Go abroad!

Guide for outgoing students
Description

Title

Go abroad! – Guide for outgoing students

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1. Introduction

Dear students,

one or more semesters abroad will not only offer you a unique experience, but you will also be able to get to know foreign cultures and people. You will be able to improve your language skills, which will benefit you on the job market as well. Nevertheless the focus is on your personal development.

A semester abroad requires an early and well organized preparation, as well as initiative and the awareness of taking a certain risk. In order to keep the risks low, this manual provides basic information about the organizational procedures in the run up.

The manual should be used as a guidance but please be aware that it does not compensate for a counseling interview at the West Coast University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule Westküste, FH Westküste. Take the chance to get information in a personal consultation. Of course we will be there to support you at any time!

Have fun and go abroad!

Antje Korthals & Anna Sophie Tuxen
2. Internship or study abroad

2.1 Internships abroad

An internship is always a very useful possibility, to gain experience in a foreign country. Only this way you get a chance to be fully integrated in your host country and your own creativity will be stimulated distinctively. By doing an internship you can often live like a local, work with them, live with them, be one of them and thus plunge deeply into a different culture.

The ways to find an internship are usually the following:

- Personal contacts (relatives/friends living abroad/ former company contacts that might have a branch abroad etc.)
- Career service at FH Westküste
- Coordinator for the internship semester or professors at FH Westküste
- Trade directories are available at the library
- Internet
- Consult German companies with international branch offices or foreign companies with offices in Germany
- Institutes of Culture
- Chamber of Foreign Commerce (www.ahk.de/en)
- Associations (e.g. VDE, VDMA)
- International fairs.

There are also various placement agencies, which help you find an internship position for a fee. Unfortunately the offers are often very expensive and can disappoint your expectations as well as non-arranged internships.

Please read the examination regulations concerning the internship semester very thoroughly.

You should always consider the country specific standards in your application!
Once you found an internship position, please be sure to contact your coordinator for the practical semester to get the internship approved and to talk about further steps:

**Department of Technology**
Prof. Dr.-Ing. Marion Hermersdorf  
Fachhochschule Westküste  
Fritz-Thiedemann-Ring 20  
25746 Heide  
Tel.: +49 (0) 481 - 8555 345  
Room: 1.031  
E-Mail: hermersdorf@fh-westkueste.de

**Department of Economics**
Prof. Dr. Stefano Di Pietro  
Fachhochschule Westküste  
Fritz-Thiedemann-Ring 20  
25746 Heide  
Tel.: +49 (0) 481 - 8555 530  
Room: 3.001  
E-Mail: fbwpraxissemester@fh-westkueste.de

ITM-Bachelor-students can have their practical semester abroad approved as a foreign study semester, given that all the requirements of a practical semester are fulfilled.

The practical semester can inter alia be financed with a scholarship of the DAAD, ERASMUS/SOKRATES or the funding program of FH Westküste. For further information please see us at our office.
2.2 Studying abroad

2.2.1 Steps to a study semester abroad
If you are a student at West Coast University of Applied Sciences, you have the opportunity to either choose one of our many partner universities or to study abroad as a so-called “freemover”.

2.2.1.1 Study abroad as a freemover
As a so-called “freemover” there are no limits when it comes to the choice of university or country where you want to study abroad. But this also means that you have to take care of every step of the preparation prior to your departure yourself. This includes but is not limited to the university that you choose, getting in touch with the university, checking their course catalogue, academic calendar and admission requirements (e.g. language skills) and sending in an application. It might even mean applying for a visa to enter the country and finding the right accommodation. Keep in mind that as a freemover, you often have to pay the university’s tuition fee. Please get started with the preparation of your semester abroad early, so you do not miss any deadlines.

To receive information about application formalities and deadlines, please contact the International Office at your host university.

This link [https://www.daad.de/laenderinformationen/de/](https://www.daad.de/laenderinformationen/de/) will help you to find universities’ contact information, information about admission requirements and the cost of living expenses. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate contact us.

Also, student exchange organisations sometimes offer a free service of helping students with their preparations of studying abroad as a freemover. Brochures and further information can be found at the International Office at West Coast University of Applied Sciences.

2.2.1.2 Study abroad at one of our partner universities
The West Coast University of Applied Sciences has cooperations with many different partner universities inside of Europe and all over the world, where a certain number of students per academic year can spend their semester abroad.

An overview of our partner universities, information about the application process and relevant deadlines can be found [here](https://www.daad.de/laenderinformationen/de/).
Further information and documents about our partner universities can also be found in our cloud. The password and Link can be received from the team of the International Office: aaa@fh-westkueste.de.

2.2.2 Language courses in the Erasmus+ program and at non european partner universities

Please be aware that your language knowledge of the language spoken in your host country has to be sufficient to pass the exams. Therefore, it is recommendable to enhance your language skills before the begin of your semester abroad to a level where you will be able to follow the classes.

To support the acquirement and development of language competency, the online linguistic support (OLS) is available to participants of the Erasmus+ program.

Generally, Erasmus+ grant receivers have to take a language test before and after the mobility. The language test evaluates the listening and reading comprehension of the participants as well as their ability to write in the particular language. The test is obligatory to be able to receive an Erasmus+ grant, however the results do not have any impact on the amount of the given grant. It is merely used for the evaluation of language skills.

If you reach at least level B2 on your first test, you are allowed to request an online language course from the International Office. The course will be offered in your working language or the language that is spoken in your host country. This enables you to improve your language skills during your stay abroad. By achieving a test result ranging from A1 to B1 you are automatically given a licence for an online language course in the tested language.

So far language tests and courses are offered in the following languages: Bulgarian, Danish, German, English, Finnish, French, Greek, Italian, Croatian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Swedish, Slovakian, Spanish, Czech, Hungarian.

Additionally, to Erasmus+ our non-European partner universities offer language courses as well:

China, Sun Yat-sen University: http://soee.sysu.edu.cn/yyb/programsandtuitions/index.htm

Mexico, Universidad Anáhuac:
http://pegaso.anahuac.mx/internacionalizacion/index.php/international-incoming-students/admission-process
2.2.3 Examination and acknowledgment of study content

If you would like to study at a foreign university, you should make sure that doing so won’t lead to a prolonging of your standard time of study. Therefore, you have to compare the study requirements of the FH Westküste for the specific semester with the requirements of the foreign university.

In general bear in mind to check the curricular requirements for a study semester abroad in your examination regulations!

Prepare a list with all the courses you would have to take at the FH Westküste and look for matching courses at your host university on their website. Talk to your host university whether you will be able to take these courses and if they are available in the time period of your stay.

Once you completed your course list, discuss with the head of your study department, whether the chosen courses at the host university will be equally accepted and acknowledged. To prepare the course list, please use the Learning Agreement form.

The crediting of your grades (process, contact point, methodology) are documented in the “Änderungssatzung zur Prüfungsverfahrensordnung § 19” as well as in the “Ausführungsbestimmungen zu § 19 Änderungssatzung PVO”. You can find both documents by following this link:

https://www.fh-westkueste.de/hochschulprofil/rechtliches/studierende/.

You can download the Learning Agreement form from our website at https://www.fh-westkueste.de/international/downloads/.
Please present the Learning Agreement at least **3-4 months before your departure** to the head of your program of study for subscription.

In general you should be aware that lecture plans at the partner universities are often announced on short notice and can still be changed. Therefore it is very likely that you get your final schedule once you are at the host university.

**Special arrangements concerning the exams have to be discussed with the head of your study program.**

### 2.2.4 Financing your stay abroad

You will probably have about the same expenses abroad, like you have for a semester at the FH Westküste. Most of the time the expenses can be even higher due to transportation, cost of living, possible tuition fees, travel etc.. Therefore you should take care of your financing possibilities in advance before your departure.

In case you need financial aid, you can apply for a loan or a scholarship. Apart from the Erasmus scholarships at Erasmus partner universities and the student loan from KfW, you can apply for a loan with no interest called „Study abroad“ for FH Westküste students. **Please be aware of the fact that applying for a scholarship or loan does not necessarily mean that you will receive it!**

#### 2.2.4.1 Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is a scholarship programme for education, youth and sport by the European Union which supports the academic exchange between universities in Europe. Scholarships are offered for studies and internships abroad.

Further information regarding Erasmus+ as well as the application formalities and deadlines are provided at:

[https://www.fh-westkueste.de/de/international/erasmus/](https://www.fh-westkueste.de/de/international/erasmus/)
2.2.4.2 PROMOS

PROMOS is a scholarship programme by the DAAD with financial fundings by the ministry of education and research which increases the international mobility for students. The International Office at the West Coast University of Applied Sciences provides PROMOS-scholarships for students of the FH Westküste for:

- a semester abroad outside of Europe (1-6 months)
- an internship abroad outside of Europe (6 weeks to 6 months)

The application deadline for a semester abroad during the summer semester is the 31st January and during winter semester the 30th June.

Further information about the application and selection procedure can be found at: https://www.fh-westkueste.de/de/international/outgoing-studierende/promos-stipendien/

2.2.4.3 HAW.International: Semesteraufenthalte und Abschlussarbeiten für Studierende

HAW. International is a scholarship programme by the DAAD for students at universities of Applied Sciences. It supports studentes who are planning to study abroad for a semester (at a non-Erasmus+-partner university) or who are planning to write their final thesis there. International students can apply for the scholarship if they are enrolled in a regular course of study at the FH Westküste (no exchange students). The period of funding depends on the cause of the stay abroad:

- study semester: 3-6 months
- writing the final thesis: 1-6 months.

Applications are made at: daad.de/go/stipd57478124.

Further information are provided at the page of the DAAD: https://www.daad.de/ausland/studieren/stipendium/de/70-stipendien-finden-und-bewerben/?detail=57478124.

2.2.4.4 Study Abroad

„Study Abroad“ is a loan with no interest funded by the support forum of the West Coast University of Applied Sciences for students at the FH Westküste, who are planning a semester or an internship abroad. Applications have to be handed in before the stay abroad starts otherwise they are unvalid.
Further information can be found at:
https://www.fh-westkueste.de/international/outgoing-studierende/study-abroad/.

### 2.2.4.5 BAföG

All German (or according to BAföG equal to German) students are applicable for BAföG. This is also possible for a study abroad.

For more information please visit their website:
http://www.bafoeg.bmbf.de/ (German).

Depending on the country, in which you plan to study or do your internship abroad, there are different BAföG-offices. You can find the overview at http://www.auslandsbafoeg.de/auslandsbafoeg/antragstellung.htm (German).

### 2.2.4.6 Travel Grants by the Fulbright-Kommission

For a study semester abroad at an US-American partner university of the West Coast University of Applied Sciences, there is the possibility to apply for a travel grant provided by the Fulbright-Kommission. Included are a financial support in the amount of 2000 € for travel costs and additional expenses as well as a preparation and network meeting of German and American persons receiving a Fulbright grant. Application deadline is the 15th January.

Further information about the program as well as the application procedure are provided on the following link: https://www.fulbright.de/programs-for-germans/studierende-und-graduierte/reisestipendien.

### 2.2.4.7 Scholarships

For a study semester abroad there are a couple of country and study specific scholarships available. An overview of the current scholarship offers can be found in the scholarship database under

https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/datenbank/en/12359-finding-scholarships/ or
Apart from the generally valid scholarships you might be eligible for a special scholarship program due to your personal situation, e.g. family foundations, regionally or denominationally limited scholarships.

Further information can be found in the german and european foundation manual.


Students with a good academic performance, who find themselves in a social emergency, can also get informally an application for a loan with no interest of the Förderforum (organization for sponsoring of students in need) of FH Westküste, available at the International Office. („Study Abroad“) Please be aware that the applications have to be turned in at the Förderforum before your departure! Otherwise, applications will be rejected.

Everybody who is planning to go for a study semester abroad within the last third of their study program can also obtain financing in form of an educational loan, available at all respectable credit institutions.

2.2.5 Follow up of the study semester abroad

As soon as you have finished your semester abroad, the overview of your marks (Transcript of Records) obtained at the partner university has to be handed in to your examinations
office as soon as possible. This only applies to cases in which the partner university has not sent it to FH Westküste directly.

In order to get the grades and credits for your academic performance abroad acknowledged it is necessary to hand in (according with the time limit of the examination procedure rules and the modified statutes) your Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records of the partner university and the completed form “Antrag auf Anerkennung erbrachter Leistungen im Rahmen eines Auslandssemesters” which can be downloaded on http://www.fh-westkueste.de/studierende/pruefungen/formular-download/ to the right.

2.3 Formalities for your semester abroad

2.3.1 Visa

Inform yourself about the entry regulations for the chosen host country well ahead of time, you can do that for example at the Federal Foreign Office.

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Uebersicht_node.html

Please inform the Foreigners Registration Office (“Ausländerbehörde”) in Dithmarschen on time about your intention to go abroad for a study semester or an internship. Please keep in mind that the residence permit for Germany expires automatically if you stay longer than 6 months outside of Germany. Depending on your home and your host country you might need a visa for the stay abroad. Please contact the host country’s diplomatic representation in Germany to become familiar with visa regulations. Since the application for a visa can take several month, you should start the process well ahead of time. Do not travel to the country with a tourist visa, if a different visa is required for your studies! The legal consequences can be serious. Please clarify if and to what extent you will be allowed to work in the host country. The finances of your semester abroad should be organized and sorted out before the departure.

2.3.2 Accommodation

Just as important as getting the visa is taking care of your accommodation in due time. Often you can get a list with student housing offers and privately rented apartments at the International Office of your host university. In some cities they offer private student housing,
addresses for those accommodations can usually be obtained at the student representatives. If this does not help, you can still post an ad in the local newspaper of your host city. Often these newspapers also offer a real estate section on their internet pages.

2.3.3 Insurance / health
You should find out ahead of time whether your insurance company covers the stay abroad. In case they do not, you will have to get a private additional insurance.

Attention: Do not switch to a private health insurance completely, because under certain circumstance you might not be able to switch back to a statutory health insurance after you return to Germany!

Furthermore you need to clarify whether your liability insurance is valid in your host country. Under certain circumstances it is recommendable to get a travel cancellation and luggage insurance, depending on the value of the flight ticket and the luggage. Before your stay you should do a health check up and consult your doctor or the health department concerning possible vaccinations. First information are also available at the tropical institute:

http://www.gesundes-reisen.de/ (German)

The need of medicine is also something to consider before your stay abroad and to make sure its availability in the host country.

2.3.4 Communication
For your study abroad it is necessary to have a secure communication link to the host university. Make sure that you have a valid credit card or reliable access to your bank account, holding a sufficient amount of money.

It would be best if you talked to your own bank and ask for more information. In case of a different currency make sure to check whether it is cheaper to change the money in the host country or to take out the money directly from your bank account.
The same applies to your cellphone (roaming), find out about the possibilities and rates. Sometimes it is worth to get an additional SIM card in your host country for the duration of your stay.

It is necessary to have a web-based email address, to be able to go to internet cafes and stay in touch with your home country. It is very important to leave your contact dates abroad, with your family and all important institutiones. Be sure to stay in contact with the FH Westküste, so that you will stay enrolled, your exams will be acknowledged and that you can register in time for the next semester.

### 2.4 Assistance

As soon as the dates for the students are set or in case of changes that have been made, all information have to be given to the examination office as soon as possible. Those documents include:

- Arrival and departure time
- Flightnumber and time
- Address of the accommodation abroad

This way the obligated application for the examination during the period of your stay abroad can be skipped. This is only valid for the actual period of time abroad, not for e.g. vacation time. If you are planning to extend your stay abroad longer than the actual semester at the university, be aware that you will still be automatically registered for the exams. No exceptions! Please be sure to register on time before the start of the semester, so you will stay enrolled at the Fachhochschule Westküste.

### 2.5 International Student Identification Card

For students, who want to go abroad, it is recommendable to get an ISIC-identification card (International Student Identity Card). With this Student ID you receive discounts for train-
and bus rides, flights, ferries, accommodations as well as entry fees for cultural events (cinemas, theaters, sports events etc.) worldwide.

The ISIC is available at the AStA for a fee of about 12 Euro. You will have to submit your Personal identification card or passport, the student ID and a photo. The ISIC is always valid until the 31.12 of the current year, regardless of when it was issued.
3. **Going abroad at one glance**

For partner universities:

|   | 1. Announcement of places at partner universities by the International Office  
   | (separate announcement for UNCW in the USA) |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | 2. Completion of the Learning Agreement (LA) by the student |   |
|   | 3. Turning in of the LA at the study department |   |
|   | **Verification by the head of the program of study:** | **Verification by the head of the program of study:** |
|   | LA correct (continue with 4.) | LA incorrect |
|   |   | Notification to the student for a consultation |
|   |   | (back to 3. with changed LA) |
|   | 4. Forwarding of the LA and the application to the International Office by the student |   |
|   | 5. Application for a place at a partner university using the MoveOn application web portal for outgoing students of the International Office |   |
|   | 6. Selection Process |   |
|   | **Admission** | **Refusal** |
|   | 7. Student gets assurance and further information by International Office, the International Office announces student at partner university |   |
|   | 8. Student sends LA to the host university and formally applies for enrollment at the partner university |   |
For other universities:

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| 3. Student applies directly at university abroad including the LA to the application documents |
Provisional hints:

- Try to learn or improve knowledge in the national language („icebreaker”, not everybody might be able to speak English)
- Collect information about travelling and habits in the destination:
  - journey and security advisory
  - country-specific information (liportal.de)
  - embassy
  - internet investigation, press (web)sites
- Get recommendations of tropical disease units, doctors about vaccinations and general medical advice
- Collect information about foreign travel health insurance, first aid kit
- Scan and upload your important documents for travelling into a cloud (Replacement of papers will be easier and faster than a reissue)
- Write down the numbers for freezing your bank account or SIM card (for german bank accounts and SIM cards: (0049)-116 116 )
- Update your contact details in HIS (also telephone number and e-mail address)
- Grant a power of attorney to a familiar person in Germany

The list doesn’t claim to be complete. We are not responsible for steps being forgotten in individual cases. The list of hints is just a memory aid.
Hints for the organization
of a study semester abroad

Before the start:
- Searched for possible universities, language requirements, academic calendar and financing options
- Verified the possibilities to attend a course with help of the learning agreement
- Learning agreement signed by the program of study department
- Learning agreement submitted to the international office
- Application for partner university handed in to the international office (in case of partner university)
- Application for enrollment sent to university abroad
- Applied for scholarships/BaföG/loan (if necessary)
- Checked coverage of insurances (health, accident, third-party liability)
- Vaccinations completed
- Applied for visa (non-EU countries)
- Found accommodation in student dormitory/host family/apartment share
- Booked ticket after assurance of host university
- Money changed/internationally working bank card is available

During your stay abroad:
- Enrolled at host university
- Timetable is created
- Learning agreement changed after approval of program of study (if necessary)
- Informed about deadlines and exams within the courses
- Transcripts of Records obtained at the end end of the term
- Semester fee transferred to FH Westküste

After your return:
- Transcript of records handed in to examinations office
- Address updated in HIS (in case you move house)
- Settled in again
Hints for the organization of a practical semester abroad

Before the start:
- All formalities for authorization to do the internship semester completed
- Searched for internship companies
- Applications sent and assurance(s)
- Internship contract is signed by the company and accepted by your coordinator of the practical semester
- Professor or employee of the FH Westküste found, who is looking after you during the internship
- Applied for scholarships/Bafög/loan (if necessary)
- Checked coverage of insurances (health, third-party liability, accident)
- Vaccinations completed
- Applied for visa (non-EU countries)
- Found accommodation in student dormitory/apartment share
- Booked tickets
- Money changed/internationally working bank card is available

During your stay abroad:
- Semester fee transferred to FH Westküste

After your return:
- Address updated in HIS (in case you move house)
- Practical semester report written and submitted
- Taken part in practical-semester-wrap-up
- Transcript of Record, Learning Agreement and “Antrag auf Anerkennung von Leistungen” handed in at your study programme office
- Settled in again

The lists do not claim to be complete. We are not responsible for steps being forgotten in individual cases. The lists of hints are just a memory aid.
4. Frequently Asked Questions

Does a study program in Switzerland and Austria count as a study abroad?

A study semester abroad in one of these countries is valid, if it is mentioned in the examination regulations. In the study program ITM it does not serve the purpose of a semester abroad as given by the head of the study program, but will be accepted.

Is it possible to end the semester abroad earlier and return to the lectures at the FH Westküste?

Yes, this is possible, but not appreciated since many universities have a limited number of places. Therefore other students don’t get the chance to go even though the place opens up. In addition your stay abroad will not be acknowledged.

Is it possible to combine the study semester abroad in the 3. semester and the internship semester in the 4. semester – also with a stay in two different countries?

Yes, this is possible. But you have to be aware that you have to be present at the obligatory lecture about the internship semester. In this case it has to be attended in the previous year. Also you need to take care of formalities like the Learning Agreement ahead of time.