



GUIDELINES FOR NEWCOMERS BERLIN

**Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces
Research Campus Potsdam-Golm • 14424 Potsdam**



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Directory

Welcome	1
Your arrival	2
Works Council	3
Residence Registration	5
Work Permit Applications	7
Income Tax Card	7
Social Security	7
Health Insurance and Services	8
Health Insurance and Services	
Money	9
Opening a bank account	9
Accommodation	10
Looking for an apartment	10
Alternative Options	11
Contracts	11
Terminology	12
Public Transport	13
Traveling on the Semester Ticket	13
Länder tickets	14
Communication	14
Mail	14
Telephone	14
Internet access	15
Schools	15
Further education	15
Day Care, Kindergarten	15
Other Possibilities	16
Driving Schools	16
Leisure	17
Restaurants and Bars	17
Cinemas	17
Religion	18
Shopping	18
PhD	19
PhD-Student Network of the Max-Planck-Society	19
New regulations for Ph.D. students at Potsdam University	20
PhD-Defense	22
Alumni	26
Imprint	27



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces



Welcome

The Max-Planck-Institute of Colloids and Interfaces would like to extend a warm welcome to you and wishes you all the best for your stay in Germany! With these guidelines we would like to inform you about the formal paperwork necessary for your stay and also to give you some basic information about the life and living in Germany.

You can visit the official website of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany for a first impression and for getting a general idea about Germany before you come here www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/startseite.html, www.berlin.de/, the official Berlin website, and www.visitberlin.de offer you a broader range of information about Berlin in particular in various languages.

Welcome Office

For any questions or problems you might have before or during your stay in Germany, feel free to contact the MPIKG's Welcome Office. You will receive assistance with finding an apartment, a kindergarten place or with filling in any documents. You can either just send an eMail bezohra@mpikg.mpg.de, or come by personally- office hours are Tuesday and Thursday 11-14h, MPIKG K 1.228a, 0049+331 567-9465.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Your arrival

The secretaries [Gudrun Conrad](#) (Theory, Room K-1.122, Phone 9601), [Kerstin Gabbe](#) (Biomaterials, Room K-2.211, Phone 9401), [Dorothee Böhme](#) (Bio-molecular Systems, Phone 9301), [Stefanie Riedel](#) (Interfaces, Room K-2.236, Phone 9201), [Annette Pape](#) (Colloid Chemistry, Room K-2.122A, Phone 9501) and [Rita Heine](#) (Administration, Room Z-1.023, Phone 9101) will help you to answer your questions. Please contact them after your arrival.

- Walk around with the [Laufzettel](#) and don't miss out on your
- [Ph.D.](#) (www.mpikg.mpg.de/br/PhD.html)
- [foreigners'](#) (www.mpikg.mpg.de/br/foreigner.html)
- [equality](#) (www.mpikg.mpg.de/gba/index.html) and
- [work's council representatives!](#) (www.mpikg.mpg.de/br/BR-main.html)
- Get inscribed as a student at the university. As a Ph.D. student, you need to do so – and you will get a good deal on public transportation.
- Please introduce yourself per e-mail to the institute

The [computer support](#) is responsible for installing your computer account. After your arrival please contact [Roy Pfitzner](#) first (Room K-1.118, Phone 9636) for permission to use the institute IT environment and for the setup of an email account. Please contact the computer support for any problems you may have with your computer. They will help you.

[Michael Born](#) (Room K-2.235, Phone 9646): specialist for PC's with Windows stuff, mobile clients and presentation equipment.

[Marco Ehlert](#) (Room K-1.110, Phone 9642): specialist for the computer clusters and all Linux-related stuff.

[Ingo Fiedler](#) (Room K-0.237, Phone 9658): specialist for PC's and Server with Windows stuff.

[Roy Pfitzner](#) (Room K-1.118, Phone 9636): Head of the IT-Group, specialist for central institute servers, IT-Security and all network-related stuff.

[Hans-Jürgen Schanze](#) (Room K-0.237, Phone 9644): specialist for PC's and all hardware-related stuff.

[Frank Seidel](#) (Room K-0.237, Phone 9649): specialist for Windows server and messaging

The [library](#) of the Max-Planck-Institute of Colloids and Interfaces is a specialized library offering services mainly to the scientists at the institute. The holdings include approximately 4500 monographs and conference proceedings and 100 scientific journals. They are searchable in the Online-Catalogue.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask the librarians [Dorothea Stscherbina](#) (Phone 9160, 9161) and [Silke Niehaus-Weingärtner](#) (Phone 9162).
www.mpikg.mpg.de/library/english/index.html



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Works Council

The Works Council represents the employees of the Institute in all affairs concerning the relationship between employer (that is the Max Planck Society, respectively the directors of our Institute) and employee. Consequently every employee may contact the works council during working hours for the purpose of obtaining information or advice, or if they have any requests, suggestions, or complaints regarding some aspect of their labor conditions.

Our Institute is represented by the following members:

Henryk Pitas

Chairperson, member of central Works Council
(Tariffs, employment law, and on-the-job-training)
Phone: -9123, fax: -9121, Z-1.104, pitas@mpikg.mpg.de

Sylvia Ost

Assisting chairperson, member of central Works Council
(Research politics, new technologies and problems of handicapped persons)
Phone: -9105, fax: -9106, Z-1.021, ost@mpikg.mpg.de

Olaf Niemeyer

Member
(Operational safety)
Phone: -9268, K-U.103, niemeyer@mpikg.mpg.de

Antje Reinecke

Member and representative for equal opportunities
(Equal opportunities, Institute's day care facility)
Phone: -9404, K-1.228, reinecke@mpikg.mpg.de

Dorothea Stscherbina

Member
(Minutes)
Phone: -9160, K-003, stscherbina@mpikg.mpg.de

Christine Pilz-Allen

Member
(Research politics, new technologies, Works Council's webpage)
Phone: -9427, K-1.117, pilz@mpikg.mpg.de

Günter Haseloff

Member
(Internal organization)
Phone: -9132, Z-0.105A/B, haseloff@mpikg.mpg.de



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Follow-ups in the Works Council

Andreas Kretzschmar

Member of canteen commission

Phone: -9131, Z-0.105A, kretzsch@mpikg.mpg.de

Thomas Vogt

Phone: -7882, Z-0.123 (next to the store), vogt@mpikg.mpg.de

Equal Opportunity Representative

Equal opportunities are a highly important issue at the Max-Planck-Institute of Colloids and Interfaces. To guarantee these, counselling and support is provided by the equal opportunity representative. The representative will help to avoid and if needed remove institutional disadvantages to students, staff and the faculty because of gender.

For more information, please see

<http://www.mpikg.mpg.de/gba/front/index.htm>.

Our Institute is currently represented by:

- **Antje Reinecke**
Phone: -9404, K-1.228, reineckel@mpikg.mpg.de
- **Antje Völkel**
Phone: -9528, K-1.100, antje.voelkel@mpikg.mpg.de



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Residence Registration – The “Einwohnermeldeamt”

Within a week of finding permanent accommodation, you have to register your address at the local Residence Registration Office (*Einwohnermeldeamt*), usually located in the town or city hall. In Berlin you will find several offices, depending on in which district you are living. This link gives you a list of all offices in Berlin, their office hours, address and closest U-Bahn or S-Bahn if there is one.

www.meldebox.de/Einwohnermeldeamt/Berlin/.

Each subsequent change of address must also be registered with the relevant local authority.

To register you need to present your passport and visa (if you have one), a copy of the lease or rental agreement and a completed registration form, which is usually available at the *Einwohnermeldeamt* or here:

<http://www.berlin.de/formularserver/formular.php?52009>. You will also need this additional form
www.berlin.de/formularserver/formular.php?52014.

Offices and agencies have varying opening times, particularly in the afternoons, so check before you go.

If there are no problems, you will be given a confirmation form (*Anmeldebestätigung*) as proof of your registration. Make a copy (or better several) of the *Anmeldebestätigung* as you will need it a lot during your first weeks in Germany. This serves as a proof of your address and a lot of institutions like banks, libraries etc. will ask for it.

At the *Einwohnermeldeamt*, you will also receive an income-tax card, if you're eligible for one.

You need your residence registration first in order to apply for a residency permit (*Aufenthaltsgenehmigung*). Once you have obtained the *Anmeldebestätigung*, take it to the immigration office to get your residency permit.

Residency Permit

Types of permits and application procedures

Everybody staying in Germany for more than 3 months must obtain a residence permit; this includes EU citizens.

Residency permits are handled by your local immigration office (*Ausländerbehörde*) at

Landesamt für Bürger- und Ordnungsangelegenheiten, Ausländerbehörde (Abteilung IV), Friedrich-Krause-Ufer 24, 13353 Berlin



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

for details see

<http://www.berlin.de/labo/auslaender/dienststelle/index.html>. In order to apply for a residency permit, first register your residence at the local *Einwohnermeldeamt*, where you can also get the application forms for a residency permit. You can also get the forms here <http://www.berlin.de/labo/auslaender/dienstleistungen/ae-info.html>.

Citizens of the EU, United States of America, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland may apply for a residency permit after entering Germany without a visa. Citizens of other countries are required to apply and obtain a visa prior to entry (an option also open to US citizens) at a German embassy or consulate in their country of residence. When applying for a residence permit, you must produce some or all of the following documents:

- a valid identity card or passport
- two passport photographs
- your residence registration (*Anmeldebestätigung*)
- proof of means of support (usually a letter from your employer) or - in case of students or non-employed - of adequate financial resources (*Finanzierungsnachweis* - around €700/month). The self-employed do not have to prove their financial situation.

You will also have to prove its purpose by one of the following documents:
In addition and depending on your status during your stay in Germany proof of employment or offer of employment (usually an employment contract or letter from the Max Planck Institute)
Fellowship holders have to show written proof from the Max Planck Institute.

If you are employed as a scientist by the Max Planck Society, you do not need a work permit. Sometimes it is difficult to convince the officials of this fact, but things usually work out.

Before going to the local immigration office, you should call to check out the latest details. Requirements change frequently, so you should try to get as much information as possible. An *Ausländerbehörde* is not exactly a fun-place to spend your time, so try to avoid multiple visits because you are missing a document! Also check opening times before you got there!

Your application for a residency permit will usually be processed within one or two weeks. In this time you will be covered by a certificate stating that you are awaiting a residency permit.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Work Permit Applications

In general, foreigners from non-EU countries, from countries not affiliated with the European Economic Area or persons who are not married to a citizen of the EU or the European Economic Area require a work permit when working in Germany.

There are, however, some exceptions. Scientific employees of research institutions which are financed mostly or solely by public funds do not need a work permit, providing that their skills and abilities are of a public interest to Germany. Because of this, most Max Planck scientists do not require a work permit. Nevertheless, you have to submit a copy of your contract, job description, academic transcript and university degree to be exempt from applying for a work permit. Foreign fellowship holders do not require a work permit because they are not employees. The same applies for students not working more than 90 days or 3 months a year.

All other foreigners, including the scientists' spouses, require a work permit for Germany. It can be obtained at the employment office for foreigners ([Arbeitsamt für Ausländer](#)). There you receive a form that has to be filled in by yourself and also by your potential employer. According to German law, you have to wait 4 weeks before receiving a work permit and, you are not allowed to work while your application is being dealt with. That is because the officials have to make sure that no other German or EU citizen fits your position. You have to renew your work permit every year. In order to receive a residence permit, you must take your work permit to the foreign registration office along with your residents' registration, documentation of health insurance, a valid passport and a passport photo.

Income Tax Card

Every employee in Germany is required to have an income tax card ([Lohnsteuerkarte](#)). This is issued by the residents' registration office ([Einwohnermeldeamt](#)).

Social Security

The German social security system

Insurance policies can be divided between compulsory and voluntary insurance. Compulsory insurance falls under the German social security system.

The term 'social security' covers five main categories - the '5 pillars' of the social security system:

- Health insurance
- Long-term care insurance
- Pension insurance
- Unemployment insurance
- Work accident insurance



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

If you have to contribute to the German pension plan, you can apply for refunds- but only for 24 months after your contract has ended and only if you were not required to be insured in Germany within this time.

International social insurance

Within the EU there is an agreement which allows benefits to be paid out to entitled persons across borders and ensures that they receive health care in other EU member states. There are also some social security agreements with non-EU European states and countries outside Europe. For example, EU nationals working in Germany can continue to pay social security abroad for a year.

Health Insurance and Services

You are required to have a health insurance for the duration of your stay in Germany. The type of your insurance (statutory or private) depends on the work contract that you have signed with the Institute. Check www.mpikg.mpg.de/br/pdf/q02anlb2e.pdf for detailed information about benefits offered by health insurance funds to foreign fellows.

The webpage www.aerzte-berlin.de offers you a list of physicians in Berlin. You can also specify your search according to the doctor's language competence.

Pharmacies

You can get prescription and non-prescription drugs at the pharmacy. For emergencies, there is always at least one pharmacy open in every area day and night. The pharmacy at Berlin Hauptbahnhof for example is opened 24/7 but you can also check online at www.akberlin.de/akb/oeffentlich/notdienst/index.cfm for a detailed list of all pharmacies that are opened in case of emergency..



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Money

In Germany it is still common to pay cash, although, credit cards and EC-cards are generally accepted but not always. So make sure that your credit card will be accepted before using it. It is recommendable to get a bank account as soon as possible since your salary or grant has to be transferred to it and you can carry out regular payments such as rent and electricity.

The Postbank offers bank accounts without any charges as long as more than 1.000 EUR per month are paid to that account <http://www.postbank.de>. You can also check <http://dkb.de/>, <http://www.deutsche-bank.de/index.htm> or any other bank that suits your needs best.

If you have frequent payments from or to your bank account in your home country, ask your home bank whether it cooperates with a bank in Germany. This could shorten and cheapen the transfer of money to a bank abroad.

Opening a bank account

For opening an account you will need your passport or registration card.

1. Current account

The most common form of account in Germany is a *Girokonto* (checking or current account). Most financial transactions are completed using this type of account, such as receiving wages or paying rent. In general, a current account allows you to:

- withdraw money from your bank using an EC-card. This is normally free of charge at your own bank's ATMs, but a fee of several EUR may be charged for withdrawing money from other banks' ATMs;
- transfer money to pay bills using transfer forms;
- set up regular fixed amount payments (e.g. your rent) paid by standing order (*Dauerauftrag*);
- set up regular payments (even of variable amounts, e.g. telephone bills and health insurance contributions) to be paid by direct debit.

At many banks you can choose between several current accounts with various facilities (e.g. online banking, interest, credit card at no charge, etc.) but the fees also differ. As a student you can apply for exemption from the usual account charges (*Kontoführungsgebühren*).

2. EC-card: electronic cash

When you have opened a current account, you are able to order an EC-card from your bank. The card works like a credit card with the same advantages and risks. If you lose your card, contact your bank as soon as possible. You can also report your loss to the emergency service- 116 116, please have your bank account number and bank code at hand.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Accommodation

Housing in Germany is either let unfurnished, partly furnished, or fully furnished. Unfurnished accommodation is the most common and it really is "unfurnished", i.e. without lamps, curtains, or any kitchen equipment. Moving into your first German apartment can be quite a shock: not only are you supposed to supply your own light fittings, but you will literally have to buy and install everything from the washing machine to the kitchen sink. Since this isn't exactly cheap, you should allow extra in your budget to get established. A furnished kitchen is usually mentioned separately in advertisements.

Looking for an apartment...

Looking for an affordable apartment in Germany can be a time-consuming and nerve-wracking experience. On arrival in Germany, you may find it necessary to stay in temporary accommodation for a few weeks or months until you can move into an apartment.

...in the Guest-House

The guest house is accepted for all successive steps, if you have a certification by the Institute's secretariat - Frau Heine).

...in Newspapers

Large sections of all kinds of accommodation can be found in various local newspapers on Wednesday and Tuesday. You can also place an advertisement in the newspaper yourself.

Der Tagesspiegel, apartments in the Saturday edition
Berliner Morgenpost, Saturday edition
Berliner Zeitung, weekend edition
Zweite Hand, FRI
Zitty, every 2 weeks
Tip Berlin, every 2 weeks

...on the Internet

www.immobilienscout24.de
www.mitwohnzentrale.de
www.berlin-online.de
www.immobilienhai.de
www.immobilien.de
www.wg-gesucht.de
www.immonet.de
www.studenten-wg.de
www.zweitehand.de
www.kleinanzeigen.zitty.de
www.berlin.kijiji.de
http://service.tip-berlin.de/anzeigen/index.php/Wohnen
www.house-of-nations.de/hon-en/index.php
www.immobilien.de
www.homecompany.de



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Alternative options

Shared apartments: For those who are coming to Germany alone, *WG's* or *Wohngemeinschaften* (shared living arrangements) are often a good option as you can live cheaply and meet new people. *WG's* are most common among students and young professionals. Be aware that *WG-Zimmer* are often not furnished.

Temporary accommodation: If you intend to stay in Germany for a limited time, you can consider temporary accommodation, which is also a solution as an interim solution before settling in more permanently. In Germany, tenants are often allowed to sublet their apartment for a limited time. Since many young Germans travel a lot, this is actually quite common. Sublets can generally be found under the terms *Untermiete* or *Zwischenmiete*. This means that the flats or rooms are sublet with a contract signed with the tenant, not the landlord.

Contracts

Lease and deposit

Before signing the lease, it is essential to read the document very carefully, including the small print. If you are interested in an apartment, ask the landlord if he could give you a draft of the lease.

As soon as you have rented the flat you will have to pay a deposit of up to 3 months' rent. If you leave the apartment without any damages, this will be refunded when you move out.

Normally, the lease includes the rent amount and additional costs, the payment for any necessary repairs up to about 80 EUR, responsibility for renovation costs when moving out, length of lease and terms of rent increase. Furthermore the lease may contain additional arrangements (use of garden, parking lots etc). If you want to keep pets, you must ask the landlord before getting any. The lease also includes general house rules like cleaning the staircases, entrance area or the basement.

Before moving into your new home you should make an appointment with the landlord to check the apartment for any defects. All the details should be included in the lease, so you won't be held responsible for any damage that you have not caused when you move out. The list has to be signed by the landlord- keep it until you move out!



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Terminology

German housing terms and abbreviations

The indications about the level of rent in most cases refer to basic rent (*Kaltmiete*) which means that you will have to pay additionally for electricity, water, heating and waste disposal (*Nebenkosten*). In contrast these subsidiary charges are normally included in the rent for furnished flats. When you are looking for a flat, keep in mind that *Warmmiete* includes all costs, *Kaltmiete* does not.

3 Zi.-Whg = three-room apartment

3 ZKDB = three rooms plus kitchen, hallway, bath

Abstand = you have to buy some of the fixtures and furnishings

DG (Dachgeschoss) = loft apartment

EBK (Einbauküche) = built-in kitchen

EG (Erdgeschoss) = ground floor

HH (Hinterhaus) = back of the house (might have little light)

K (Kaution) = deposit

kalt = heating extra

NR (Nichtraucher) = non-smokers

KM (Kaltmiete) = (cold rent)

KN = kitchenette

Nachmieter = tenant who takes over an old lease

NMM (Nettomonatsmiete) = net monthly rent (plus costs for heating, electricity, gas, water, waste disposal)

MVZ (Monatliche Vorauszahlung) = rent in advance

Prov. (Provision) = commission

qm (Quadratmeter) = square metre (size of the apartment)

TG (Tiefgarage) = underground garage

VH (Vorderhaus) = front of the house

WG (Wohngemeinschaft) = shared flat

WBS erford. (Wohnberechtigungsschein) = subsidised housing only rented to holders of a special permit (WBS)

Wfl. (Wohnfläche) = living space

WM (Warmmiete) = warm rent (this is the cold rent plus additional cost)

Zi (Zimmer) = room(s)

ZH (Zentralheizung) = central heating

zzgl. NK = plus extra charges (heating, electricity, etc.)



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Public Transport

Berlin has an extensive network system of underground lines (U-Bahn), urban railway lines (S-Bahn), buses and tramways (Tram), allowing you to reach every location in town very easily. There are three fare zones:

zone A is delineated by the S-Bahn ring and encompasses the city centre,

zone B ends at the city limits.

Zone C includes Berlin's immediate surroundings (e.g. Potsdam).

Tickets can be purchased with the zone combinations AB, BC or ABC. Standard fares apply to adults, reduced fares to children aged 6-13; children under 6 ride free. Tickets can be purchased at any of the many BVG and S-Bahn Berlin ticket counters and at ticket machines located in the stations. The machines are equipped with convenient on-screen menu navigation and are available 24 hours a day in 6 languages (German, English, French, Spanish, Turkish, and Polish).

You can purchase various kinds of tickets-

Einzelfahrschein- Single ticket, valid for 2 hours travelling in the direction of your destination

Tageskarte- Day pass, valid until 3 a.m. of the next day

Wochenkarte/ 7 Day Pass, valid for 1 entire week, costs about the same as 5 Day Passes

Monatskarte, Monthly Pass, valid for one calendar months

Jahreskarte, Year Pass, valid for about one year, costs about as much as 10 monthly passes

Other ticket option can be found on

www.bvg.de/index.php/en/Bvg/Index/folder/709/name/Fares+Overview

Schedules can be checked online on

www.bvg.de, www.bahn.de, <http://www.vbbonline.de/>.

Traveling on the Semester Ticket

Since winter semester 2001/2002 all students of the Potsdam University, the Potsdam Technical College and the Konrad Wolf College for Film and Television can obtain the student's semester ticket. With this ticket you can board all buses, trams, urban lines and underground lines throughout the entire public transport system of Berlin and Brandenburg (VBB)

You can find more detailed information on

www.asta.uni-potsdam.de/semesterticket/

For all who want to travel in Germany or Europe, some offers of the Deutsche Bahn are listed below:

Bahncard: This card is quite recommendable for those who travel by train frequently. www.bahn.de/international/view/en/prices/germany/bahncard.shtml



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

The card can be purchased in every travel agency of the DeutscheBahn. You will need a photo and your valid passport for the application.

Länder-Tickets

You can travel for a whole day during the week.

The ticket can be used by up to 5 people, travelling in the Bundesland (federal state) of your choice. Most Länder-Tickets are valid also on Saturday and Sunday. Usually they are valid from Monday to Friday for one day of your choice from 9 a.m. until 3 a.m. of the following day.

SchönesWochenendticket- Happy weekend ticket

Valid for up to 5 persons travelling together and for parents travelling with their children aged 14 or younger on Saturdays or Sundays between 0:00 a.m. (mid-night) until 3 a.m. of the following day for only 35 EUR if you buy your ticket online.

Communication

Mail

You can search for the nearest post office on <http://standorte.deutschepost.de/LocationSearch?lang=en>.

Telephone

The easiest way is to get your phone is to complete an application form in a Deutsche Telekom shop ("T-Punkt").

Most homes already have a phone line installed. When you order a telephone connection, you can take over the number of the previous tenant. This used to be cheaper and faster than getting a new phone line. But Deutsche Telekom has now changed this policy and you have to pay a one-time installation fee of €59 (as of 2004), whether you get a new line or take over an old one.

Another option is to choose an alternative provider. Depending on your calling patterns, an alternative provider may be cheaper, so it is worth making a comparison. If you're in a rush to get connected, you can get a basic Deutsche Telekom line until you work out whom to use in the long-term and then discontinue it with a short notice period.

Public phones

Fro making a phone call, you will probably need a telephone card. Some phone booths still accept coins, but these are very rare, so don't depend on it.

Telekom cards can be bought at the T-Punkte of Deutsche Telekom, post offices, and many stationery shops in denominations of €5, 10. In fact, these cards can be used from any phone and can also be used from abroad. You can also buy pre-paid cards from other providers which can save money and are used by dialing a PIN. Credit cards can be used from a small number of public phones.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Internet access

Getting connected to the Internet in Germany is fairly easy, options include: dial-up, ISDN, DSL and cable. Bear in mind that it may take a while to get high-speed access, such as DSL, installed. Go to www.verivox.de/internet/ to compare internet offers.

Schools

Finding a primary school for your children ages 6-12 should not be a problem. Generally where you live determines which school your child will attend. Nevertheless, some German children go to schools which they are not supposed to attend. How they managed to get in is not entirely clear, but one way would be to receive a letter from the regular school stating that it has no more capacities, which would then allow you to send your child to the school of your choice. For Americans there is also this option: www.jfks.de

Schools and day care centres in your area in Berlin can be found on:

www.berlin.de/sen/bwf/meine_fragen/wo_finde_ich/schule_kita/anwendung/

Further education

Learning German

To help you feel more like home in Germany, the Max Planck Institute offers you German classes. For detailed information please contact Rita Heine (rita.heine@mpikg.mpg.de)

Furthermore there are language courses at the Volkshochschulen in Berlin www.berlin.de/vhs/struktur/index.html.

The University of Potsdam offers special classes for foreign students, doctoral candidates or guest scientists who are staying at the university. Depending on their previous knowledge they can join special courses (Aufbaukurs 1 und 2). German proficiency is necessary, you will have to take a test and need at least 60% of the points to be accredited. You finish your class with a participation certificate and a mark. Further information is available at www.uni-potsdam.de.

Day care, Kindergarten

The staff members of the Max-Planck-Institutes have the possibility to receive day care for their children (aged 3 months to 3 years) in the institute's day care facility. This day care centre, which opened in July

2007, is very flexible and tries to match the individual needs of the family to improve the employee's work and life balance. Parents who would like to enrol their child into our day care facility must meet the following conditions:

- One parent must work in one of the Max-Planck-Institutes
- The other parent must also work or be engaged in another activity (e.g. studying, language course, etc.) for at least six hours per day.

If you are interested in the day care facility, please contact Antje Reinecke, e-mail: reinecke@mpikg.mpg.de, phone: 0331 567-9404

For further information please go to: [www.mpikg-golm.mpg.de/english/09information/Children s Day Care Center/index.html](http://www.mpikg-golm.mpg.de/english/09information/Children_s_Day_Care_Center/index.html)



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Other Possibilities:

If you would like to receive childcare in Berlin you will first have to go and see the Jugendamt www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/sen-familie/kindertagesbetreuung/kindertagespflege/ansprechpartner_bezirksaemter.pdf in your district. You will have to hand in a registration form www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/senbjs/service/formulare/anmeldevordruck.pdf, usually 2 months before you wish to start childcare. You will then receive a Gutschein www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/sen-familie/kindertagesbetreuung/anmeldung/gutschein_muster.pdf that allows you to send your child to a childcare facility.

www.familienservice.com

As a partner of the Max-Planck-Society, *Familienservice Berlin* provides special back-up centres that are to help you in cases of emergency. They offer flexible child care at a very short time notice, be it for a few hours, days, weekends, day or night. This service might come in handy in case you need to attend a conference, your child's day care provider becomes sick or you have a family emergency. You can use this service for up to 20 days a year.

Driving schools

At www.berliner-fahrschule.de all driving schools in Berlin are listed. You can find their detailed contact information and the service hours. Additional information on the team, the cars and special offers are listed too.

www.fahrschool.com/Fahrschule-suchen-und-finden_ger.html also gives you detailed information on driving schools, their offers and also what languages are spoken.

www.fahrschule-weibrecht.de for example offers its theoretical and practical lessons in English.

“Fahrschule am Ostkreuz GmbH” (Boxhagener Str. 87

10245 Berlin, Tel.: 291 74 00) offers lessons in English and Russian.

Please note- your foreign driver's licence is usually valid for the first six months of your stay in Germany- non EU driver's licences have to be converted in due time.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Leisure

Berlin is a captivating city full of sights and culture, a fantastic nightlife and a vibrant atmosphere.

If you are interested in the sightseeing spots and you would like to explore the city, taking bus 100 is quite recommendable. The bus passes almost every sightseeing spot on its way from Zoologischer Garten to Alexanderplatz and it's the easiest way to get a first impression. It's even possible to download an audio guide for this 'unofficial' bus tour. Unfortunately it is only available in German- www.culture-to-go.com/produkte_bus_100.html.

You can also get some good information on Berlin's sights on www.visitberlin.de/english/sightseeing/e_si_sehenswuerdigkeiten.php?

If you'd rather get to know the city by walking, you can always join a guided tour or simply download an audio guide and walk through the city on your own-

www.berlin-tourist-information.de/english/sightseeing/e_si_stadterkundungen_fuss_audioguide.php
http://www.berlin-tourist-information.de/english/sightseeing/e_si_stadterkundungen_fuss_audioguide.php

There are also some free walking tours (almost- tips are always welcome) with expert guides through Berlin www.newberlintours.com/nbt/content/view/1/2/lang.en/. Sandeman's New Berlin Tours also offers many other theme tours.

Restaurants & Bars

www.schlemmerinfo.de/eng/berlin/index.html gives you an overview of some restaurants in Berlin, www.berlinatnight.de/ informs you about events in Berlin, newest locations and much more.

Cinemas

www.berlinonline.de/kino-und-film/programm/bin/azfilm.php/ov gives you detailed information of all the movie theatres that show films in their original version.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Religion

For those, who are looking for spiritual communities in the Berlin area, a few web pages are listed here.

www.ibcberlin.org shows information about the International Baptist Church. The community is English and they offer a lot of meetings and events. There is

also a Sunday school.

www.lukas-gemeinde.de is also a protestant-orientated community. The web site is available in English, too. They offer worships, meetings and many social projects.

www.jg-berlin.de presents the Jewish community in Berlin. The community offers many services. In their parish hall is a Jewish Library, a restaurant that offers kosher meals, an Internet café and the “integration office” that lists German courses, readings and other projects.

<http://mitglied.lycos.de/MenschenUnsererZeit/religion/adressen1.htm>

will give you further information about religious and national communities. The web page is also offered in English. There are a lot of addresses given; you can find a lot of parishes for Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Hindus and Muslims. Here you can also get information about special shops and restaurants.

www.r-o-k.de shows you a list for orthodox churches and communities in Germany. The web page has a Russian version.

Shopping

Most shops in Berlin are open from 9/10 am until 8-10 pm. You can also find a few small shops open on Sundays and the shops at Berlin Ostbahnhof for example are open 24/7.

www.shopping-hauptstadt.de/verzeichnis/index.php gives you a list of some shops and their opening hours. Shopping areas can be found around Kurfürstendamm, Friedrichstraße, Tauentzienstraße, Wilmersdorferstraße, Hackescher Markt, Schönhauser Allee, Alexanderplatz or Schlossstraße.

There are limited opening hours on Sundays. A list of when which stores open on Sundays can be found here:

<http://www.berlineradressen.de/Sonstiges/Verkaufsoffenesonntage/verkaufsoffen-2009/>



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

PhD

PhD-Student Network of the Max-Planck-Society

This Phdnet portal serves as a platform for exchange among doctoral students at all Max-Planck-Institutes independent of their field of research. Launched at the 1st meeting of MPG PhD students in Heidelberg (April 4-6 2003) the network is currently building up its organizational structures to achieve that annual meetings of the PhD student representatives and other interested people are organized where recent topics and general strategies are discussed. Furthermore we try to have at least one interdisciplinary section during the meeting where PhD students and/or invited guests talk about a selected topic with a focus from their own field of interest.

Regardless of their particular fields of research, all PhD students strive to maximize their achievements during the PhD period, to avail of and contribute to the scientific profile of their respective MPIs and to effectively plan their career.

Proficient communication-structures among students and between students and the MPG are essential for an exchange upon these common interests as well as for joining efforts in improving and ensuring the efficiency of the PhD period.

In order to focus the internal organisation and collaboration of the PhD students at all MPIs, the students have initiated a network which follows the same ideas that led to the establishment of the International Max Planck Research Schools.

The WebPortal aims at providing information about the activities of PhD-Net Workgroups and the latest News. There is also a Forum where you can actively take part in ongoing discussions.

The PhD network can be accessed via www.phdnet.mpg.de



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

New regulations for Ph.D. students at Uni Potsdam

Important changes:

- From the summer-semester 2004 on, all students planning to defend their Ph.D. at Uni Potsdam at some point in the future **must be inscribed for the entire duration** of their Ph.D.-work!
- It is ok for those students, who have not been inscribed so far (complying with the old regulations), but they will have to get inscribed from the summer-semester 2004 on – until they defend their Ph.D.
- **Involvement in teaching is required** for all Ph.D. students, who want to apply for the “Eröffnung des Promotionsverfahrens” from the beginning of winter-semester 2004/2005 on.

Clear rules have not been set yet. Uni Potsdam thinks of a requirement of at least one weekly hour for the duration of one semester (“1 Semesterwochenstunde”) of giving a seminar or supervising practical work. Teaching activities before the Master’s degree or Diploma will not be accepted. If you will / might have your defence after September 30, 2004, please check on the requirements with Mrs. Cornelia Grüning-Schwarz (Tel. 977 2965, e-mail: prommnf@rz.uni-potsdam.de). Prof. Strauch and Prof. Beckmann are responsible for the approval of teaching activities.

Matriculation at Uni Potsdam:

- **German students** have to hand in their Immatrikulationsantrag directly to the offices of the “Dezernat für Studienangelegenheiten”
- **Foreign students** are requested to get in contact with the “Akademisches Auslandsamt” (foreign students’ office).

Their degrees have to be accepted as an equal qualification to a German diploma by the faculty of maths and natural sciences –

Contact: Dr. Ulrich Hunger (hunger@rz.uni-potsdam.de)
Phone: 0331-977-1676)

- The following **documents** have to be handed in **for matriculation** as a doctoral student:
 - “Anzeige der Promotionsabsicht” (German version) or “Declaration of intent to do doctoral studies” (English version)
 - “Immatrikulationsantrag” (German version) or “Application form for the enrolment as doctoral candidate” (English version) available at the “Akademisches Auslandsamt”
 - A certified photocopy of the certificate of your academic degree and a proof of the grades that you obtained (“Diplom-Zeugnis” and “Diplom-Urkunde”)
 - Certified photocopies of your high-school diploma
 - Germans have to bring a copy of their “Exmatrikulationsbescheinigung”.
 - Foreigners have to bring their “Aufenthaltsgenehmigung”



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Remark: It is possible to bring the originals with their uncertified photocopies and have them certified for free.

For certificates written in most of the European languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish etc.) a translation is not necessary, it might be required for other languages. For EU-countries and most candidate countries for joining the EU, academic degrees are considered to be equal to German degrees; degrees of other countries are accepted after individual approval. In some cases, attendance of additional courses might be demanded (“Auflagen” – conditions).

- Curriculum Vitae.
- Proof of health insurance (“Krankenversicherungsbescheinigung”).
- “Betreuererklärung”. This is a formless letter (with an official letter-head) written by a professor or habilitated researcher of the faculty, in some exceptions also a “qualified group-leader” (e.g. Privatdozent), in which he states that he is going to advise you during your Ph.D. work.

All these documents have to be handed in at the “Geschäftsstelle Promotionsausschuss”.

Forms to fill in and additional information can be found under (also English forms): www.uni-potsdam.de/u/studium/bewerbung/

Regulations on conditions: Students with an average grade better than German 2.5 are accepted without further conditions. Students with average grades worse than 2.5, students with diplomas from “Fachhochschulen” and students having studied other fields than they want to do their Ph.D. may be required to fulfil certain conditions like the attendance of additional courses during their Ph.D. These conditions depend on the individual qualification.

Important: Matriculation takes place only after payment of the tuition fees and the six months transportation ticket.

Those students who do not want to buy the transportation ticket may get the money back from the AstA office.

Your student-ID is going to be a chipcard called PUCK (Potsdamer UniversitätsChipKarte). You have to send in a photograph to the Studierendensekretariat (Postfach 60 15 53, 14415 Potsdam) indicating your name, date of birth and matriculation number or submit it digitally under

<https://www.sb-portal.uni-potsdam.de/foto/index.php>.

Furthermore you have to pay a bail of 10 €.

For further information on PUCK send an e-mail to puck@rz.uni-potsdam.de or call the service phone number 0331/977-4100 or refer to the

[Studierendensekretariat](#)

[Universitätskomplex Am Neuen Palais](#)

[Haus 8](#)

[14469 Potsdam](#)



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Changing your project:

If the topic of your Ph.D. project changes in the course of your work, you do not have to announce that to Uni-Potsdam. However, if the field of research changes (e.g. Physics to Physical Chemistry) you should change that in the form “Anzeige der Promotionsabsicht”/“Declaration of intent to do doctoral studies“. It might be that in this case you have to fulfil certain conditions. Be careful about that and talk to Mrs. Grüning-Schwarz (Tel. 977-2965) before running into trouble! A [summary of the regulations](#) is available at the university, which is called “Information zur Annahme eines Promotionsstudiums an der Universität Potsdam” – apparently it is not on the web yet.

Defending your Ph.D.:

You have to send an “Antrag auf Eröffnung des Promotionsverfahrens” (request to start the procedure for taking your Ph.D.) - as Dr. rer. nat. to the “Promotionsausschuss“ (committee) and attach the following documents ([please find the application form under \[www.uni-potsdam.de/mnfakul/frame.php?datei=promotion.html&navi=4\]\(http://www.uni-potsdam.de/mnfakul/frame.php?datei=promotion.html&navi=4\); click “Unterlagen“](#)):

- A two-page form (“Antrag auf Eröffnung des Promotionsverfahrens”), on which – among many other things – you state that you have done the work yourself and that you haven’t handed in your thesis at another university. This form has to be signed by yourself, your supervisor at the institute and the head of the examination board of the respective institute at the Potsdam University.
- 4 copies (on paper) of your thesis
- 30 copies of the “wissenschaftliche Zusammenfassung” (formerly “Thesen”), summarizing the topics and objectives of your research – about two pages
- Curriculum Vitae, listed as a table.
- List of publications
- Certified copies of the certificate of your degree and a proof of the grades that you obtained (“Diplom-Zeugnis” and “Diplom-Urkunde”) or uncertified copies and the originals for certification (see above, in the section on Matriculation)
- If you had to fulfil certain conditions during your Ph.D., bring certificates that show that you have fulfilled them
- If you have not been employed in the “öffentlicher Dienst” (at MPI: mostly BAT-salary) or if you have been exmatriculated for more than three months at the date of your defence, you need a “polizeiliches Führungszeugnis” (statement of the police on your legal behaviour).
- Summary of your thesis in German (!), one A4-page, popular scientific and understandable for non-specialists, for reference: There is a list of such summaries on the web (please have a .doc-file saved on a floppy-disc or CD)



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

- If you do a binational Ph.D. (Uni-Potsdam and another, foreign university), you need a certificate of the contract of cooperation and your two advisors
- Proof of enrolment as a doctorate student at the University Potsdam which you can get from the PUCK machine
- Proof of performance for a doctoral seminar, which may have been at MPI; it must be signed by a professor of the faculty
- Proof of having participated in teaching (giving a seminar or supervising practical work of students, presumably for at least one weekly hour for one semester)
- Prof. Strauch and Prof. Beckmann are responsible for the approval of teaching activities. This requirement is enforced from September 2004 on. Clear rules do not exist yet.

The [first page of your thesis](#) must contain the following information: (please find an example www.uni-potsdam.de/mnfakul/promotion-unterlagen.html)

- Name of the institute and research-group
- Topic of your thesis
- “Dissertation zur Erlangung des naturwissenschaftlichen Grades Dr. rer. nat.“; „Eingereicht an der mathematisch-naturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Potsdam in der Wissenschaftsdisziplin...“
- Your name
- Date

It is not necessary to have a hardcover, binding (not wire bound) in paperback is sufficient. Be aware that sending the thesis overseas might damage cheap bindings, hardcover might be better in this case.

You (in cooperation with your advisor) have to propose a [commission for evaluating your PhD thesis](#). The first member of the commission is your advisor, who has to be a member of the faculty at Uni-Potsdam. Three others of whom two have to be external to Uni-Potsdam have to be proposed. Please include the address, phone-number and e-mail-address of each member of the proposed commission. The Ph.D. committee will chose three of them to actually evaluate your thesis. Consider that it might take the commission four to ten weeks from the date of receiving your thesis to evaluate it.

A second [commission for your PhD defence](#) will be composed of at least five of the following people, who you have to propose to the Ph.D. committee (“Promotionsausschuss”):

- The chairman, who has to come from the faculty and who has to do research in your field (e.g. chemistry)
- Four other qualified researchers have to be proposed; three of whom from the same field of research – they may even come from the same working-group –, one has to come from another field of research (e.g. Maths, Physics, Biology, if you do your Ph.D. in Chemistry). Please include the addresses of those, who are not doing research at Uni-Potsdam.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

- Remark: The four proposed members of the commission for evaluating your Ph.D. thesis are automatically on the list of proposed members of the commission for your Ph.D. defence. With the five members mentioned above this makes a total of nine possible members of the commission for your Ph.D. defence.
- The actual commission for your Ph.D. defence must consist of at least five members, of whom one must have been in the commission that evaluated your thesis and one must be the chairman of the commission for your Ph.D. defence. However, six of the proposed members must agree to come to your defence (this means you have to ask them personally before) – just in case one is sick. Your advisor must sign the list of the proposed members of the commission.

The **deadline** for handing in your thesis is at 11:00 am. on the Monday 10 days before the next meeting of the Ph.D. committee.

(please find further information under www.uni-potsdam.de/mnfakul/promotion-termine.html)

Even if you are still busy with corrections, go to Frau Grüning-Schwarz, a week or at least a few days in advance, announce that you plan to submit and bring the form, (ideally signed by everybody who needs to sign it), additionally your CV (signed!), list of publications, (as much as possible), so that everything can be already checked and filed. This will relax the submission process

More information on the submission process can be found on the website of the PhD representatives (www.mpikg.mpg.de/br/PhD.html), in particular there you can find “A kind guide for PhD submission, look at this as well, it may contain additional information

You will have to organize a **room for your defence** as soon as you know the exact date and time. Please contact Mrs. Birgit Maury (bmaury@rz.uni-potsdam.de)

Everything should be ready and handed in **three weeks before the date of the defence**, because it is necessary that the date, time and location of your defence are announced at least two weeks in advance.

You may have a look into the evaluation of your thesis about a week before your defence. However, you are not going to be told the grades given by the evaluators. If you want to read the evaluations, please call 977 2965 during the operating hours to make an appointment, which may also be at other times than the operating hours for the phone.

After your defence, you will have to hand in ten hardcopies or four hardcopies and an electronic version (<http://pub.ub.uni-potsdam.de/>) of your thesis before you get the actual certificate of your Ph.D.



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Additional changes to the old regulations:

- Now you can do your Ph.D. defence in German or English, without filling in a form, if you want to do it in English as up to date.
- According to the new regulations, only “Prädikate” (magna cum laude, cum laude, rite) are given as grades, not decimal grades as before. The commission of your Ph.D. defence can change the “Prädikat” given for your thesis by one level up or down and has therefore more influence on your final grade. The “Prädikat” summa cum laude can be given even if one of the members of the commission votes against giving it.
General information on doing a Ph.D. at Uni-Potsdam can be found under:
www.uni-potsdam.de/mnfakul/PromOrd_Engl_web.pdf

Ph.D. Defence (March 05)

In General:

Write up your thesis and have it corrected by your supervisors!
Do not expect to finish in less than two months after handing in your thesis!
Be aware of the numerous deadlines, e.g. for handing in your thesis!
Do not trust the information on this page – for up-to-date information you must pass by the office of Mrs. Grüning-Schwarz:

Frau Cornelia Grüning-Schwarz
Room: 2.36,
Phone: (0331) 977-2965
Fax: (0331) 977-2097
E-mail: prommf@rz.uni-potsdam.de

Opening hours:

Mo.: 8.00-11.00 und 12.00-16.00
Di.: 8.00-11.00
Do.: 8.00-11.00
Fr.: 8.00-11.00

Furthermore – very important for your fellow Ph.D. students:

- leave a hardcopy of your Ph.D. thesis for the library (Mrs. Stscherbina)
- tell your contact-information to your Ph.D. representative and – if possible – leave a memory-protocol of your Ph.D. defense



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Alumni

Alumni Meeting

The institute organizes together with the "Freunde der Kolloid- und Grenzflächenforschung e.V." an annual meeting, which informs about the "Trends in Colloids and Interface Science".

Freunde der Kolloid- und Grenzflächenforschung e.V.

Everybody who is interested in Colloid and Interface Science is most welcome to join us. If you want to become a member, please inform yourself under:

<http://www.mpikg.mpg.de/FKGF/FKGF-home.html>

maxNet - the Max Planck Network

maxNet is a virtual platform for ALL former employees, visiting scientists, Ph.D. students, postdocs, and graduate students from institutes and facilities of the Max Planck Society. In the future we would like to use [only this database](#) to invite you to our annual alumni meeting. To join the community, please fill out the following [registration form](#): <https://maxnet.mpg.de/register>

- With maxNet you can stay in touch with friends throughout life.
- With maxNet you can meet people with similar interests and maintain your contacts.
- maxNet brings together knowledge, skills, and expertise from the most varied areas.
- By networking with others through maxNet, individual know-how becomes shared knowledge.

<https://maxnet.mpg.de/>



Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces

Imprint:

Based on:

an original document by Scott H. Hawley, Brian Grady, Guruswamy Kumaraswamy and Bao-Hang Han 2001

Living in Germany, Guide for Marie Curie Research Fellows by Barbara Lieder, Andre Schlochtermeyer, Jörg Schneider; DLR e.V.

Leitfaden für Ausländer - Guidelines for Scientists New to Germany by Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Generalverwaltung

the web: www.daad.de, www.uni-potsdam.de and further websites listed in the document

Published by Max-Planck-Institut für Gravitationsphysik (Albert-Einstein-Institut, AEI) 2002

Made by Juliane Weyher and Katharina Zesch (AEI)

Editorial Team:

Max-Planck-Institut für Gravitationsphysik

(Albert-Einstein-Institut) 2002








- Dr. Elke Müller, Public Relations
- Constance Münchow
- Katharina Henke
- Alan Rendall
- Susann Weber

Max-Planck-Institut für Kolloid- und Grenzflächenforschung

- Katja Schulze, Public Relations
- Meriam Bezohra, Welcome Office



Research Campus Golm

-  Fraunhofer Institute of Biomedical Engineering (IBMT)
Am Mühlberg 13
-  Fraunhofer Institute of Applied Polymer Research (IAP)
Geiselbergstr. 69
-  GO:IN Innovation Center Golm
Am Mühlberg 11
-  Berlin Pharma AG
Am Mühlberg 3
-  Guesthouse (Max Planck Campus)
Am Mühlberg 2
-  MPI of Gravitational Physics, Albert Einstein Institute (AEI)
-  MPI of Molecular Plant Physiology (MPIMP)
-  MPI of Colloids and Interfaces (MPIKG)
-  Central Building, Reception (Max Planck Campus)
Am Mühlberg 1
-  Office Container (Max Planck Campus)
-  Main Entrance