



Just Arrived

A Guide for International Students

Department of
International Affairs

Technology
Arts Sciences
TH Köln

www.th-koeln.de/international

Department of International Affairs

Contact

Postal address

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th-koeln.de/io-opening-hours

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ZN 2, Room 4
T: +49 221-8275-2910
F: +49 221-8275-2836

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Claudiusstraße 1
50678 Köln
Room A1.42
T: +49 221-8275-3772
F: +49 221-8275-3369

Gummersbach Campus

Steinmüllerallee 1
51643 Gummersbach
Room 1.104
T: +49 2261-8196-6519
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Visit us on the Internet:

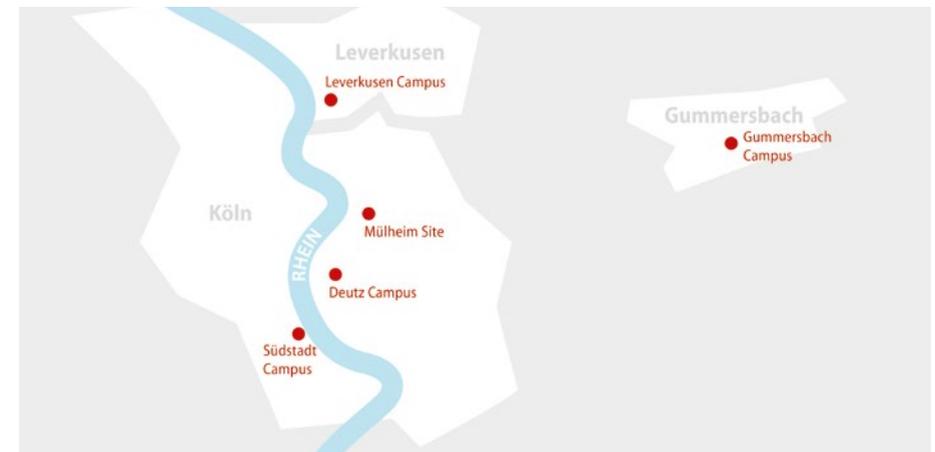
 www.th-koeln.de/international

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 www.facebook.com/International.Office.TH.Koeln

 www.instagram.com/international_office_thkoeln/

 www.twitter.com/IO_at_THKoeln



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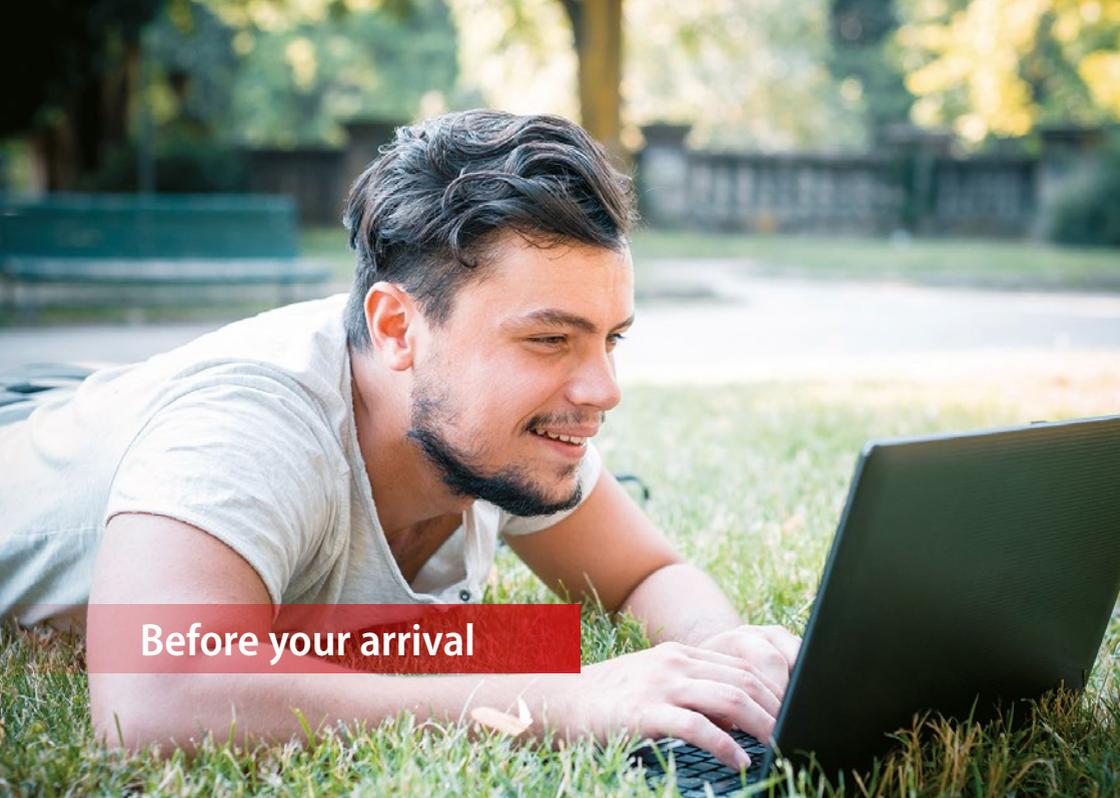
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Note:
The subsequent information has been compiled as carefully as possible. Changes may be made at short notice as a result of legislation and the corresponding regulations. That is why we ask for your understanding of the fact that no guarantee can be made regarding the accuracy and completeness of the contents.



Before your arrival

Visa

It depends on your citizenship, the length of your stay and the purpose of your stay whether or not you are required to apply for a visa as a prospective international student.

Please note that TH Köln only issues electronic letters of admission, which are valid without signature and stamp.

You can apply for a visa through the German Embassy or the German Consulate in your home country.

Further information regarding visa applications and required documents can be found on this website:

 www.th-koeln.de/visa

Important – Apply early!

The process of applying for a visa can take weeks or even months. That is why we advise you to begin as soon as possible. Unfortunately, TH Köln does not have the authority to influence or speed up the visa issuing process at the embassy, consulate or relevant immigration office in Germany.

Accommodation

Student dormitories

The most convenient and economical housing option in Cologne, Gummersbach and Leverkusen is oftentimes accommodation in a student dormitory. The Kölner Studierendenwerk (KSTW) is responsible for allocating dormitory rooms to students.

The KSTW operates 90 dormitories with more than 5,000 rooms. However, more than 104,000 students study at various universities in Cologne, so that demand is much higher than the actual supply.

You should therefore apply as early as possible for a dorm room as the waiting time might be up to three semesters. You can do this online via the website of the Kölner Studierendenwerk.

Please note that you will receive an e-mail from KSTW once every month after you have completed your online application. In this e-mail you will be asked whether you are still looking for a place in a dormitory. You must respond to this e-mail and confirm that you are still interested; otherwise you will no longer be considered for the application process for a dormitory place.

Please note that TH Köln does not own any of the dormitories and hence cannot influence the allocation of dorm rooms.

 www.kstw.de > [Wohnen \(Change language into English\)](#) > [Online application](#)

Private housing market

In Germany, students often prefer to live together in shared apartments called ‚WG‘ for the German word »Wohngemeinschaft«. Several students live together in one apartment and split the rental costs. Each roommate has his or her own room. Shared rooms such as the bathroom, kitchen, or even a living room are used on a communal basis. Many students in Cologne prefer to live in a WG because of relatively high rent costs and strong competition for housing in the city.

In Germany, rent is usually paid every month directly to the landlord from your bank account. Please note that many landlords may also require a deposit as a first payment. A deposit can be as high as up to three months' rent. When you move out and the lease expires, it will be repaid unless the apartment is damaged.

We recommend that you visit all apartments personally and conclude a lease contract or sublease. Never transfer money from abroad before you have seen the accommodation and signed a written contract.

You can find a wide range of offers for apartments and shared apartments on the following websites:

 www.wg-gesucht.de
www.wohngemeinschaften.de
www.immobilienscout24.de
www.kalaydo.de/immobilien/Mietwohnungen
www.studenten-wg.de
www.zwischenmiete.de

Kölner Studierendenwerk also maintains a database with private offers for rooms:

 www.kstw.de > Habitation > Private rooms

You can find detailed information about accommodation on the website of the Department of International Affairs:

 www.th-koeln.de/accommodation

! Important - Cologne has very little affordable living space.

Make sure to start looking for accommodation as early as possible. Please apply not only for a dormitory at the KSTW but also look for alternatives. We also recommend that you take advantage of offers outside of Cologne's city center and your place of study. Please note that TH Köln cannot provide any accommodation for students.

Public broadcasting fee

In addition to the regular costs of living, such as electricity, water and Internet, students are required to pay a public broadcasting fee ("Rundfunkbeitrag" in German) for the use of German public television, radio and online services. The monthly contribution is €17.50 and must be paid by every household. International students must also pay this contribution. You can find all the information you need on this website:

 www.rundfunkbeitrag.de/welcome/

Health Insurance

All students need health insurance in order to be able to enroll at a German university. Please note that travel health insurance is not sufficient for enrollment at TH Köln. There are two types of health insurances in Germany: everyone must have either a statutory or private health insurance.

Statutory health insurance companies usually charge a standard fee of approx. € 90 for students. Contributions for a private health insurance can vary depending on the scope of services provided.

If you have a private health insurance policy and would like to use it in Germany while you study here, you must apply to be exempt from the German statutory health insurance before enrolling at TH Köln. Every statutory health insurance company in Germany provides a written confirmation of this exemption once

your private health insurance has been submitted and deemed sufficient. You then need to present this confirmation at TH Köln when enrolling. Please note: Once you have chosen a private health insurance, you can no longer return to a statutory health insurance during your studies.

Students holding a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from their home country are sufficiently insured in Germany. However, upon arrival you also must apply to be exempt from a German statutory health insurance and present this confirmation when enrolling at TH Köln.

Further information as well as a selection of private and statutory providers can be found on the following website:

 www.th-koeln.de/health-insurance-for-international-students

Limited duration of cover

The period of cover for statutory student health insurance is a maximum of 14 semesters and ends on the student's 30th birthday. After exceeding these benchmark dates, you will need to pay an increased contribution rate or you may change to a policy by a private health insurance company.



After your arrival

At TH Köln

Enrollment for exchange students

In your admission letter you will find the time and location of your enrollment with the Department of International Affairs.

Please bring the following documents with you:

- Your letter of admission
- Evidence of German statutory health insurance or confirmation of exemption from a German statutory health insurance company (see page 7)

www.th-koeln.de > International > Incomings > Exchange Students > Admission and Enrollment for Exchange Students

Enrollment for degree-seeking students

Admission and enrollment will be carried out by the Office of Student and Examination Services. You will receive your letter of admission electronically via TH Köln's online application platform.

It contains the following information:

- whether your enrollment has to be done in person or by mail,
- when your deadline of enrollment ends,
- what documents are required for your enrollment, and
- the contact details of the Office of Student and Examination Services

@ www.th-koeln.de/enrollment

Semester fee

All students of TH Köln – including exchange students – have to pay a semester fee of approximately € 280. This fee has to be paid each semester before the re-registration deadline. Please note that a payment in cash is not possible.

Re-registration

You are required to re-register for the following semester in order to remain enrolled. This is usually done by paying the semester fee. In some cases, the Office of Student and Examination Service may ask you for missing documents, such as proof of internship or a language certificate, for your re-registration. Please submit these documents before the re-registration deadline.

If you have not transferred the semester fee before the re-registration deadline, a late fee of € 17.50 will be charged. Please note that in the case of an international bank transfer, the extra fees for this international transfer must be paid by you.

Re-registration deadlines:

- Winter semester: July 10
- Summer semester: January 10

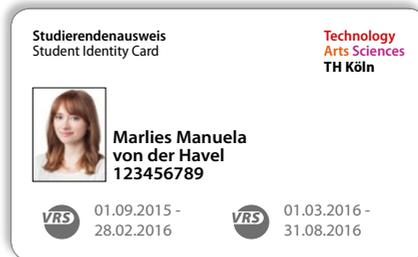
Detailed information on the composition of the semester fee, the payment modalities, the exact amount as well as the re-registration can be found in the letter with your MultiCa and on the website of the Office of Student and Examination Services.

www.th-koeln.de/re-registration

MultiCa – Your student-ID card

You will receive your student-ID card by mail once you are successfully enrolled. When you have transferred the semester fee, you must activate your student-ID card at one of the validation stations on campus. These can be found in every building of TH Köln. You will receive an imprint including the logo of the VRS (Regional Transport Association) and the period in which your student ID card is valid. The validation must be repeated every semester after re-registration.

You will keep your MultiCa for the entire duration of your studies.



The student-ID card of TH Köln is a multifunctional card - MultiCa for short. It includes the following functions: semester ticket in the entire VRS system, library card, cashless payment device in all student cafeterias, copy card, ID card for exams.

Your VRS and NRW ticket

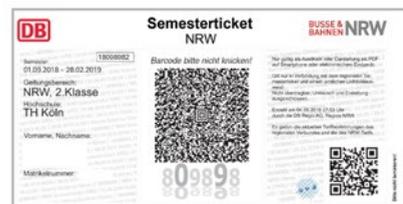
Your MultiCa serves as a ticket for the VRS transport system – in German »Verkehrsverbund Rhein Sieg«. The ticket authorizes students to use all means of transportation such as buses, trams, S-Bahn, Deutsche Bahn's regional express trains. Alongside the MultiCa's function as transportation ticket for the greater Cologne area, you will also be issued an NRW Ticket. This ticket can be used in conjunction with a valid MultiCa on local transportation options throughout the entire state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), including the Regionalexpress (RE) and Regionalbahn (RB) train services operated by Deutsche Bahn. You must generate the NRW ticket yourself and print it in DIN A4 format. To create the ticket, you need your matriculation number, which you will find on the front of the MultiCa under your name.

Please find instructions on how to generate the NRW ticket on the AStA's website of TH Köln:

 www.asta.th-koeln.de/semesterticket

You can print your personal ticket via this website:

 www.ots-nrw.de



When using the MultiCa student ID-card in the VRS system after 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and throughout the day on weekends and national holidays, you are permitted to travel free of charge with one other person. You may take a bicycle with you on the tram every day starting at 9:00 a.m. Please note that the regulation regarding extra passengers only applies in the VRS system, not in the entire state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

In your City



Registering your place of residence

If you plan on staying in Germany for more than three months, you will need to register your new place of residence at the registration office of the city of Cologne. Please make sure that you do so within two weeks after your arrival. If you move during your stay in Germany, you have to inform the registration office about your new residence and street address.

You will require the following documents for registering your place of residence:

- valid passport including visa/ residence permit
- confirmation form signed by your landlord, in German »Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung« (The form is available at the registration office.)

 www.th-koeln.de/international > [Incomings](#) > [Living in Cologne](#) > [After your Arrival](#)

You can also register with the city if you do not have a permanent address and your search for an apartment has not been completed within 14 days. When registering, you must provide a postal address to which your mail can be sent. This could be the address of a friend or relative living in Cologne for example. In this case, you will need an informal letter from this person confirming that he or she will accept mail for you. If you would like to submit the address of your hotel or hostel, you will also need a »Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung« signed by someone working in this entity.

There are several registration offices in Cologne – you are free to go to whichever one you like. You can make an appointment via the online system of the city of Cologne:

 www.th-koeln.de/international > [Incomings](#) > [Living in Cologne](#) > [After your Arrival](#)

Applying for a residence permit at the immigration office

International students who plan to stay longer than three months must apply for a residence permit with the immigration office of their city once they have arrived in Germany. Students with an EU nationality do not have to apply for a residence permit.

You must apply for the residence permit during the validity of your entry visa. If you have entered Germany without a visa, please make an appointment with the immigration office before the end of the first 90 days of your stay. You will receive the permit in form of a chip-card, the so-called electronic residence permit (eAT). As a rule, such a residence permit is valid for one year and must be renewed annually.

You will have to submit the following documents to the immigration office:

- completed application form
- copy of your passport with visa and entry stamp if applicable
- biometric passport photo (35x45mm)
- copy of confirmation of registration with the city
- copy of your rental contract
- certificate of enrollment at TH Köln
- proof of health insurance
- proof of sufficient funding (yearly)

If you live in Gummersbach, Leverkusen or Hürth, you must contact the local town hall or registration office since every city has its own administration and service centers.

In certain cases, the immigration office may ask for other documents. The advisers on site will tell you if this applies to you.

Ausländeramt Köln

You may go to any of Cologne's city halls without an appointment. There is also a special student service of the immigration office. However, your application documents must be submitted beforehand (by e-mail as a pdf-file, by post or personally). An appointment will be made after examination of your application.

T: +49 221-221-93381
E: auslaenderamt-arbeitsmigration@stadt-koeln.de

Ausländeramt Gummersbach

Stahlstr. 5, 51645 Gummersbach-Dieringhausen
T: +49 2261-880, E: amt32@obk.de

Ausländerbehörde Leverkusen

Friedrich-Ebert-Platz 1, 51373 Leverkusen
T: +49 214-4063344
E: 362-ABH@stadt.leverkusen.de

Ausländerbehörde Hürth

Willy-Brandt-Platz 1, 50126 Bergheim
T: +49 2271-830, E: abh@rhein-erft-kreis.de

Opening a bank account

It is advisable to open up an account with a German bank. This comes in particularly handy when paying your rent and transferring the semester fees. It is possible to open an account with any bank in the city you live in. Before doing so, please find out directly from the bank which documents you need and what costs are entailed for holding a personal banking account.

In general the following documents will be required:

- valid passport
- certificate of enrollment at TH Köln
- confirmation of registration with the city





During your studies

TH Köln activities & services

Semester program

Every semester, the Department of International Affairs offers a cultural program for German and international students of TH Köln. Each semester's highlight is a trip to Berlin or Hamburg for several days.

Have a look at the current semester program online:

 www.th-koeln.de/io-semesterprogramm

KARIBU – buddy program

Everybody needs some buddy! KARIBU is a program meant for newly arrived students of TH Köln. It offers mentoring sessions between more experienced students of TH Köln and new international students. New students in particular get the opportunity to receive support and advice from students who have been studying here for many semesters already. Would you like to join? Then please sign up using the online form via our KARIBU website. We look forward to receiving your registration!

 www.th-koeln.de/karibu

 Facebook: Karibu TH Köln



TANDEM of the University of Cologne

The TANDEM program of the University of Cologne is aimed at all students of Cologne universities who wish to learn, develop or pass on a new language or existing foreign language skills. The focus is on learning languages together - in mutual exchange, freely and creatively. A language partnership is very informal and individual. You can arrange meetings with your tandem partner any time you want to and learn at your own speed.

Where can I find more information and sign up?

 www.tandem-unikoeln.de



Language Learning Center

In any semester you have the opportunity to attend free language courses at the Language Learning Center of TH Köln. Currently the offered languages are: German as a foreign language, English, French, Italian and Spanish. If you participate successfully, you will receive a certificate and ECTS points at the end of every language course.

Please note that you can only take part in a certain language course if you can prove the pre-requisite language level by taking a placement test or with an up-to-date language certificate.

If you have any questions concerning the language courses offered during the semester, please visit the Language Learning Center's website:

 www.th-koeln.de/slz

or by sending an e-mail to:

@ www.sprachlernzentrum@th-koeln.de



Campus IT and service desk

The Campus IT department provides general IT services for the entire university. There are service desks at four different campus locations where your questions about setting up and using your CampusID or queries regarding Wi-Fi will be answered. You also have the option of acquiring several software products and setting up Wi-Fi access on your smartphone or laptop via Campus IT services. Please see:

 www.th-koeln.de > Hochschule > Organisation > Campus IT

KVB –Bike Use

Students of TH Köln can rent the KVB-Bikes every time for free for 30 minutes. You just have to register with your smail-address!

Registration:

1.  <https://secure.nextbike.net/kg/de/koeln/registrierung/>
2. Register with your smail-address
3. You will receive an email from nextbike
4. Validate your email address

Rent a bike:

Via Smartphone

1. Download the nextbike app on your smartphone
2. Connect the app with your nextbike account
3. Search for an available bike on the map or type in the number of the bike
4. You will receive the PIN number of the bike
5. Type it into the board computer
6. Let's go

Via Hotline (Only in German)

1. Call **+49 30 69205046**
2. Enter the number of the bike
3. You will receive the PIN number of the bike
4. Type it into the board computer
5. Let's go

Via Board Computer

1. Enter your mobile phone number and your PIN code
2. Let's go

Return:

1. Lock the bike
2. Press »OK« at the board computer
3. »OK für Rückgabe« will appear on the display
4. Press »OK« again
5. »Rückgabe erfasst« will appear on the display



Medical and emergency services

In case of emergency, the following telephone numbers apply in Germany:

Police: 110

Ambulance and fire services: 112

It is a good idea to save these emergency numbers to your mobile phone so that you can call help immediately when an emergency occurs. Calls are free of charge from all telephone networks.

The emergency telephone number within the European Union is 112, which you can call free of charge from any EU country at any time.

If you need medical attention, the following websites may be useful:

 **Doctors:** www.kvno.de
Hospitals: www.stadt-koeln.de/leben-in-koeln/gesundheit/krankenhaeuser
Dentists: www.zaek-nr.de

Please note that you need to take your health insurance card with you every time you visit a doctor.

If you get sick on the weekend, you can use the following numbers to find out which doctors and pharmacies have an emergency service.

Medical emergency service:
Dentist emergency service Cologne:
Pharmacy emergency services:

You will also find a written notice at every German pharmacy telling you where to go for the nearest emergency service pharmacy.

T: +49 116-117
T: +49 221-29010200
T: +49 800-0022-833

Working

In general, international students are permitted to take on a part-time job during their studies in Germany. **Citizens of the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland** have equal legal status on the labor market as German citizens. This means that they may access the labor market just like any other German student and they are also permitted to work as much as they choose to without having to obtain prior approval of German authorities.

Citizens from non-EU countries are normally permitted to work 120 full or 240 half days per year if they are in possession of a valid residence permit for Germany. The total number of hours you are allowed to work per year is stated in your residence permit. If you would like to work more days in one year, you will need to apply for a new permit from the immigration office. Further information can be found on our website:

 www.th-koeln.de/international >
[Incomings > Living in Cologne > Financing your Studies > Working](#)

Leisure time

Cologne university sports

The sports department of Cologne universities provides all students with an extensive sports program that is mostly free of charge. To participate in most courses, it is sufficient to present your valid MultiCa. For some courses it is necessary to register before the course starts or to pay a participation fee. The current sports program can be obtained as a brochure at all locations of TH Köln or as a download online:

 www.hochschulsport-koeln.de/en

UniSport Köln is the university sport of the University of Cologne and of the German Sport University Cologne (DSHS). A sports card is required to participate in the UniSport program, which costs 15€ per semester. Some special courses cost an additional participation fee, please see:

 <http://unisport.koeln/>

What's going on in the city?

As a multicultural city with over one million inhabitants, Cologne and its surroundings offer a multitude of leisure activities for every taste: cultural events, sporting events, numerous restaurants, a varied nightlife and much more.

 www.th-koeln.de/international >
[Incomings > Living in Cologne > Leisure time](#)

Useful Apps

	Köln Guide	App by KölnTourismus, has many tips and information about Cologne
	Stadt Köln	Traffic, parking, addresses, events etc.
	Rausgegangen	Events
	DB Navigator	App by Deutsche Bahn, tickets, route maps etc.
	KVB mobil	Tickets, timetable, route maps for Cologne
	Nextbike	Helps you to use KVB-bike
	komoot Fahrrad, Wandern	Helps you to find your way by bike, uses bicycle-friendly roads
	UniSport Köln	Information about the sports program, create your own training plan
	Mensa Köln	Menu, overview of canteens, opening times
	Frag Mutti	Useful information about cleaning and tidying
	Ask Helmut	Concerts, exhibitions, theaters, clubs
	Google Übersetzer	With Camera-Translation

Checklist – To do's after your arrival ✓

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- Enroll at TH Köln (page 8)
- Register with the city (page 11)
- Register with the Immigration Office (page 12)
- Open a bank account (page 13)
- Set up your Campus ID account and Wi-Fi (Brochure »Startklar/Getting Started«, page 6)
- Forward your smail-address to your own private mail address (Brochure »Startklar/Getting Started«, page 7)
- Change your address in PSSO, if necessary (Brochure »Startklar/Getting Started«, page 10)
- Transfer semester fee (page 9)
- Validate your student ID card (MultiCa) (page 10)
- Generate and print your NRW ticket (page 10)
- Register for placement tests and language courses at the Language Learning Center (page 15)
- Visit the information event / first semester welcome at your faculty
- Contact your Departmental Coordinator / Program Director / Mentors / Tutors in your faculty
- Create your timetable
- Get informed about exam registration:
 -  www.th-koeln.de/internationales > Exchange Students > Informationen für Austauschstudierende
- Register with KVB-Bike (page 16)
- Register with Karibu and the Language Partnership Program (pages 14-15)
- Register for Semester Program Events (page 14)