



# Pre- Departure Guide

Winter University  
2020



Please read the entire Pre-Departure Guide carefully and thoroughly for complete comprehension



The Winter University is held by the University of Stuttgart.

Please contact:

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## Organizational Information

### First steps:

In case you need to apply for a visa – this will be the very first step to take. You either already have or will receive a document that is required for your application at the German embassy.

After approval of your application you will receive an official letter of acceptance and an invoice with exact instructions on how and when to pay the participation fee of 1200 EUR. Please note that we will ask for a late fee in case we don't receive any payment in due time. If we don't receive any payment at all the coordinator at your home institution will be informed that your participation has been withdrawn from the program.

Please make sure to contact your host family right after you have received their contact information which usually will be sometime late November. They will be eager to hear from you and especially need to know when exactly to expect their guest. A host family is not a Bed & Breakfast or a hotel. We have met all our hosts in person, so we know that misunderstandings are mostly based on lack of communication.



### Deposit:

We ask that you provide us with a deposit of 200 EUR in cash. This deposit is completely refundable and will be held until your departure to ensure that you leave your room tidy and in good standing. It is to be paid upon registration which will take place on Monday, January 13 in the International Office (detailed information will follow before your departure)

The deposit will be returned to you on the last day of the Winter University.

### E-mails:

In general, you will receive quite a number of e-mails from us giving you vital information about our program, your living situation, etc. Therefore, it is crucial that you check your e-mails using the account that you stated on your application form at least once a week.



## Fee:

The course fee includes the following:

- Bed & Breakfast during the Winter University
- Unlimited public transportation (bus, subway, tram) within the greater Stuttgart area <http://www.vvs.de/download/Tarifzonenplan.pdf>
- Excursions during subject courses (entrance fee to museums, galleries, guided tours, etc.)
- Weekend excursions (bus, train, lunch, guided tours, entrance fees; except a 15/20 EUR registration fee and spending money)
- Program administrative costs



The fee does not include:

- Tuition from your own university
- A fee your own university might need to charge to cover their costs
- Transportation to Stuttgart
- Transportation to the university before registration
- Lunch and dinner
- Medical/accident insurance
- German class textbooks\*
- Personal expenses

\*For German language class you will need to buy a textbook which costs approx. 25 EUR. During your first class the teacher will tell you which book to purchase. You do not need to bring your own textbooks. For the subject course German Film & Literature there are book requirements. Your teacher will let you know which books to purchase and read before the start of the course.

## Housing:

Regarding housing information we will contact you about six weeks prior to the beginning of the Winter University.

If you have any questions about the program do not hesitate to contact us. However, please read this booklet carefully and thoroughly for complete comprehension; the answer to your question might be there already.

Current Information: look for updates and news on our website:

<http://www.ia.uni-stuttgart.de/iu/essp/Module1/index.html>



Official arrival: January 11 or 12 (please do NOT arrive earlier, see below)

Official departure: February 21 (if you decide to stay longer, you will need to find your own accommodation!)

When you plan to come to the Winter University you should try to fly directly to Stuttgart: The three-letter code for its airport is STR.

Another possibility is to arrive in Frankfurt (FRA) or Munich (MUC) and to take a train to Stuttgart (approx. 2 hours).

For train schedules, please check the website at: [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de)

We have a set arrival and departure date (January 11 /12 and February 21, 2020). This is the day to arrive and the day to depart. Please do NOT arrive before the set date. Although we understand that sometimes it is easier to book a flight a few days earlier or leave a few days later, we cannot accommodate you before or after the set dates. If you choose to arrive earlier or leave later, you will have to make your own housing arrangements for these days. The host families cannot accommodate you before then. The same goes for staying later. You are welcome to stay in Germany after the Winter University is over but you will have to make your own housing arrangements. Also we ask the participants to not leave before the official departure date. Although classes often end on Wednesday, the certificates of attendance won't be ready before the official Farewell Party Thursday night as your teachers need the extra day to mark your papers.

You will be picked up by your host family at the airport in Stuttgart (if you fly into Stuttgart) or at the train station in Stuttgart (if you fly into Frankfurt or Munich). Make sure that you have some small Euro bills or even coins to buy a ticket for public transportation. You will not receive your public transportation pass until the first day of the Winter University.

### Accommodation:

While participating in Winter University we offer home stay options with a variety of host families/single person households, etc.



Advantages: We have met all hosts - families and single households - in person and have made very good experiences over the course of the years. In many cases the hosts have been offering their private homes repeatedly to participating students and have shown outstanding hospitality.

Our hosts are representing German society: Small and larger families with toddlers and/or older school kids, singles, or apartment-sharing communities with two or more residents. As in real life we have young and older hosts, some of them smoking, some with pets, migrant background, working moms, single moms, and stay-at-home moms. In order to match you according to your personal needs and wishes, it is essential for you to send us the housing questionnaire including as much information as possible about yourself.

## Arrival and Departure





Please don't expect to stay within walking distance to the university building. Especially families tend to live within the greater Stuttgart area and are willing to commute for up to 60 minutes on a daily basis.



Some hosts offer to accommodate more than one participant. In case you would like to stay with your friend in a private home, please let us know. We will try to plan accordingly.

Also we offer our help in planning to your personal needs and wishes: In case you have special eating habits, hobbies, and interests, we will try to match you with similar hosts.

Unfortunately it isn't possible to meet with all your requests, but please feel assured that we are trying our best to offer you accommodation according to all your needs and wishes. Even if we can't offer the 'perfect' match, please give your hosts the chance to getting to know you. Living in private homes will offer you intercultural experiences that you won't be able to make otherwise.

When you are given the name and address of your host family (usually 1 month prior to the start of the Winter University but it can be as late as 1 week before), please contact them immediately by e-mail, letter, phone or fax. Please do not wait until your departure because it is always good to get to know each other ahead of time. This is a good time to clear up questions, get to know the family, etc.

### Living with a host family:

- Communication: some of our hosts speak English fluently but not all do. You are here to learn and speak German anyways. 😊
- Internet access: not all families have internet access but if they do, please make sure to talk to them about if and how you can use it. Please be aware of what you download. Illegal downloads have been happening in the past and have not only cost a substantial amount of money but have caused a lot of trouble for the student AND host families. If the host family gets invoiced after your departure, we expect you to pay the fee. Best though to stay safe and don't download anything that might not be legal (this can even be films and songs!)
- Duties of student: always remember: you are a guest and they are your hosts. Therefore, be nice and polite and take care of their belongings; be as quiet as possible when you come home late and keep your room tidy.
- Duties of host family: your host has to provide you with the things you need (i.e. a towel), with a key to their house and with breakfast all week. Talk to them if you would like to join them for dinner as well (maybe they would like to get to know your culture and you could cook one night yourself...). Some host families ask for a Euro or two in case you ask for dinner. As this isn't included in the package, please don't be offended in case this happens.





- Use of the kitchen: most host parents allow the use of their kitchens but not all do due to bad experiences in the past. To be on the safe side, please ask before you start cooking. Please also discuss if you want to use the kitchen with friends to prepare meals. Not all families are happy if their kitchen is crowded with people they haven't met before.
- Food: German food depends a lot on meat (mostly beef, pork and chicken), carbohydrates (pasta, potatoes) and vegetables (mostly salads and green vegetables like broccoli and zucchini). If you have any allergies or special dietary needs, please let us **and** your host family know in advance so the diet can be adjusted.
- Laundry: you can do your laundry at your host family's house but please discuss with them how often you can use their washing machine. Some host families have a certain rhythm of doing their laundry and do not wish the washing machine to be used at all times.
- Staying out overnight: if you decide to stay out overnight, please make sure to inform your host family. Otherwise, they might worry about your whereabouts.
- Alcohol: naturally, during your stay in Stuttgart, you want to explore the city's night life and enjoy the good German beer and wine. Please remember that you are here not as a tourist but as a student representative of your university and as a guest of your host family. Therefore, do be careful with how much you drink and do not let it interfere with your studies or your host family's life. Also be aware that alcohol is strictly prohibited on the premises of the Winter University and on the bus while on excursions. Violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion.



**And always have in mind: Don't drink more than you can take. If you are hung over in the morning it's not an excuse to miss classes!**

- Guests: if you have friends or family who wish to visit you during your stay, make sure to ask your host family before you invite them to stay with you.
- In general: stay in touch with your hosts, talk to them about dinner plans, excursion plans or if you plan to stay out late.

If you have a problem, do not hesitate to talk to us and them. Usually, a solution can be found very quickly.



**Absence Policy:**

We have a very strict absence policy. Daily participation is absolutely mandatory in order to get a certificate for the class. Please have in mind that Winter University is very intensive (135 hours = 13 ECTS) and you will also be able to get a lot of credits during a very short period of time. If you must miss a class, please inform your instructor and/or the course coordinator. Also you will need to bring a medical note from a doctor in case you are ill. Please note that attendance, homework, daily preparation, and in-class participation are vital to your success in this course.

**Alcohol is strictly prohibited on the premises of the Winter University. Violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion.**

**Classes:**

Here is a typical day at the Winter University:

The first thing you have to get to is the German language class. It starts at 8:45 am SHARP! and ends at 12:15 pm. Of course you will have a half hour break in between. There will also be a lunch break from 12:15 pm to 1:30 pm – lunch can be taken in either the “Mensa” (cafeteria of the university) or in one of the many shops nearby.



Starting at 1:30 pm you will attend your chosen Subject Course which usually continues until 3:30 pm. Then you will be set free until 8:45 the next morning.

And please remember: although we definitely want you to have a great time while in Germany, we also expect you to take your studies seriously. This includes attending all your classes regularly, participating in class actively, and doing your homework diligently.

As our regular students are still in class until the end of February, your classes won't be on campus. Our university building on Böblinger Street is conveniently located within walking distance to little shops and bakeries close to downtown Stuttgart.

**Credits:**

Most participating institutions will give 9 ECTS for the German Language Course and 4 ECTS for the Subject Course. You are responsible for obtaining credit transfer yourself so please consult your Study Abroad and/or Faculty Advisor in good time.

The University of Stuttgart will supply your institution with a Confirmation of Academic Performance at the end of the program.



### Excursions:

We offer single-day excursions for you during the Winter University. These excursions will take place on Saturdays only and will cost 20 EUR each. If you booked the same trip at a travel agency the amount you paid would be at least double our price.



Since we try to always update our excursions to include the most current events, we are not able to tell you in advance where they will go to. You will find out and can register for them during the first week of classes. Please note that the excursions are for WU participants only as the field trips are sponsored by the university.

Of course you are free to arrange your own excursions and trips throughout Germany and Europe on the weekends.

### Internet access:

Please do not expect to have internet access around the clock, especially not at your host family's house.

There is a computer lab in the university building where your classes are held. You will be given a password upon registration with which you have access to the internet. The lab is open from 8 am until the end of your daily classes. So you will be able to surf and chat in breaks between classes.



Please feel free to bring your own laptop. Wifi is available with your personal Eduroam account issued by your **home university** as you won't be officially enrolled at the University of Stuttgart.

### Placement test:

There will be a general language placement test on the first day. You will then be placed in a class accordingly. Beginners, however, don't need to be placed and can go directly to their classes on the first day of Winter University.



### Subject course:

As class sizes are limited to 18 students per class. Switching subject classes depends mostly on how full the classes are. In general you can't change after the subject classes have already started. Please make sure to let the course coordinator know before your arrival that you would like to switch classes. Although we try our best to grant every student his first choice subject course, sometimes it simply isn't possible due to the limited class sizes.





**Health Insurance:**

You will have to get health insurance on your own at home. If you have to visit a doctor here you'll have to pay cash up front (some but not all doctors will accept credit cards!) and then get reimbursed by your health insurance back home. The University of



Stuttgart does not provide you with health insurance.

Those participants of the Winter University remaining at the University of Stuttgart as part of the Enhanced Summer Semester Program (ESSP) need to take out a traveller's health insurance in their home country covering the period from the beginning of January until the end of March. From the summer semester on (starting April 1) those students will then have to purchase the German state student health insurance for approx. 100 EUR a month in order to properly enroll as students. More information on how to purchase this German state health insurance will be given upon arrival in Stuttgart.

**Public Transportation:**

During your stay you will be provided with a public transportation pass from the Stuttgart bus and train system which allows you to travel freely in and around Stuttgart at any time.

<http://www.vvs.de/download/Tarifzonenplan.pdf> (covered area)

Your classrooms will be within five minute walking distance to the next bus- or tram stop (Erwin-Schöttle Platz)

**Weather:**

All information offered here is based on average data. The operative terms are "normally" and "generally". Of course we cannot guarantee the weather. ☺

The winters in Stuttgart are normally mild but high in precipitation. Temperatures during the day are mostly between -5° C (23° F) and 10° C (50° F) and often a bit colder during the night. In previous winters the temperature went down to -15° C (5° F), so you should be prepared in any case.

Snow is common but not guaranteed. Expect some rainy and/or snowy days so you will really need a warm, waterproof coat. There are of course sunny days as well but they can be blistering cold. Therefore you will need warm clothes and many clothes so you can layer yourself up to maximum protection. Bring a warm cap, a scarf, gloves (snowball fights are no fun with bare hands!) and waterproof shoes.

