Willkommen!

Guide for Exchange Students

Year 2014

Updated Version of February 2014
Dear Exchange Student,

Welcome to Otto–von–Guericke University Magdeburg!

First of all, we want to thank you for having chosen Magdeburg University as your place to study abroad and for giving us the opportunity to be part of your future exchange studies.

My name is Anne–Katrin Behnert. I am the incoming exchange student advisor in the International office of our university. Josephine Hartwig, our ERASMUS assistant, and I want to welcome you to Magdeburg. We are sure that you will enjoy our university and our town.

This Exchange Student Guide provides useful information about living at OvGU and Magdeburg, and it will help you to cope with the application procedure and, later, with arriving at and doing your first steps on campus and in town.

With kind regards,

Anne–Katrin Behnert & Josephine Hartwig
Liebe/r Austauschstudent/-in,

Herzlich Willkommen an der Otto-von-Guericke Universität Magdeburg!

Wir freuen uns, dass Sie sich entschieden haben, Ihr Auslandsstudium an unserer Universität zu verbringen.


Der vorliegende Exchange Student Guide gibt Ihnen nützliche Informationen über das Studium an der OvGU und das Leben in Magdeburg. Er soll Ihnen helfen, die Bewerbungsschritte sowie später die Ankunft und Ihre ersten Schritte an der Uni zu meistern.

Wir freuen uns auf Sie!

Anne-Katrin Behnert & Josephine Hartwig
Content

About the University

International Office

Becoming an Exchange Student

Application Procedure

OVGU Academic Calendar

Choosing Courses

Learning German at the University’s Languages Centre

Sports courses

Housing

Prepare Your Stay

Required documents

Directions to Magdeburg

First Steps after your arrival

1. Housing/Rental contract
2. Citizens’ Office
3. Health Insurance
4. Bank
5. Payment of semester fee
6. Enrolment
7. Establishing your university account

Welcome & Orientation week

The City of Magdeburg

Finding Your Way

Public Transport, Internet

Food, Shopping, Doctors & Pharmacies

Leisure Activities

IKUS Intercultural Students
About the University

The Otto-von-Guericke-University (OVGU) of Magdeburg was founded in 1993. Being established in a merger of the previous Technical University, the Teacher Training College and the Medical School, it is now one of the youngest German universities.

The university comprises 9 faculties and offers more than 70 degree courses. With almost 14,000 students coming from all over the world, OVGU is becoming increasingly important as the centre of education and research in Central Germany and beyond.

The University is named after Otto von Guericke (1602–1686). He was Magdeburg’s famous son, a politician, scholar and then–mayor of the town. He was the founder in the field of vacuum engineering, well–known beyond German borders.
International Office

The International Office ["Akademisches Auslandsamt"] advises and supports all international guests of the university, whether undergraduates, postgraduates or scholars.

If you are an ERASMUS exchange student, your contact is Ms. Anne-Katrin Behnert, or her student-assistant Josephine Hartwig.

International degree-seeking, non-exchange students please contact Mrs. Eva Boehning in our International Office.

Contact

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Becoming an Exchange Student

Otto-von-Guericke-University has entered into bilateral agreements with numerous universities in many European and non-European countries. If your home university is our partner institution, you can be nominated for ERASMUS/exchange studies at OVGU. Please ask your International Office for the relevant conditions for your application.

Application Procedure

If your home university has nominated you as an exchange student, we will contact you and invite you for application to Otto-von-Guericke University.

ERASMUS candidates please follow the instructions given on our website: [http://www.ovgu.de/Part_Time+Studies/ERASMUS.html](http://www.ovgu.de/Part_Time+Studies/ERASMUS.html).

ERASMUS candidates are requested to make an online application. Send the printout of your online application and your Learning Agreement to our International Office by post. Only the complete application, both online and hardcopy, can be considered for admission.

**Application deadline:** We will not accept any application arriving after the closing date! We ask for your understanding for this policy.
OVGU Academic Calendar

**Summer Term 2014**
- Overall: 01 April 2014 — 30 September 2014
- Orientation Week: 24 March 2014 — 28 March 2014
- Lecture Period: 31 March 2014 — 05 July 2014
- Exam Period: 07 July 2014 — 01 August 2014
- Holidays: 18 + 21 April; 01 + 29 May 2014; 09 June 2014

Closing Date for Application: **15th January 2014**

**Winter Term 2014/15**
- Overall: 01 October 2014 — 31 March 2015
- Orientation Week: 29 September 2015 — 03 October 2015
- Lecture Period: 13 October 2015 — 03 February 2015
- Exam Period: 04 February 2015 — 27 February 2015

Closing Date for Application: **15th July 2014**

**Choosing Courses**

OVGU has an online platform called “LSF”, where you can search for appropriate courses. Please use the link below:

*https://lsf.ovgu.de*

This platform provides various information for your studies, from complete course lists to individual courses. The study programmes can be sorted by level of education (bachelor, master).
Please note: Your individual study programme should be in the discipline or faculty you were nominated for. For example, if you study management at your home university, you cannot choose engineering courses, or you have to consult with us beforehand.

The LSF is made out in German, the English version is only partly active. You can choose the English flag symbol on top of the right side of the page to switch to the English version.

(1) Go to “Course Overview”
(2) Choose your faculty (in german “Fakultät”)
(3) Now you can choose between lectures or seminar sorted by:
   - Courses sorted by Degree Programmes
   - Courses sorted by Chairs and Professors
   - Courses for Degree Programmes of Other Faculties
   - Other courses / Events of the Faculty
(4) You will get the list of courses that are offered for your programme and semester.
(5) If you would like to enrol on a course, click on the course then under “Dates/Times/Location” mark the small checkbox. Then go on “Schedule preselected”.
(6) Now you can see your course on your personal timetable. Go on “Course Overview” to select another one.
(7) When you have finished selecting courses, go back to your personal timetable and press the “save schedule” – button.
(8) Generating a PDF is possible by clicking on “Print (PDF)”.

Find a list of courses that are taught in English here:  
Learning German at the University's Languages Centre

Learning some German will make your stay at OVGU more valuable even if you are going to attend English courses exclusively. Exchange students are welcome to register for one of the German language courses via the moodle-platform: http://moodle-n.ovgu.de/sprz

German language courses in a volume of up to 6 hours per week are free of charge for our ERASMUS/exchange students for one semester.

The registration starts at 24 March 2014.

Sports courses

The OVGU Sports Centre offers a wide variety of courses and sports disciplines. Exchange students can register for the courses like any regular student. Note that the registration must be done online. The current semester’s sports courses are announced at www.spoz.ovgu.de a few days before the semester starts, mostly just before the Orientation Week. For enrolled students most sports courses are free of charge. For some complex, material-consuming courses a participation fee might fall due.

The registration starts at 24 March 2014.
Housing

If you wish to live on campus, you must apply for housing at the Student Union, called “Studentenwerk” by completing an online application via http://www.studentenwerk-magdeburg.de/en/accommodation/accommodation-request/.

Please note: Deadlines for housing application are 15 of January and/or 15 of July, same as for the study applications.

Rooms are furnished single-bed rooms of approx. 20 sqm. with private bathroom and internet included. Kitchens are shared, as a rule. Washing machines are located in the basement. The internet in the dorm rooms is included in the rent and can be used right after your arrival.

Most exchange students live in the dorm Walter-Rathenau-Str.19. Prices for rooms range from 206 EUR to 280 EUR depending on size and equipment.

When you fill out the online form at http://www.studentenwerk-magdeburg.de/en/accommodation/accommodation-request/, please choose “Wohnheim 9” (dormitory 9) which is the dormitory reserved for ERASMUS students. Make a remark “ERASMUS/exchange student” on the form.

Please note: You may apply for housing starting from the 1st day of a month, exceptionally starting from the 15th day of a month. Rental fee has to be paid for full months, for half months you have to pay 50%.

After having received a room offer and after having secured it by paying the relevant deposit fee, you will get your rental contract on the day you move into your room. Check your rental contract and related documents carefully, especially with regard to start and end dates of the contract!

Rental contract: The termination notice for on-campus rooms is two (2) full months!
Required documents

EU nationals do not need to apply for a visa to enter Germany. Residents/nationals of any non–EU country need to apply for a student visa at the German embassy or a consulate general. All admitted exchange students receive a formal Letter of Acceptance from our International Office. It is needed for non–EU nationals to apply for student visa. EU nationals need it for registration formalities after arrival.

Please be prepared to take the following documents when departing for Magdeburg:

- Your Passport/National ID
- Your ERASMUS Letter of Acceptance
- Proof of international health insurance (EU insurants must bring the EHIC European health insurance card)
- 2–3 photos in biometrical format
- Non–EU residents only: proof of sufficient funds (min. 659 EUR/month).
Directions to Magdeburg

By plane: The most common way to come to Magdeburg is by plane to one of the airports: Berlin, Leipzig, Altenburg or Hannover. From there you continue your travel by train to Magdeburg (duration of approx. 1.5 or 2 hours).

www.berlin-airport.de
www.leipzig-halle-airport.de
www.leipzig-altenburg-airport.de/
www.hannover-airport.de

You will find schedules, prices and tickets on the website of German railways “Deutsche Bahn”, www.bahn.de.

By bus: Some international bus lines stop in Magdeburg at the central bus station, “ZOB Zentraler Omnibusbahnhof”, which is located next to Magdeburg’s central train station. Coming from Magdeburg train station or bus station, it takes a walk of 25 minutes or a tram ride of 10 minutes to reach the city campus. (Attention, the Medicine campus is not part of the city campus; it is in the south of the town, about 5 km from the train station.)

Pick-up service: Exchange students may enjoy our pick-up service, if they have registered for it at least 7 days in advance by filling in the arrival pick-up form that was sent to them. Please note: Our pick-up service is by tram. Please take some cash with you for a tram ticket (2.00 EUR for a single ticket or 4.60 EUR for a day-ticket).

If you wish to arrive individually, you are free to do so. Magdeburg is located close to highways A2 and A14. From those you reach the city centre and the campus within a few minutes.

Please note: The OVGU offers a Welcome & Orientation Week which is compulsory for exchange students. The variety of essential information you get during the WOW cannot be guaranteed for latecomers. Also, stay in touch with our International Office regarding your planned arrival date, which is important for securing your housing and/or pick-up.
First Steps after your arrival

1. Payment of the semester fee

Before enrolment, every student needs to pay the obligatory semester fee in the current amount of 92.78 EUR to OVGU. The semester fee is charged for certain services that all students receive, like the “semester ticket” that allows enrolled students to use tram and busses for free during the semester. Also, student discounts for lunch in the university canteen (“Mensa”) are permitted by those fees. Exchange students are requested to pay the semester fee in cash at the University’s cash office (Ms. Brand – Building 06, Room 022).

2. Housing / Rental contract

You need a rental contract for your registration at the local citizens’ office. Therefore please approach Mr. Bock (Studentenwerk) or your landlord’s representative soon after your arrival for the contract. Usually, rental contracts
are handed out after payment of the first monthly rental plus security deposit, if any.

3. Citizens’ Office “Bürgerbüro”

Within 7 days after your arrival to Magdeburg, you are supposed to register at the “Einwohnermeldeamt/Bürgerbüro” in the city centre. However, during the Welcome Week, the Citizens’ Office offers on-campus appointments for students in the Campus Service Center (Building 01).

Non-EU residents need to register also in the foreigners’ registration office (“Ausländerbehörde”) within 3 months after their arrival.

Required Documents for the above registration formalities:

- Passport/national ID
- Rental contract (“Mietvertrag”) that shows your Magdeburg address
- ERASMUS Letter of acceptance (German version!)
- Proof of health insurance (EHIC)
- 1 or 2 photos in biometric format.

4. Health Insurance

To register as a student, you need an adequate health insurance that is valid for your stay in Germany. As mentioned above, EU citizens need to bring the personal European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Non-EU citizens need to take out a health insurance after they have arrived to Magdeburg. Compulsory health insurance in Germany is round about 77 EUR per month (student rate valid as from April 2011).

During Orientation Week we offer appointments with health insurance companies on campus.

5. Bank

To remit rental fees, health insurance contributions or anything else, students need to open up a bank account at any German commercial bank. You need to bring your passport, the ERASMUS letter of acceptance and the document you received from the citizens’ office, “Meldeschein”. You can open up the account on your own, or you seek the IKUS’ help after your arrival.


6. Enrolment

After those five steps, you are prepared to enrol at the International Office with Ms. Behnert (Building 18, Room 149).

Needed documents:

- National ID card / Passport
- 1 photo in biometric format
- Letter of Acceptance as ERASMUS/exchange student
- Health insurance
- Proof of payment of semester fee
- The pick-up student ID which you receive in the CSC (Building 1)

Soon after registration, you will receive your student ID card and OVGU student e-mail address.

Office Hours of Mrs. Behnert:  
Mon: 10 a.m. – 12  
Tue: 10 a.m. – 12 and 1 p.m.– 4 p.m.  
Thu: 10 a.m. – 12 and 1 p.m.– 4 p.m.

7. Establishing your university account

After enrolment, you can proceed to the Computing Centre (Building 26.1, next to the Mensa) to establish your campus account. In the lobby, you find two terminals on which you enter your data and create your account. When typing your data, make sure that your family name and first name/s appear as indicated in your passport. After you have entered all data and triggered the creation of your account, you need to wait for some minutes (up to 20 minutes at peak times) until you can take the printed account confirmation from the terminal. On peak days of enrolment, additional terminals shall be activated for registration of the new students in one of the computer labs.

During the semester/lecture period:  
Mon to Fri: 8 a.m. – 11 p.m. and  
Sat: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Welcome & Orientation Week

The International Office and the IKUS – Intercultural Students (www.ikus.ovgu.de) organize a compulsory Welcome & Orientation Week for the new exchange students. (In winter semesters only, this week is also called the “Integrative Introduction Week” which invites all German and international students to experience the new surrounding on campus and to have all orientation events together.)

The Welcome & Orientation Week takes place from 24 March 2014 to 28 March 2014 and the schedule for it will be released on http://www.ovgu.de/Part_Time+Studies/ERASMUS.html.

The Welcome & Orientation Week also comprises a brief Intensive German language course. The details about advance registration will be communicated to you with your Acceptance Letter.
The City of Magdeburg

At an age of more than 1200 years, Magdeburg is one of the oldest cities of Central Germany. It has experienced an interesting and eventful history through times of peace and war.

The city has approximately 230,000 inhabitants who live along Elbe River. Although Magdeburg was partly destroyed in during war times, the city offers many ancient, attractive buildings. The most famous is the Magdeburg Cathedral in the heart of the city centre.

The “Grüne Zitadelle” designed by the architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser constitutes a controversial but important component of the newer architecture of the city and has established itself as a major tourist attraction since its opening in 2005.

Find some more information about our green and enjoyable town on www.magdeburg.de.
Finding your Way

On campus you will find several big maps to help you with orientation. The Student Service Center (Building 01, close to the tram stop “University”) is the main information point on campus. All campus buildings are numbered. An interactive map of the campus can be found on http://www.fokus-du.de/fokus-du/upload/1_fokus_du/karten/OvGU_Campus.jpg.

Public Transport

Magdeburg has a convenient public transport system, with trams, buses and even two Elbe river ferries. As enrolled student, you must take your student ID with you when using public transport. You need to show it to the ticket inspector in case of a control.

Before enrolment please buy a regular ticket at a ticket vending machine either at the tram/bus stop or inside the tram. Using public transport without valid ticket may be fined with 40 EUR.

Internet

During the very first days of your stay, you won’t have access to internet on campus. You can use several internet cafés in the vicinity of the campus.

After registration and receiving your student ID, you may register your account at one of the terminals in the computer lab (Building 26.1). With your university account you can log on to the computers on campus and you can check your OVGU student e-mails. With this account you can also use your own laptop to access the internet.

Usually you will find a cable in your dorm room if you live at Studentenwerk. You can use the internet right away. If there is no cable you need to buy a cable in an electronic store.
Food

Most students have lunch at the canteen (Building 27), called “Mensa”. You have the choice of several meals: meat, fish and vegetarian food. You can also enjoy a large salad buffet.

Furthermore there are small cafés on campus, e.g. in the library (Building 30) and in some faculty buildings (Buildings 16, 18 and 40).

In your dorm you will have a shared kitchen, where you can cook individually or with friends. An “NP” supermarket, open for 24 hours from Mondays to Saturdays, is located 200 meters from the campus in Jacobstr.13.

Shopping

The main shopping facilities are located in the city centre. There are two shopping malls: Allee Center and City-Carrée. The street "Breiter Weg" invites for shopping with numerous small shops and boutiques.

Doctors and Pharmacies

In case of an accident or illness you have the choice of numerous doctors in town. Just call one and make an appointment. Please note that not all of them speak English fluently.

If you need to see a doctor without previous appointment, you should be prepared to wait some time. You have to take your health insurance card with you.

The nearest pharmacy is located next to the University Place (“Universitätsplatz”), vis-à-vis the tram stop “Opernhaus” (Opera house).
Leisure Activities

The University sports centre offers a lot of free sports courses for students. Make sure to register early, since usually the most popular ones might fill up within half an hour after registration has started.

Furthermore there are several parks e.g. the Nordpark right behind the Campus and swimming pools (also outdoor) e.g. Elbeschwimmhalle and Nautica, which you can use for sports activities.

If you are tired of being active, why not heading for the Opera or the “Kammerspiele” theatre with their many offers (www.theater-magdeburg.de), or for the Cinemaxx (movie theater) or for one of the small independent cinemas (Moritzhof, Studiokino, OLI at Olvenstedter Strasse).

If you like to go out, the Hasselbach square area offers the best opportunities to relax in a café or bar.
Last but not least – IKUS Intercultural Students

If you need help, if you have a problem, or if you just have a simple question, do not hesitate to visit the IKT place (“Interkultureller Treffpunkt”) and ask the IKUS for help. IKUS is a group of German and international students–volunteers who assist all international students at OVGU. Almost each week of the semester, the IKUS students offer several social and cultural activities for you to get to know the German culture, but also other students and their cultures.

Try the IKUS services: Weekly office hours for counselling, table football nights, movie nights, country evenings, trips, sports tournaments, parties and many more activities in and around Magdeburg.

For more information check on www.ikus.ovgu.de, join the IKUS Magdeburg group on facebook or send an email to ikus@ovgu.de.
We wish you a pleasant guest stay at Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg!

www.ovgu.de