheap notebooks, folders, some kitchen stuff like Tupperware, etc. There are a couple in the center of the city.
- Galeria Kaufhaus: Bohlweg 72 Braunschweig. This is basically Germany’s department store, so you can get a huge variety of things here.
- McPaper is in the basement of the Schloss and is where to go if you want more legit office supplies.
- Saturn is in the basement of the Schloss, and is where to go if you want any sort of electronics. It’s similar to a Best Buy.
- DM (Drogerie Markt) is also in the basement; it’s similar to a CVS, so head over here for shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.
- Woolworth’s: Damm 16, 38100 Braunschweig, Germany. This is a home goods store where you can also buy blankets, towels, rugs, glasses.
- Wolfsburg designer outlet, just 24 minutes away by train, many outlets with very good prices and a couple dress clothing stores for before the internship, also a good place to seek out a part time job for those with advanced German skills and lots of free time.

You are required to have your student ID on you at all times when you’re using the public transportation. For the buses you have to get on in front and show your ID to the driver. For the trams, you just get on and don’t have to show it at all. However, there are people roaming around the city in plainclothes whose job is to make sure that people have tickets. If you’re unlucky enough to have one on your tram, they’ll show you their badge and ask to see your ticket. Show them your student ID and everything’s fine, but if you don’t have it on you you’ll get slapped with a 60€ fine.

Also note that your student ID is only good for local transportation in BS. If you go somewhere else with its own transportation network (Bremen, Hamburg, etc.), you’ll have to buy a ticket there.

Or just use a bike! Braunschweig is a fantastic bike city. It's fairly small and flat and there are bike paths everywhere. It frees you from the public transport and you get some exercise too. It is illegal to bike on the left side of the road, and you will annoy everyone + look like an American + potentially get a ticket. You can also get a ticket for not having a working bell and light, so check for that when you’re buying one. Also remember to always lock your bike! The best place to get these is at the flea market (Flohmarkt); ask your Pate where to find it.
Costs to expect

It can be a bit difficult to figure out exactly what the year abroad will cost, but this is a summary of the main costs that you’ll have. Appendix A has a sample from a couple of students who kept track of their finances during their year in Germany, and shows an average idea of the main expenses that can’t be avoided. It doesn’t include one-time costs (list below), assumes you’re only going out a little bit for food, and doesn’t include other things you might want for yourself (Lederhosen aren’t cheap).

- $483 OIE Payment
- $10,878.00 URI In-state Tuition
- ~1,200€ for Group flight
- ~100€ at IKEA
- ~100€ minimum for smart phone or ~30€ for cheap phone
- ~60€ for cheap bike, lock, lights, basket (not strictly necessary)
- ~80€ monthly TK mandatory health insurance (ask Sigrid for a waiver form for the otherwise mandatory URI HTH insurance)
- 2 X ~190 Semester Fee in November and February
- Costs for moving (depends on how you choose to move, could be 200€ or more)

Sports

Sports are a great way to meet new friends, have fun, get some exercise, and try something new! Even better, most of the classes are free! Sign-ups take place online during the first week of classes, there are different levels, and you can take anything from soccer to fencing, handball to international dance. There are also fitness classes and some not-actually-sports like some board games. Because you have so many options, it’s a good idea to take a look at the catalog in advance (http://www1.unisport.etc.tubs.de/sportarten/aktueller_zeitraum/index.html) so that you know what you’re interested in. Some of the classes will fill up within minutes of the registration opening so if there is one you really want be ready to fill out your information as fast as you can! The sign-up date is also on the link above. There are different levels so check to make sure you aren’t going to an expert-level judo class.

VfL Wolfsburg, the closest (and best) 1. Bundesliga team, better competition than you'll see in Braunschweig, BUT! Braunschweig's stadium is very close to APM and tickets are cheap but you have to buy as soon as they're made available! They sell out quick.
ISN Group/Gauss Freunde

Here’s something quick and easy to help you find things to do in Braunschweig: the ISN (International Student Network) has a Facebook group, which is where they post a lot of different activities and meetups with people from all over the world right in Braunschweig. Definitely worth checking out, since you don’t want to be hanging around with boring Americans the whole time you’re there: https://www.facebook.com/groups/isnbs/.

The Gauss Friends (Gauss Freunde) is a pretty similar thing; they also have a lot of events for international students. Another group definitely worth checking out.
https://www.facebook.com/GaussFreunde
http://www.gauss-freunde.de/

Postage

If you need to send something in the mail you can find a Deutsche Post retailer or shop. If you are sending a package of any sort be prepared to fill out a sheet detailing what is inside the package, how much it weighs, and an approximate monetary worth. Sending boxes within Germany is very cheap, but shipping internationally (especially to the US) can get a bit expensive.

There are other package stores like Hermes or DHL which ship packages cheaper. Weigh your options before sending - especially to the U.S.

General Germany/Cultural Notes

When you buy bottled drinks in Germany you are assessed a small fee or “Pfand.” It is usually about 25 Euro cents and you can get it back by returning your bottles to the grocery store or to a bottle collection facility. If you’re returning bottles to a grocery store there is a machine, usually by the door, where you insert the bottle. The machine reads the tag and accepts (or sometimes declines) the bottle. You keep putting in all your bottles and when you are finished you are given a receipt that you give to the cashier and that amount will be taken off your bill or given to you in cash if you’re not purchasing anything. Basically, it’s a way to encourage people to recycle.

While we’re on the topic of grocery stores here are some helpful tips on making your shopping experience a pleasant one. For starters, no one is going to bag your groceries for you. In fact, they won’t provide you with bags either. If you’re buying several grocery items, bring your backpack or buy reusable bags at the checkout. The cashiers scan the items pretty fast so it’s a bit of a game trying to keep up with your bagging. While you’re picking up items you may notice that some things are labeled “Bio”; this means they are organic and probably cost more. Also note that vegetables, eggs, and dairy products are much fresher in Germany than they are in America, although the quality of meat is usually poorer.
When you first get to Germany, you will notice there are some definite cultural differences. One of the biggest differences is the importance of punctuality or “Pünktlichkeit.” If you have an appointment somewhere it is incredibly important that you arrive on time. This applies for class too! Take the earlier bus or tram, because the later one won’t wait.

Germany also has more relaxed policies on alcohol in public areas. It is legal to have an open container on the streets. HOWEVER, if you get out of hand or are belligerent you will be approached and can get in serious trouble.

Unlike in America, waiters/waitresses in Germany make real wages, and they do not depend on tips. Tipping is optional, but it is customary to round your bill up to the next euro or two if you received good service. For example, if your bill was 13.75€ you could say 15€ and that would be fine.

Helpful restaurant phrases:
“Können wir bitte bezahlen?” (Could we pay, please?)
“Welche Biersorten haben Sie vom Fass?” (What beers are on tap?)
“Ich hätte gern das Schnitzel.” (I would like the Schnitzel)

Do not cross the light when it is RED. If a police officer sees you he/she will stop you and you will get a ticket! Also somebody could yell at you in German... Generally try to avoid that.

Travel

Now that your paperwork is taken care of and you’ve got your schedule figured out, use some of your free time to do some exploring! First things first... where should you go?

Germany
Germany is a pretty big country chock full of everything from castles, to modern cities. Check out the festivals in Bremen during October, head to a city like Dresden or Nürnberg to experience famous Weihnachtsmärkte during the month of December, in February Köln is the place to be for Karneval, and during the spring/summer towns everywhere will be having festivals. Try the traditional food (every city has their own style of Bratwurst and Bier), buy homemade crafts, listen to folk music (or the cover bands playing classic rock songs), or watch a Maibaum be hoisted. If you want to experience real German culture check these festivals out, you won’t regret it!

Europe
If you’re looking to travel outside of Germany, or trying to escape the gray winter, you have several options. You can go anywhere from the Spanish party islands of Palma and Ibiza; to Florence, Italy; London, England; Prague, Czech Republic; Vienna, Austria; Paris, France; to Stockholm, Sweden; Amsterdam... the list goes on.
See as much as you can! Want to travel Europe? The cheapest flights are usually out of Bremen through Ryan Air, Google flights is an excellent tool for finding the cheapest flights and very easy to navigate. Reminder that with the semester fee it includes a Niedersachsen-Bahnticket. Students can travel many places for free (i.e. Hamburg, Bremen (airport), Hannover, Ostfriesische Inseln).
Safety
The number one thing you need to consider when you’re traveling is your safety. Let’s face it, you’re probably going to stick out as a tourist. You’re going to want to take pictures and you’ll probably have a map so you don’t get lost. That’s fine, just make sure you’re not a vulnerable tourist. Be aware of your surroundings, travel in groups, and avoid talking to random vendors who approach you. Pickpocketing is a real threat but if you’re smart/careful you won’t have any problems. In really crowded areas wear your backpack on your front, don’t keep your wallet in your back pocket, etc. Consider carabiners or chains for valuables, and always keep track of your stuff.

Proper planning will also cut down on stress while traveling. Have good directions to your hostel/hotel, know how to get to the train station/airport, pack a map or buy one as soon as you get to your destination. You might also want to have some ideas for what you might like to see so you can use your time efficiently. That’s not to say plan every minute, but there might be something special at your destination that you’d be sad to miss! If your transportation situation is well planned you will have a lot less stress.

Transportation
So let’s talk about transportation. In Europe you have lots of options for travel. See Appendix C for a breakdown of different modes. Here we are going to discuss the websites you will be using and some tips for getting your trip booked.

We’ll start with cars. You will be able to use your American driver’s license for the first 6 months that you are in Germany, but there are some things to keep in mind. For starters, gas is much more expensive in Germany than it is in the US. You can pay a little extra to ensure you get a diesel car. This is the best way to go for the money. Also, there is practically no “free” parking. Search car rental services for more information on the terms and conditions of renting a car in Germany. It is also possible to share a ride with someone who is going to the same place as you. This is called Mitfahrgelegenheit. You will probably be expected to pay part of the gas or a small fee to the person driving. It’s a popular option with college students traveling home for weekends/holidays and might be a good opportunity for you to practice your German.

You could also take advantage of Germany’s extensive train system. In the region of Niedersachsen you can ride the regional trains for free with your TUBS student ID. However, once you get out of Niedersachsen it is important that you have a ticket! You can also get to Hamburg and Bremen on RE trains for free, but need to pay for the trams/subways once you get there. The same applies for Hannover, which has public transit run by a different company.

If you plan on taking the train on several trips you might want to consider buying a “Bahn Card,” or train card, for discounted tickets. There are a couple different options with the Bahn Card and you should pick the one that best suits your needs

- Bahn25: This card will get you a 25% off of any price, whether it is the regular price or an already discounted one (Sparpreis). If you plan your trip well in advance this card allows you to take advantage of the additional 25% off of the Sparpreis option.
- Bahn50: This will get you 50% off of the regular price only. This option is great if you’re going to be taking the train for long distances and for spontaneous trips when a Sparpreis ticket is not available.

In general, if you plan ahead you can find great deals with DB. All information on timetables and buying and printing tickets can be found at: www.bahn.de.
For those of you planning on flying, look no further than Ryan Air (https://www.ryanair.com/), Europe’s favorite discount airline. Through Ryan Air you can book round trip flights for as little as 15€ (seriously!). But
remember that you get what you pay for. Ryanair usually flies out of airports that are located near, but not directly at large destinations. For example, if you’re flying to Barcelona you will actually land in Girona which is about a 1 hour bus ride from the city. That being said, there is always a bus service to take you to your actual destination. However, plan for that and make sure you buy and print your ticket before you leave! Another thing to keep in mind is the STRICT carry-on policies that Ryanair has. You are more than welcome to check baggage but if you are on a budget and you want to backpack it, just make sure that your bag meets the required size and weight restrictions. They will be checking!!!!

The closest Ryanair location to Braunschweig is in Bremen. You can use your TUBS ID to ride the train to the Bremen Hauptbahnhof and from there you’re going to need to buy a tram ticket and check the map for which one takes you to the airport (Flughafen). It will literally drop you off in front of the airport doors. Now that you’ve got your flight booked it’s time to find a hotel or hostel. In Europe it is possible to find cheap, clean, safe hostels. Check out http://www.hostelworld.com/ and http://www.hostelbookers.com/ for accommodations. While booking your hostel, look for places that include breakfast (but don’t expect too much); it can help you save on food. You will also need to decide whether you would like a private room (anything from a single bed to 3-4 bed room that you are sharing with your travel group) or a bed in a dormitory/shared room (a room with 4-8 bunk beds shared by you and other travelers). If you are worried about your belongings, bring a lock (any shared room will have lockers), and consider spending a few extra Euros on the private room. If you are feeling adventurous and want to meet some new people, try the dormitory.

Leaving Braunschweig

Here is a link from the IO on what to do and how to do it before you leave Braunschweig: https://www.tu-braunschweig.de/international/incomings/exchange/departure
Make sure you have all of this set up before you leave. The last thing you want is to have to come back from an internship city far away to get paperwork done, or get a fine for something. There is an explanation in the Classes section a few pages back on how to get your grades/transcripts done as well.
Internship Semester

When you’re getting your paperwork and contract for the internship, they might ask you if the internship is a Pflichtpraktikum. It is, because you need the internship to be considered part of the IEP, and this has some tax ramifications for your company, and you don’t have to pay taxes on this income in the US.

Finding a place to live in your internship city

Now that you know where you’re going to be working for your internship it’s time to find a place to live. When looking for a place, consider commute time and utilities. Some companies may have housing available for you so be sure and ask. If not, be prepared to do some searching on your own. Look at www.wg-gesucht.de/ and www.easyroommate.com/ for finding a place on your own, as well as searching “WG & Wohnung [your city]” on facebook. Here is an example facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/WG.Zimmer frei.in.Regensburg. Also try searching “Zimmer frei in [your city]” on google or other search engines.” Start looking as soon as you know where you’ll be or you might end up having to pay out the nose for a place. Another good bet is to see if there are any universities in the city and if you can stay there. You will still be registered as a student at the TU for this semester, so they will often allow that. While you’re searching for housing, beware of scams! Scammers will list an apartment and then begin corresponding with you. They may claim they are out of town and need you to wire them a deposit. Be very careful about sending money without having signed your contract, viewed the house, received your keys, etc. Hate to say it, but if it seems too good to be true, it probably is a scam.

Getting in contact with roommates

From the websites listed above, you can find the emails or faces of the roommates and send them a message, preferably in German and English. Let them know you are doing in Germany, your reason for moving to the new town for the internship, how long you will be staying (6 months), etc. They will most likely want to meet with you once (or skype with you) to get to know you better. Living alone is not particularly bad, it will just be harder to get to know the city and finding new friends.

How to move to your new city

Now that you’ve got a place to live you’ve got to get all your stuff there! Here are a few options: Car vs. Train: If you feel comfortable driving in Germany, and you are moving before the 6 month time period, it is possible to rent a car to move to your internship location. If you are moving somewhere a little more remote it might be the easiest thing to do and you could carpool with other IEP students. If you don’t want to drive, you can always take the train. If you have a lot of stuff (your things will multiply when you aren’t looking...) it might be a little tricky getting everything on and off the train so pick one with as few connections as possible so you don’t have to move things around several times. When planning your travel, be mindful of what’s going on in the city as well as the time of day. You don’t want to show up and have to take the soccer tram right before game time with all of your suitcases!
Registering in the new city

Your company should be able to point you in the direction of the *Einwohnermeldeamt* in your new city. You will probably have to fill out a short form with information about how long you are staying and where you are living. This step should be done shortly after you arrive. If you happen to get official mail from your new city, speak with someone about it; they likely want to see you for one reason or another.

German Workplace Culture

Welcome to your internship! The workplace in Germany might be a little different from what you've experienced in the US. Depending on your job, the dress code could be very casual (jeans and button-down shirts) or it could be formal (suit and tie). For your first day, err on the side of caution and dress more formally. At that point you can ask what is typical and take a look at what everyone else in your office is wearing.

Another small side-note: if people say "Mahlzeit" to you, it is a way of saying that they're going to lunch soon and you should come! It’s also used as a general greeting in the cafeteria and pretty much any time of the day. The Germans like to eat I guess...

GER 315/316 & Registering for Fall Classes

In order to receive GER 315/316 credits while you are abroad, you will be assigned essays that are due about every few weeks. Prof. Tracksdorf will send you a list of topics (internship, travel, workplace culture, etc.) and due dates. Make sure you keep up with these and submit them on time. They will sneak up on you! At the end of the semester you will also need to take a survey and make some posters for the IEP. Reports will be graded, so write them well!

During this semester you will also need to register for fall classes. Usually this is as simple as emailing your advisor to have your hold lifted, and then checking the curriculum sheets for what you have left.
Preparing to Leave Germany

Before you leave Germany it is important that you take time to close all of your accounts. It is best if you do not wait until the last minute to take care of this step because sometimes you will need to give advance notice of cancellation. Start thinking about this in June/July so it’s not a mess right at the end. These things all get much more difficult/expensive once you have to make transatlantic calls, so get this done before you go!

One of the things that will need to be closed in advance is your Bahn Card. Stop by the train station and let them know you are going back to America and would like to cancel your card. They will probably have a few papers for you to sign but it’s no problem. If you don’t do this, you will automatically be charged for a second year of the service.

You will need to do the same kind of thing for your bank account, gym membership, insurance, internet provider, and phone account. Call them and ask what they need for cancellation, or go to one of their stores. If you have any questions you should send an email to the IO in Braunschweig or ask a colleague. Another stop that you should make is at the Einwohnermeldeamt. This will be the same place that you registered at when you first arrived. Just let them know you are leaving. Once again, they will probably have a paper or two for you to sign but it’s no big deal.

If you don’t have a prepaid phone, also go to a store a few weeks before you leave to ask them how to cancel the plan. Amazingly, some of them will insist that you send a letter of cancellation, so this isn’t something you can do immediately.

The cancellation of the insurance from TK has previously been done automatically by the IO, but it is worth checking with the IO to make sure this is being done. In recent years, students have had to prove that they are leaving the country to cancel, and a copy of all of your basic documents (Aufenthaltstitel, plane ticket, etc) should take care of it. A simple handwritten letter saying you are moving out on AUG XX has also worked.

What papers to keep

Hang on to your transcripts from classes, bank information, insurance info, and any document you have saying you have closed an account, just in case. That way, if anything happens, you have documents you need.

As far as Deutsche Bank goes, you can either cancel it before you leave or do it from home. On that note, it is much less of a hassle to cancel **BEFORE** you leave the country. If you are going to do it from home, make sure you keep your TAN numbers, so you can electronically transfer the cash to your BOA account. You can also tell them you are going to be in America, which lets you use your Deutsche Bank card to take out money in America. Changing your address to your home address before you go is also a good suggestion. One way or another, go talk to them and make sure you have this figured out before you leave.
Super-Senior Year

Reverse culture shock

Well, you’ve done it! You lived in another country for an entire year, you (hopefully) had some incredible experiences, made new friends, and learned a lot about yourself in the process. Now, you’re back at good ole URI for your final hoorah as an undergrad.

You might be thinking that reverse culture shock is a myth (yeah, we did too). I mean, what’s so strange about coming home? You’re hanging out with your old friends again, doing all the things you missed in Germany, driving your car, and speaking English!

But take our word for it, there are things that you’re going to miss about living abroad. You were independent, you had a job, lived on your own, and didn’t have homework or studying! And now, well... it’s back to the grind. Instead of hopping on the train and going off to a European city for the weekend, you’re buried in senior design projects and eating ramen noodles. (Or perhaps whipping up Schnitzel like a boss) But it’s ok, you’re not alone! It’s not all doom and gloom and there are ways to get out of that funk, but we’ll get to that in a second, first let’s take care of some paper work.

Getting your classes transferred & Intent to Graduate forms

You’re going to want to do this ASAP when you get back on campus. Bring your transcripts from the summer school course (yeah, that paper from that thing a year ago) and the regular courses to Sigrid. She will have some papers for you to update and help you make sure you’ve got all you need to graduate. Then you’re going to take a stack of papers including your Intent to Graduate Form (http://www.uri.edu/artsci/forms/pdf/Intent_to_Graduate.pdf) down to the College of Arts and Sciences to have your graduation audit. They’ll take all your papers, review them, and send you a letter back letting you know what’s left to take care of in your final semesters.

You’ll be doing something similar for engineering, especially if you are transferring engineering courses. You can see the College of Engineering’s web page for the step-by-step process: (http://egr.uri.edu/students/declare-intent-to-graduate/).

Sharing Your Experiences

Remember that reverse culture shock thing that we were telling you about? Well, this might help. One great way to get out of that funk and back to your normal self is to get involved. Why not help out the next generation of IEP students? They are going to want to hear all about your adventures and ask you lots of advice and questions. You could even be the next person to write a pamphlet like this! See the German IEP Coordinator (TI House office) about being a Student Ambassador. You’ll get to talk to prospective IEP students and 3rd year students about to embark on their own journey, and help make the IEP a better program. What better way to remember your time abroad than by giving back to the program that made it possible?
There are also programs through the IO that will allow you to connect with international students coming to URI. As a Peer Ambassador you would get to be the Pate student! They hold fun events on campus like salsa dancing, intramural teams, Thanksgiving dinner, and much more.

While you’re at it you can keep your German skills sharp by going to Kaffeestunde, or even living with international students at the IEP House! The Assistant Director of the IEP Living & Learning Community will send applications to live in IEP housing via email in spring when you are abroad.

Whatever you decide to do, make sure you take some time from job and grad school applications, interviews, and senior projects to enjoy your senior year.
Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Budgets

It can be a bit difficult to figure out exactly what the year abroad will cost, but this is a summary of the main costs that you’ll have. Appendix A has a sample from a couple of students who kept track of their finances during their year in Germany, and shows an average idea of the main expenses that can’t be avoided. It doesn’t include one-time costs (list below), assumes you’re only going out a little bit for food, and doesn’t include other things you might want for yourself (Lederhosen aren’t cheap).

- $483 x 2  OIE Payment for off-campus studies for both semesters
- $450 for 12 months of HTH repatriation/emergency evacuation/health insurance (you can get this insurance waived and purchase a less expensive repatriation coverage only (ISOS, MEDEX) but that requires extra paperwork (waiver to be signed by URI risk manager, Sigrid, Tom H.)
- $10,878.00  URI In-state Tuition
- $1000 for flights (CONDOOR one-way PVD-FRA; LH connection to Hannover; CONDOOR one way back FRA-PVD)
- ~100€ at IKEA (or get starter kit from APM)
- ~100€ minimum for smart phone or ~30€ for cheap phone
- ~60€ for cheap bike, lock, lights, basket (not strictly necessary)
- ~80€ monthly TK mandatory health insurance (required for study/internship semesters)
- 40€ for BahnKarte 25 (highly recommended, explained in travel section)
- 2 X ~250€ TUBS Semester Fee in November and February for both semesters
- 100€ for current visa fee for residency permit
- Costs for moving (depends on how you choose to move, could be 200€ or more)

Sample budget of recurring costs TU Braunschweig

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample TUBS Month</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>320 – 491€</td>
<td>(paid 5 times)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Bill</td>
<td>10 – 20€</td>
<td>Per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Health Insurance</td>
<td>80€</td>
<td>Per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>150€</td>
<td>Estimate, obviously highly dependent on your choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Expenses</td>
<td>50€</td>
<td>(Toiletries, haircuts, laundry, postcards, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment/ Nightlife</td>
<td>50€</td>
<td>This depends entirely on your own choices, but is something you should account for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>150-200€</td>
<td><strong>Regional</strong> train in Niedersachsen is free, but trips to other parts of Germany and especially to other countries can be expensive</td>
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## Sample budget recurring costs Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Internship Month</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>300 – 600€</td>
<td>Cost of living is highly dependent on city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Bill</td>
<td>10 – 20€</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
<td>80€</td>
<td>Per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>150€</td>
<td>Also dependent on city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Expenses</td>
<td>50€</td>
<td>(Toiletries, haircuts, laundry, postcards, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tram Month Pass</td>
<td>40 – 80€</td>
<td>Many of you will need this to get to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment/Nightlife</td>
<td>50€</td>
<td>Same as first semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>150-250€</td>
<td>If you aren’t staying in Niedersachsen, then the train and other public transport in your area might not be cheap, and trips to other countries are usually a bit pricy</td>
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<td>EXPENSE</td>
<td>COST</td>
<td>FREQ.</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>OIE</td>
<td>483.00 €</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flug</td>
<td>1,100.00 €</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahn 50 Karte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Techniker Krankenkasse</td>
<td>82.00 €</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miete (APM)</td>
<td>391.00 €</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU-BS Bezahlungen</td>
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<td>Kaution (APM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaution (Praktikum)</td>
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<td>Miete (Praktikum)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebensmittel</td>
<td>30.00 €</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notgeld</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSE</th>
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<th>TOTAL (EUR)</th>
<th>TOTAL (USD)</th>
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<td>Zimmersachen (IKEA)</td>
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<td>Mobilplan (AldiTalk)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>16,434.00 €</td>
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## Appendix B: Common Abbreviations In This Handbook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Braunschweig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
<td>European Exchange Student Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hbf</td>
<td>Hauptbahnhof = Main Train Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>TU Braunschweig’s International Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISN</td>
<td>International Student Network, works closely with ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIE</td>
<td>URI Office of International Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SZ</td>
<td>Sprachenzentrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUBS</td>
<td>Technische Universität Braunschweig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG</td>
<td>Wohngemeinschaft = Apartment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Transportation Glossary

Trains
- All the trains are run by the national train company Deutsche Bahn ("German Rail"). They also run some of the city transportation
- ICE/ICE Sprinter - Inter-City Express: The fast, expensive trains that make relatively few stops. Mostly run between big cities
- IC - Inter-City: Cheaper, slower version of the ICE. Either makes more stops or provides a direct/non-stop link between two cities, depending on the train
- RE - Regional Express: Fastest local train. Like the ICE/IC of small towns (Free in Niedersachsen with TUBS ID in 2nd class seating ONLY!)
- RB - Regional Bahn: The slowest trains that stop at every town big enough for a train platform (Free in Niedersachsen with TUBS ID in 2nd class seating ONLY!)

City Transportation
- The S-Bahn is run by Deutsche Bahn, but the others are run either by the local transportation agency or by a cooperation of the two
- S-Bahn - Schnellbahn ("Fast Train"): Similar to a subway, but usually faster and makes fewer stops. Also usually ground level or elevated. Often runs not only inside the city, but also connects the city to suburbs up to 45mins away
- U-Bahn - Untergrundbahn ("Underground Train"): Subway, big cities only
- Straßenbahn: Street trams, usually found in smaller cities in place of the S/U-Bahn
- Buses: They go everywhere, but are often neither fast nor punctual
Appendix D: Info for DAAD scholarship holders

If you were fortunate enough to receive the DAAD Undergraduate Scholarship, then there's some extra stuff that you should know.

First, do the paperwork the DAAD sends you as soon as you get to Germany. The Arrival Announcement can be sent as soon as you move in (you need your address), and the bank account information can be sent (obviously) as soon as you set up your bank account. It's a good idea to fax the bank account info. An easy way to do that is to fill it out and ask someone from the IO to fax it for you after the IO Orientation.

On that note, make sure you let the IO people at the orientation session know that you are a DAAD Scholar. Thanks to the DAAD, you don't have to pay the registration fees mentioned above, and you also don't need to sign up for insurance. Make sure you bring your entire award packet, because the insurance people will need to see your award certificate and possibly other related paperwork in order to give you an exception stating that you already have valid insurance. You will also need to report any salary you earn in Germany. Since you will have an internship, you will need to do this. The person to talk to about this is Uschi Niethammer <niethammer@daad.org>

Throughout the year the DAAD will also host various scholarship holder meetings/seminars. The most significant is the Welcome Seminar in Bonn. It's held at the beginning of October and is free. The DAAD pays for a hostel, all your food, busses in Bonn, and reimburses you for a train ticket up to IC-class (though if you can get an ICE ticket for the same price they don't mind). The seminars are kinda boring (mostly more intercultural fun), but you get to meet a lot of cool people from all over the US and Canada. (I met a couple people who are studying in other parts Germany that I still meet up with for traveling and hanging out.) The Friday-Saturday seminar is also a valid reason to miss a day of the summer course... as long as you pitch it well. In the months after the welcome thing, the DAAD will send some of its management people around Germany to meet the scholarship holders in different regions. This is different from the welcome thing for a couple of reasons. First is that the welcome seminar is only for US/Canadian students, whereas the regional meetings are for any student that receives DAAD money. That means that at the regional meeting roughly 45 countries will be represented, and that you may be the only American there. Second, at the welcome seminar, students are studying all over Germany. Lots are in München, lots more are in Berlin, etc. At the regional one, it's more, well, regional. All of the students will either be studying at the TUBS or at the neighboring HBK arts school. The regional meeting isn't as much fun as the one in Bonn, but it's still free food and you get to meet interesting people.