Information regarding COVID-19 for international scholars

Dear international scholars,

As COVID-19 continues changing our everyday lives, we have gathered the most important information around the pandemic, on entering Germany, on quarantine, on testing, on infection control measures, etc. We try to keep the information as updated as we can. However, we also ask you to inform yourself actively on the recommendations, instructions and measures taken by the University of Stuttgart, the city of Stuttgart, the state of Baden-Württemberg and the Federal Government of Germany.

Travelling to Germany

What are the current entry restrictions for Germany?

From May 13, 2021 on all travelers entering Germany by air – irrespective of whether having spent time in a risk area or not – must present a negative Covid-19 test to their air carrier prior to boarding.

For travelers entering Germany after spending time in a foreign risk area, a high-incidence area or an area of virus variants of concern further restrictions and regulations apply. An up-to-date list of these areas is published on the website of the Robert Koch-institute. Before entering Germany these travelers must register their entry on the portal Einreiseanmeldung. Print out the confirmation of having registered and have it on you when entering Germany.

As a rule, travelers are required to proceed directly to their accommodation immediately upon arrival and remain exclusively at this location for a period of 10 days (quarantine). If you transmit proof of a complete vaccination against COVID-19, proof of recovery from the disease or a negative test result via the portal Einreiseanmeldung your quarantine may end prematurely.

- **Foreign risk area**: Persons who travel to Germany from “normal” risk areas must be in possession of a test certificate taken at the latest 48 hours after entry, proof of recovery from COVID 19 or a vaccination certificate. As soon as one of these certificates/proof have been transmitted via the portal Einreiseanmeldung, travelers may curtail the necessary quarantine of 10 days.

- **High-incidence area**: Persons who travel to Germany from a high-incidence area, must be in possession of a test certificate (antigen test: max. 48 hour, PCR test: max. 72 hours old on entry), proof of recovery from COVID-19 or proof of vaccination. The quarantine period of 10 days can be shortened if a second negative test which may not be conducted earlier than five days after entry is presented via the portal Einreiseanmeldung.

- **Area of virus variant of concern**: Germany restricted the travel from countries with a widespread of Covid-variants drastically and introduced a travel ban. Only German citizens, persons with permanent residence in Germany and persons who have a residence permit are allowed to enter Germany. Persons who travel to Germany from areas of virus variants of concern must be in possession of a test certificate (antigen test: max. 24 hour, PCR test: max. 72 hours old on entry). They need to obey a 14-day quarantine which cannot be ended prematurely.

Violations against these regulations can be punished as an administrative offence with a fine of up to 25,000 euros.
Contact the competent health office or a doctor without delay should symptoms typical of an infection with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (difficulties breathing, newly developed cough, fever or loss of smell or taste) emerge within 10 days of entry into Germany.

Testing

Where can I get tested?

With an online appointment, you can go to the test-center at the airport to get tested after coming from a risk region. The PCR-test costs 67 Euro, the rapid test 35 Euro. If you have to get tested because you had contact with an infected person or your doctor transferred you due to symptoms you can go to the test center Cannstatter Wasen or the test-center Neckarpark. In these cases testing remains free of charge. There are also several doctors’ offices who do testing, but please call beforehand and ask about their testing regulations for the safety of other patients.

Since March 8, 2021 one rapid test per week is free for everyone in Germany. You can go to special testing centers, some pharmacies offer testing as well. Check out the differences between “Schnelltest” (rapid tests) and “Selbsttest” (do-it-yourself test). Testing is also possible at the campus in Vaihingen, where spit tests are offered.

The University of Stuttgart hands out tests to employees who are not working full time from home. Your institute will hand them out to you.

Vaccination

Who is entitled to a corona vaccination?

More and more people are entitled to get a vaccination against the corona virus. The government of Baden-Württemberg has identified different priority groups who will receive the vaccinations one after the other according to risk and exposure. Please note that there is no obligation to get vaccinated, it is voluntary.

Employees and visiting researchers of the University of Stuttgart belong to priority group 3. From May 15, 2021 on, you will be entitled to get vaccinated at vaccination centers as well as at doctors’ offices. As an employee, you have automatically received an e-mail confirmation from the university administration which entitles you to vaccination. Visiting researchers may receive this entitlement confirmation by asking their institute to get in touch with the Division of H.R. The institute must confirm that you are working at the institute and should convey your name and birthday to following e-mail address:leitung.dez4@verwaltung.uni-stuttgart.de.

Each employee and visiting researcher is responsible for organizing his/her own vaccination appointment. In spite of the growing amount of vaccines available, you might still a bit of patience until you get vaccinated.

Most probably, the prioritization of vaccination will be given up completely from June 7, 2021 on. Doctors are already not obliged to prioritize any more.

Where can I make an appointment?

There are different vaccination centers in Stuttgart and the region. Appointments can be made online or per phone 116117). It is also possible to get a vaccination at your doctor.

If you face difficulties in booking an appointment at any of the vaccination centers, you may write an e-mail to the Bürgerstiftung Stuttgart. They help citizens of Stuttgart to make an appointment at any of the vaccination centers in the region.
The websites www.impfterminmanagement.de and sofort-impfen.de/ try to match people who do not have a family doctor to find appointments at registered doctors who have left-overs vaccines.

**Which rules apply to fully vaccinated persons and recovered persons?**

Persons are considered as fully vaccinated by the time two weeks after their second vaccination against COVID-19 have passed (except for Johnson&Johnson with only one dose). Persons count as recovered if they have a positive PCR-test that is at least 28 days but maximum six months old.

Please inform yourself on the special rules. Contact regulations do not apply to both groups of persons. They do not count as a person in private meetings. They also do not have to adhere to the exit restrictions or mandatory tests, such as for hairdressers or shops. They also no longer have to be in quarantine coming from a risk area or after having contact with someone with a positive test result. They only have to be in quarantine when entering from a virus variant area or after having come into contact with a person who is infected with a dangerous virus variant. Wearing a mask, hygiene measures and keeping distance are still obligatory measures. Please keep in mind that it is still possible catch the infection after a vaccination and keep taking care of yourself and others.

**Quarantine**

I need to be quarantined. What should I pay attention to?

In case you need to be quarantined, please check out the guidelines for self-isolation and quarantine by the Robert-Koch-institute. Information brochures are also available in other languages.

**How can I get necessary items/food?**

There are several German supermarket chains that offer online shopping:

- NETTO: https://www.netto-online.de/lebensmittel/
- REWE: https://shop.rewe.de/
- EDEKA: https://www.edeka24.de/
- REAL: https://www.real.de/lebensmittel/

Normally, it takes one to three days for delivery. Another option is to order meals from:

- Lieferando: https://www.lieferando.de/
- Bring-Butler: https://www.bringbutler.de

You may find addresses of nearby restaurants, take-aways and shops which deliver non-food items here: https://www.stuttgartsindwir.de

Electronic articles can be ordered from Conrad, Mediamarkt or Saturn.

If these options are not possible for you, feel free to contact the Welcome Center for International Scholars and we will try to find a suitable solution.

**Infection Control Measures**

Which measures and regulations must be observed in Stuttgart and Germany?

In the following, the most important rules are presented. Please note that the presented rules do not cover all regulations. We kindly ask you to keep yourself updated actively on the recommendations, instructions and measures taken by the city of Stuttgart, the state of Baden-Württemberg and the government of Germany.
If no suitable physical infection protection devices are available, a minimum distance of 1.5 meters from other people must be observed. A medical mask (FFP2/3, KN95/N95 or surgery mask) that covers mouth and nose must be worn by everybody older than 5 years.

In public transport a FFP2/3, KN95 or N95 must be worn.

At present a nation-wide, so-called “Notbremse” (emergency brake) applies. Please keep yourself updated since rules can loosen or tighten fast. The “Notbremse” includes a five-step reopening strategy to end the lockdown gradually if the infection rates sink. If you are fully vaccinated, please inform yourself what rules apply to you. As of May 14, the following regulations apply in the city of Stuttgart.

- Private meetings are only permitted with your own household and one person from another household (plus children up to 14 years). Keep the number of households constant and as small as possible.
- Hairdressers remain open, but a negative test is required. Book shops, flower shops and garden centers remain open as well. Retail stores need to close. Click&Meet is possible if the incidence remains under 100 for several days.
- Zoos, botanical garden, theatres, cinemas, bars, sports clubs, swimming pools, museums, galleries, fitness studios as well as restaurants and cafés will gradually re-open if the incidence remains under 100 for at least seven days.
- Kindergartens and primary schools need to close in case of an incidence over 165, emergency care is offered, they can re-open partially if the incidence is under 100. Secondary Schools need to close, distance teaching is offered.
- Exit restrictions at night apply from 10 pm to 5 am.
- Refrain from private travel and visitations. Overnight stays in hotels, hostels, etc. for touristic purposes in most Länder and districts are still prohibited.

How can I protect others and myself?

To protect yourself and others, it is important to keep distance to other people, to wear a mask and to avoid closed rooms, especially with poor ventilation. In addition, group gatherings as well as close contact and discussions with others should be reduced. Hygiene measures such as coughing and sneezing in your elbows, regular ventilation, thorough washing of hands and general cleanliness are also important.

How do I behave in case of doubt?

If you have been in contact with a person who was tested positive, contact the local health office immediately to ask how to proceed. Stay at home. Testing is possible from three days after contact to the infected person. If the test result is positive, please follow the guidelines, stay in quarantine and take care of your health status. Also directly inform your employer. Negative testing does not shorten the quarantine of 10 days (14 days if virus variation).

If you develop symptoms of Covid-19, please stay at home and do not get in touch with other persons. Contact the Fieberambulanz or your family doctor. They will inform you about how to proceed. To protect others do not go to the doctor without calling him or her before! The doctor will decide if a Covid-19-test needs to be taken.

Corona-Warn-App in Germany

The Corona-Warn-App helps to stop the spread of the virus and can be downloaded in app stores for free. It uses Bluetooth technology and detects other smartphones around you on which the app is also active. The app will inform you if you have had contact with someone who has been tested positive for coronavirus. You can then react quickly and prevent the virus from spreading unwittingly. You remain anonymous at all times when using the app.
Which measures and regulations must be observed at the University of Stuttgart?

To inform yourself about regulations at the University of Stuttgart please read the current hygiene concept and check out the webpage regarding Covid-19. The most important rules are to keep a minimum distance of 1.5m and to wear a medical mask everywhere on campus except for your own workplace. If you have respiratory symptoms or fever you are not allowed to come to the University — unless a doctor has confirmed that it is a non-hazardous condition.

When can I start working at my workplace in University after travelling to Germany from a risk region?

The corona regulations of the University of Stuttgart require you to present a negative corona test taken one the sixth day after arrival to get access to the buildings of the University of Stuttgart and the workplace at your institute.

Matters regarding visa, residents’ registration, residence permit

I am a Non-EU citizen. The German Embassy does not issue any visa due to the corona situation. What can I do?

The University of Stuttgart does neither have any information nor any influence on visa applications. Please check the websites of the respective embassies for more information.

What happens if my visa expires before I was able to enter Germany?

You will need to re-apply for a new entry visa at the German embassy nearest to you.

I have just moved to Stuttgart. How can I register myself?

If you need to register or de-register in Stuttgart, please contact one of the Residents’ Registration Offices of Stuttgart by phone or e-mail if and ask how to proceed. If you live in another town, contact the “Rathaus” of your town. It is possible to send the necessary documents to the citizen’s office, please add your contact details for questions.

I am a Non-EU citizen: How can I get a residence permit if the validity of my visa does not cover the whole time of my stay? And how can I extend my residence permit if I intend to stay longer?

If you live in Stuttgart and need your residence permit to be issued for the first time or get it extended, please send all necessary documents to auslaenderrecht.arbeit.a-k@stuttgart.de or auslaenderrecht.arbeit.l-z@stuttgart (depending on the first letter of your last name) and ask them to issue/extend your title. Don’t forget to send the filled in and signed application form for a residence permit or application form for an extension of your residence permit, too. The Foreigners’ Registration Office will then either give you an appointment or send a provisional residence title (so-called “Fiktion”) by post. Thus, please make sure that your name on your letter box can be read clearly.

If you live in another town, please contact the Welcome Center for International Scholars, we will help you to get in touch with the competent authority.

How can I stay healthy?

Eating well, doing exercises and finding appropriate support in need of help are always important, but maybe even more in times of crises.

The Health Management Department (Betriebliches Gesundheitsmanagement) of the University of Stuttgart publishes easy recipes and hints for every day (in German). You may subscribe to the newsletter called “loving food monthly” via a mailing list.
University Sports (Hochschulsport) offers online courses during Corona times. You need to register online on their webpage. On their YouTube channel they offer FIT@WORK, very brief exercises which can be done in front of your desk without having to change clothes.

Counseling on all physical and mental health problems in quite a number of different languages including English is offered by the University’s Occupational Medical and Health Services (Arbeitsmedizinischer Dienst). You may find contact details on the bottom of their webpage.

Where to get more information in English about the situation in Germany

- ‘Zusammen gegen Corona’ by the Federal Ministry of Health
- Deutsche Welle
- The local
- I am an expat
- https://www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de/amt-und-person/informationen-zum-coronavirus
- Government of Baden Württemberg: information in French, Italian, Turkish, Polish, Russian, Arabic and Romanian