



Before You Come to Heidelberg

You can use this checklist to keep track of the tasks you have already completed and those which are still outstanding. The list is not exhaustive; however, we have attempted to include the most important steps to follow in preparation for your trip to Heidelberg. There is no need to adhere to the order of the tasks as given in the list.

► Invitation from your host institute or confirmation of your research fellowship

Plan the beginning of your stay and arrange the dates of your stay with your host institute in advance.

► Visa

You should apply as early as possible for your visa at the German embassy or consulate in your home country. You will receive a visa permitting you to stay a maximum of three months in Germany. Depending on the purpose and length of your stay, you will need either a Schengen visa (for a research stay of up to three months) or a National visa (for a research stay of more than three months). Normally you will receive a National visa permitting you to stay a maximum of three months in Germany. The visa may be extended if necessary after you arrive in Heidelberg. Recently it has become possible, however, to obtain a National visa valid for up to one year, given that you are not planning to stay longer than one year. Please inquire at your local German Embassy about this possibility.

Important documents for visa applications for stays longer than three months:

- Researcher visa: hosting agreement according to §18d AufenthG. and exclusively issued by the Welcome Centre
- Blue Card: Form Declaration on employment ("*Erklärung zum Beschäftigungsverhältnis*")

► Apartment Search

Apartments and furnished rooms are in great demand in Heidelberg. Therefore, we recommend that you start your apartment search as early as possible. Unfortunately, rents are fairly high in Heidelberg in comparison to other German cities. Please contact us in plenty of time if you would like us to help you with your search. It goes without saying that all the dates are confidential.

► Online registration

Already before your arrival at Heidelberg, you should register in the Online Portal for visiting scholars of the Welcome Centre of Heidelberg University. This online registration via www.uni-heidelberg.de/welcomecentre allows us to support you. Using the portal you can also obtain useful information on events or programs. Naturally, all the provided information is protected by the data privacy regulations.

► Health Insurance

If you are planning a longer stay in Germany, you should make sure that you and any family members accompanying you, have an adequate health insurance coverage. German health insurance providers generally cover the costs of medicine, doctor's visits and hospital stays. It is very important that your health insurance covers medical treatment in the case of acute illnesses and accidents. Adequate health insurance coverage is also required in order to obtain a residency permit in Germany.

► Formalities for family members

If you have children, you will need to plan for them to be absent from their school or kindergarten in your home country. You should also make their child care arrangements in Heidelberg ahead of time and at best before coming to Germany. We recommend that you contact the Welcome Centre as early as possible because it is often necessary to reserve child care spaces well ahead of time. In many cases, your host institute can also be of assistance. Please do not hesitate to ask.

There are a number of formalities to be taken care of if your spouse or other family members are going to accompany you to Heidelberg. Such family members will need a visa, for which you need to apply well in advance. If your spouse wishes to work while in Germany, you must indicate this during the visa application process. A work permit is required if a spouse is to be employed regularly in Germany (exceptions: citizens of countries in the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

► Language Preparations

It is a good idea to learn at least some basic German, especially if you are planning a longer stay in Germany and obtaining some language skills in your home country will make your arrival easier and more pleasant. The Welcome Centre organizes language courses for visiting scholars and their families in Heidelberg. There are also numerous language schools in Heidelberg.

► Important Documents

Before coming to Germany, you will need to gather various forms of identification and other documents, such as:

- your passport(s) or similar identification document(s)
- visa(s) (non EU-citizens) / for researcher visa: visa and hosting agreement
- your children's birth certificates / your marriage certificate if your spouse is accompanying you (plus preferable German translations and depending on the country of issue of the certificates, you may also need an legalization or an apostille of the documents. Information you will get at the German embassies/consulate in your home country)
- several passport photos (important: please read the passport photo requirements of the Federal Ministry of the Interior at www.epass.de)
- the invitation letter from your host institute or confirmation letter from your funding institution
- copies of your university degrees and your doctoral degree, if applicable
- proof of health insurance covered in Germany
- confirmation of health insurance in Germany
- vaccination records (proof of measles vaccine for children) information about previous sicknesses or medications
- a foreign or international driver's license
- if applicable, a confirmation from your third-party liability insurance provider at home that you have not had any accidents (this should entitle you to a rebate on your German insurance policy)
- confirmation of funding / confirmation of a fellowship

Please go to our "Download Centre" (http://www.zuv.uni-heidelberg.de/international/downloadcenter_engl.html) to find other helpful information for your stay in Heidelberg.