

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: THE CORONAVIRUS AND YOUR STUDIES

FAQ

I am an international student and my residence permit is about to expire. How can I extend it?

Due to the Corona pandemic, interviews at the Foreigners' Authority are currently only possible with an appointment. If you have questions for the Foreigner's Authority, you can contact them by e-mail or telephone. You can find the [contact details here](#).

Appointments are only assigned by the Foreigners' Authority itself – you cannot arrange them independently.

TIP: Pay attention to when your residence permit expires and inform the Foreigners' Authority by e-mail in advance.

Please do check the (German) website of the [Leipzig Foreigners' Authority](#) regularly for possible updates.

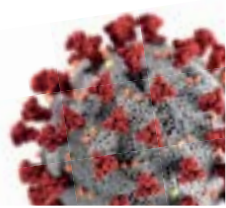
I have questions concerning my visa or residence permit and the Leipzig Foreigners' Authority is currently closed to visitors. Is there anyone I can speak with?

In order to prevent the spread of coronavirus and ensure the safety of both visitors and staff, the Foreigners' Authority is currently closed to the public. Personal consultations are only possible if you have an appointment.

For urgent matters and appointments that cannot be postponed, please call the Foreigners' Authority. You can also e-mail the relevant department with your questions. The phone numbers and e-mail addresses of the various departments can be found on the website of the City of Leipzig regarding [restricted opening hours during in the current situation](#) (German) and regarding [general official information about the coronavirus](#).

The situation right now is very uncertain, my university is partly closed, my living room is so small, and I can't meet with any of my friends. The corona pandemic is also making me worried. Who can I talk to about my problems?

Studentenwerk Leipzig offers a [Psychosocial Counselling Service](#). You can talk to the counsellors free of charge about anything that is worrying you. Unfortunately due to the current situation, personal appointments are not possible, but you can still call during the telephone consultation hours or send an e-mail. Either German



or English may be used. For contact details, please visit the website of the [Psycho-social Counselling Service](#) of the Studentenwerk Leipzig.

A lot is changing, and so much information is coming from so many sources. Where can I find information on important developments and regulations relating to the corona crisis in Saxony?

The state government of the Free State of Saxony is publishing all information and regulations on its [website](#). You can also find translations of the official announcements from the Free State of Saxony on the coronavirus in several languages.

I am an international student and I am thinking about traveling home. How can I make an informed decision?

Please contact your university or academy in Leipzig before making plans to return home. Even though personal consultations are currently not possible, you can still get in touch via phone or e-mail. Please check the website of your university or academy.

You will have signed contracts for your stay in Leipzig, e.g. a rental contract, cell phone contract, gym contract, etc. Please check the contract terms and be sure to terminate all contracts in writing. Terminating a contract before the end of the agreed term is in most cases not possible. This will depend on the contract and the company you have made it with.

Right now, it is very difficult to travel out of Germany or gain entry into other countries. Many airlines have canceled flights or are no longer servicing certain destinations. Before unenrolling from your university or academy, or ending your rental contract, please review the current [travel and security advice of the German Federal Foreign Office](#) (German).

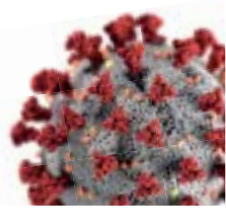
The embassy or consulate representing your home country in Germany can also provide you with [information](#) (German).

I am an international student and I am in a difficult financial situation due to the pandemic. What can I do?

Students who have suffered financial losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic can [apply for bridging assistance from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\)](#) on a monthly basis. This program is limited to the end of March 2021 for the time being.

This applies to students

- \ who are not on leave of absence,
- \ are not studying in a dual degree program,
- \ have lost their job,
- \ have lost their self-employment engagements,



- \ are in a suspended employment relationship,
- \ whose parents are now no longer able to provide (full) support.

FAQs on how to apply can be found on the website of the Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW): <https://www.studentenwerke.de/en/content/faqs-students>

I am an international student and am currently not making any money from my student job. Can I apply for BAföG?

No, if you were not entitled to BAföG before the corona pandemic, you are still not eligible. Those who do meet the requirements may still apply, however students with a German study visa are rarely entitled to BAföG. In order to receive the allowance, for example, it would be necessary for you or your parents to have worked in Germany and made social security contributions for several years prior to the beginning of your studies. Find out more on our [BAföG-Website](#).

If you are self-employed (meaning you provide invoices to your clients) or you lost your part-time job and now have no income, please contact the Studentenwerk [Social Counselling Service](#).

If you already receive BAföG, the following question apply to you.

My parents have been hit hard by the current situation and anticipate a significantly reduced or no income. Does this change my BAföG eligibility in Germany?

If the only reason you have not been receiving BAföG is because your parents earned too much, you could apply for BAföG for the summer semester based on their current financial situation. Your application will be reviewed to assess whether you are now eligible.

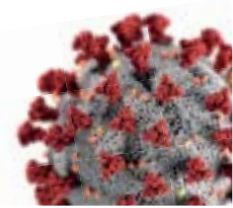
If you are currently receiving a lower BAföG rate due to your parents' earnings, you could submit a revised application and may be eligible to receive a higher allowance.

Please contact the [Department for Grants](#) should you have any further questions.

The current situation has me considering the option of taking a semester off. What should I keep in mind?

The current situation alone is no reason to take a semester off, especially as it affects all students and online or self-study are still possible. Reasons to take time off include illness, caring for children or pregnancy. Before you decide to take a semester off, please contact the [Social Counselling Service](#) as there are some important things you will need to keep in mind.

Students with a residence permit that allows them to study in Leipzig must ensu-



re that they inform the Foreigners' Authority by e-mail of their intention to take a semester off. As such they will be aware of the planned break in your studies. Please note that even when taking a semester off, the same working restrictions apply. Please refer to your residence permit and the green supplementary sheet provided with it for more information.

As an international student, do I have the right to housing benefits (Wohngeld) or unemployment benefits if I lose my job or do not receive my salary?

The eligibility requirements for housing benefits and unemployment benefits (ALG II) remain unchanged. This means that you are not eligible to receive any of the above benefits if you did not meet the criteria before the corona pandemic. Before applying for any benefits, please contact the [Social Counselling Service](#) by phone during their consultation hours or by e-mail. **This is important because an application may negatively affect your residence status.**

I have lost my job. Where can I look for new job offers?

You can look for jobs on the [job portal](#) of the Student [Job Office](#). Please refer to the Job Office's website for further instructions.

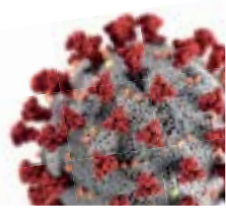
Please check the maximum number of days you are allowed to work, or any other restrictions related to working while studying. Even now they must be upheld. You will find this information on your residence permit or the green supplementary sheet provided with it.

There are currently areas that are in great need of staff. Consider applying for jobs in the following sectors:

- \ Food and drink delivery services
- \ Supermarkets and grocery stores
- \ Logistics
- \ Cleaning companies
- \ Online retailers/e-commerce companies
- \ Parcel delivery services

As a working student, can I receive a short-time working allowance (Kurzarbeitergeld)?

No. Students with part-time jobs are exempt from making health insurance, long-term care insurance and unemployment insurance contributions. Anyone who does not make contributions to unemployment insurance is not entitled to receive a short-time working allowance.



What do I do if I cannot pay my health insurance, rent, cell phone bill, etc. because I am not receiving my salary, or I lost my job?

Contact your health insurer, landlord, cell phone company, public service broadcaster, etc. if you cannot currently make the payments. Ask for a deferral of payment and where applicable a suspension of late-payment penalties. You could also request a payment reduction, where possible.

I have booked a trip or bought a train or bus ticket that I can no longer make use of. What can I do?

If you've booked a package holiday, the declaration of a global travel warning by the Federal Foreign Office means that travel plans can be canceled free of charge by citing exceptional circumstances.

For individual travel, please consult the websites of the relevant companies to find out if and how you can cancel or exchange your tickets. Read all contracts carefully for your rights to cancel or withdraw from the contract.

What should I keep in mind when considering a (student) loan?

Look at multiple offers and consider them carefully. Take note of each provider's requirements, processing fees, interest rates and repayment options. Be aware of any additional costs that may arise. Students with a German residence permit should absolutely obtain advice from the [Social Counselling Service](#) before taking out any loans.

Due to the Corona pandemic, international students may also benefit from the KfW student loan offer. [Further information can be found here.](#)

For additional information on this offer make use of the chat or telephone consultation of KfW.

