

Handbook

For **INCOMING** exchange students at
RPTU Kaiserslautern

Welcome to RPTU Kaiserslautern!

Dear Exchange Students, we warmly welcome you at Rheinland-Pfälzische Technische Universität Kaiserslautern!

This Handbook is supposed to guide you through your exchange experience at RPTU Kaiserslautern. We will give you some useful tips on 'how to survive' the first weeks in Germany and how to adjust yourself to living here.

Since we want to contribute to your well-being in your new environment, please feel free to contact us if we can support or assist you in any way.

We wish you a great and successful study time at RPTU Kaiserslautern!

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1. Introduction

RPTU

Rheinland-Pfälzische Technische Universität Kaiserslautern-Landau (RPTU) is a public research university located in Kaiserslautern and Landau, Germany. Prior to January 1st, 2023, it was formed through the merger of two independent universities, namely the Technical University of Kaiserslautern and the University of Landau.

The campus of Kaiserslautern is well-known as an academic talent factory for future-oriented science and business. It's a place for international research and good scientific practice.

RPTU has a student population of 20,000 and its primary campus is situated in Kaiserslautern. The university benefits from its close collaboration with various technological institutes in the surrounding area. These institutes include renowned organizations such as the Fraunhofer Institutes, the Max Planck Institute for Software Systems, the German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence, the Institute for Composite Materials, and the Institute for Surface and Thin Film Analysis.

Furthermore, RPTU actively participates in the Software-Cluster, a collaborative initiative involving the Technische Universität Darmstadt, the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, and Saarland University. The Software-Cluster has achieved notable success, earning recognition and significance in the field by winning the esteemed 'Spitzencluster' competition organized by the German government.

These are the 12 faculties in which RPTU in Kaiserslautern is divided:

Architecture	Electrical and Computer Engineering	Physics
Biology	Computer Science	Regional and Environmental Planning
Civil Engineering	Mechanical and Process Engineering	Social Sciences
Chemistry	Mathematics	Business Studies and Economics

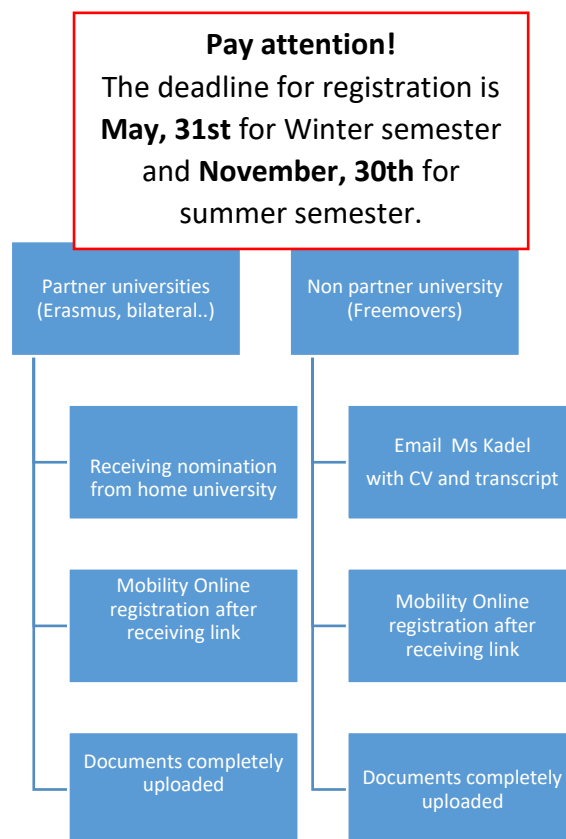
Winter Semester starts on October, 1st and ends on March, 31st. Exams are usually between the second week of February until the end of the semester.

Summer Semester starts on April, 1st and ends on September, 30th. Exams are usually between the last week of July until the end of the semester.

Application

In the following, you can see a diagram of the application process. As you can observe, there are some slight differences between students from partner universities (e. g. Erasmus programs) and students from non-partner universities (FreeMover students), so keep that in mind when you are about to apply! The main steps after the application are mostly the same.

If you are a student who wants to apply for an internship you need to find a supervisor first before you can contact the department of international affairs to enter the application process.



ErasmuScout

If you participate in an exchange at RPTU Kaiserslautern, especially with ERASMUS, you will probably get to know an ErasmuScout. ErasmuScouts are students from the university who volunteer to help guide you through your exchange. They will give you lots of helpful advice



and will show you all the places you need to know, whether at the university campus or around town. You can ask them any questions regarding your exchange, and they will try their best to give you a great experience in Kaiserslautern! Application required!

Also, you will get familiar with lots of extracurricular activities like events, especially for international students but also in general. The IntClub is also a great option to connect with other students from Germany and around the world. It offers some nice events like the popular 'Länderabende' or game nights and trips to different places and cities or even sports events!

Additionally, we help you connect with others through offering some online groups at the university's platform OLAT and through text messenger group chats.

When you arrive at campus, you are definitely not going to be lonely or bored!

2. Preparations and Important Information

Visa (only Erasmus students)

Due to the stricter VISA requirements, it is advisable for non-EU citizens to submit their paperwork approximately 6 months before the start of the course. The following documents must be submitted in their entirety no later than 60 days prior to your arrival in Kaiserslautern:

1. [Notification Form](#): Ensure that this form is completed.
2. Residence Permit Copy: Provide a copy of your valid residence permit for the EU country where you are currently residing. The permit should be valid for the entire duration of your stay in Kaiserslautern and issued for the purpose of study.
3. Proof of Financial Means: Submit evidence of means of subsistence amounting to **992,00€ per month**. You need to submit a form called "Erklärung über die Sicherung des Lebensunterhalts"
4. Proof of Health Insurance: Present proof of your health insurance coverage, such as the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), private health insurance, German public health insurance, or travel insurance with a minimum coverage of 30,000.00 €. This can also be done using the Form "Erklärung über die Sicherung des Lebensunterhalts"
5. Passport Copy: Include a copy of your passport.

Once RPTU receives confirmation from the BAMF authority (Bundesinstitut für Migration und Flüchtlinge), it takes 30 days before the student is allowed to enter Germany.

Accommodation

One of the challenges students face while coming to Kaiserslautern is finding accommodation.

Student dormitory

The most convenient accommodation option is to apply for an apartment in the student dormitory. The dormitories are



managed by the Studierendenwerk Kaiserslautern, which is a non-profit organisation for student's needs. Also, this organisation is completely independent from the university.

But keep in mind, student dorm rooms are quite popular and are therefore booked out quickly. Therefore, it is always the best to look for a plan B right away.

However, do not worry, we got you a list of websites and contacts you could check based on your preference.

Apartment/Room:

Here are the websites student usually visit in case they don't find a room in the student dorms or they simply prefer to live in a shared flat or own room.

Website	Comment
WG-GESUCHT (Apartment)	If you're many and looking for an apartment
WG-GESUCHT (Room)	If you prefer having your own room
Immowelt	Room/Apartment
Immobilienscout	Room/Apartment
Staytoo	Studios

Important advice:

Security deposit: Most landlords require a deposit that is equal to approx. three months' rent. This is a one-time payment that will be given back at the end of the stay - if the apartment and the furniture are not damaged.

"Kaltmiete": This amount includes only the use of space and no additional costs.

"Warmmiete": It includes all additional running costs: land use, water, gas, power, heating, waste disposal, cleaning of the stairwell, etc. More additional costs incurred for the use of Internet, telephone and television (so called "Rundfunkgebühr"), are usually not included in the monthly rent.

Rundfunkgebühr: This is a fee, every household has to pay. It costs 18,36€ per month

Temporary tenancy: In conclusion, it is important to specify the period of stay, so the landlord knows that the tenancy is short-lived. There is a three months' notice period.

Boarding House:

Name of Boarding House	Address	Email address
<u>Ferienwohnungen Kallmayer</u>	Ruth und Arno Kallmayer Römerstraße 6b 67677 Enkenbach-Alsenborn	<u>ferienwohnungen-kl@web.de</u>
<u>Pension Bobot</u>	Nordbahnstrasse 40 67657 Kaiserslautern	<u>pension-bobot office@pension-bobot.de</u>
<u>Schmitts Boardinghaus</u>	Friedel und Edeltraud Schmitt Im Dunkeltälchen 39 67663 Kaiserlautern	<u>fewo.schmitt.kl@gmail.com</u>
<u>Pension Adler</u>	Rasim Muric Pariser Straße 99 Kaiserslautern	<u>info@pension-adler-kl.de</u>

Hotels:

There are many hotels in Kaiserslautern, but the ones that Booking.com and B&B provide are the most affordable ones.

[Booking.com](#)

[B&B Hotels](#)

Extra Tips:

- You can always look on Facebook groups such as 'Wohnung Kaiserslautern'. Sometimes, some students leave announcement of their houses as a sublet for a period of 6 months.
- There are many small towns in the region of Kaiserslautern, such as Landstuhl, Hochspeyer, Neustadt, Frankenstein, Lambrecht... They are only 20 minutes' train ride and with your semester ticket, the ride is free.
- Be more active. Sometimes, offers don't last long: 'first come, first served.'
- Check building 46/Mensa entrance. There are many announcements where students look for a flatmate.
- Also check out the [DAAD Dormitory finder](#)

Note: if you apply to an exchange, we will hand you some more information concerning housing etc.

3. Before Arrival

Before your arrival in Germany, make sure to bring all the right things with you. For example, you need to bring enough suitable clothes or all your important documents. In the following, we have listed all the crucial stuff to bring and check before you start your journey!

Checklist

- Documents e. g. Letter of Acceptance (digital)
- Accommodation
- Visa
- Valid Passport
- Travel and Health insurance
- Arrival dates, check Semester dates
- Bring medications, tell us if you have 'special needs'
- Bring money/check bank account
- Check if you can use credit card
- Plan travel (train/plane etc. to Germany and to your accommodation)
- Pack suitable clothing for weather conditions (usually cold in March or October)

What to bring:

- Bedding, sheets, towels
- Cutlery, pots etc. (You can get some stuff for free at the IntClub. Also check out the Starter Kit from Studierendenwerk!)
- International travel adapter plug if needed
- Stuff you need for some comfort (comfortable clothes, personal belongings, photos, hair dryer)
- Informal clothing is usually fine

University Starter Kit:
Studierendenwerk Kaiserslautern



You can go to building 30 of the university, to the Studierendenwerk office and ask about the Starter Kit.

The package to get you off to a good start:

To help you get started, they help you get a starter package for your apartment. This package can be purchased for 95.00 € and contains:

- 1 Kitchen towel
- 1 pan
- 2 pots
- 1 coffee cup
- 1 plate
- 1 dinner plate
- 1 knife, fork, spoon, small spoon each
- 1 comforter
- 1 set of linen (for pillow, comforter, sheet)
- 1 bath towel
- 1 pillow

Mobile Phone Services

For mobile services you can check if your current provider works in Germany.

Alternatively, it would be easier if you get yourself a prepaid SIM card. You can find them in stores like grocery or drug stores or even at gas stations. Usually, you pay a starter fee and then you can use the service by uploading money to the SIM card.

German Bank account

You will need a bank account for transfers and payment by standing order (fitness clubs/gyms, paying rent etc.). You can also check out whether your institution in your home country has got a partnership.

Bank Accounts for students are usually free. If you go to the bank office, you can ask for a 'Girokonto' and specifically mention that you are enrolled at a university. They are most likely going to ask for a proof of enrollment as well. To open a bank account, you need a passport/visa and the address of your current place of residence. You'll also need your tax number (Steuernummer).

You'll receive this document in your mailbox a few days after registering at the 'Bürgercenter' (town hall).

You can find the bank "Sparkasse" closely to the campus. Also, there is e. g. the Deutsche Bank but there are many alternatives if you want to do more research.

Sparkasse: Davenportplatz 4, 67663 Kaiserslautern (near Uni West/
Davenportplatz station)



Deutsche Bank: Stiftsplatz 13, 67655 Kaiserslautern (near
Stadtmitte station/Stiftsplatz)



As the process of opening a German bank account can take some time, it's always useful to have some money (Euros and in cash) on hand when you arrive, especially if you know that your usual bank account cannot be used in Germany.

4. How to get to RPTU Kaiserslautern

From Hauptbahnhof Kaiserslautern (main train station)

If you have luggage, it is easier to take the bus.

All the following busses numbers operate:

115 Universität

105 Uni-Wohngebiet

107 Lämmchesberg

116 Universität

106 Mölschbach

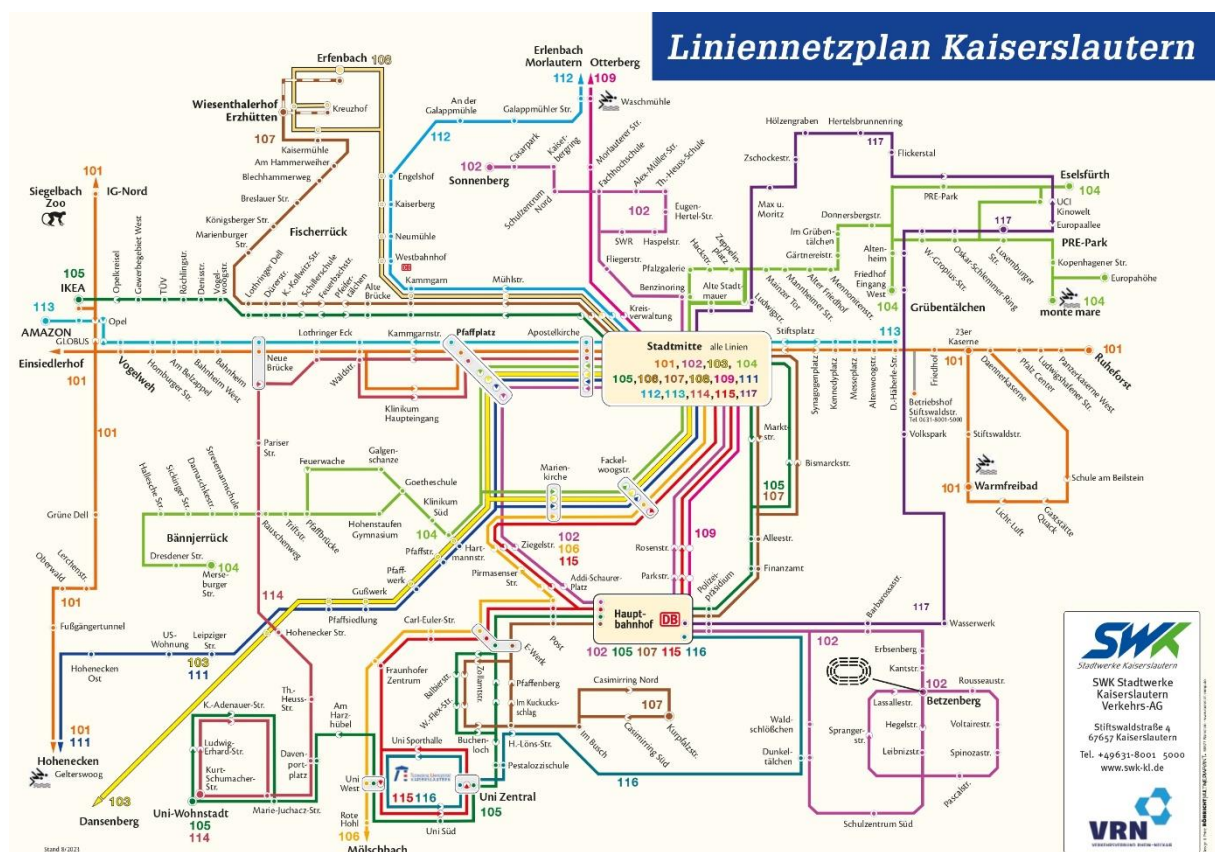
170 Trippstadt

Please make sure to get into the right bus by regarding the titles of the bus as listed above. Usually, every bus number is assigned twice. The busses drive the same route but to different directions.

If you arrive after midnight, there are also couple of busses working every hour. The Nachtbus will cost an extra fee (1.50 €). Bus line N6 will get you from the main station to university.

Notice that walking from the train station to the university is doable, as it is only 30 min by foot.

You can find here a plan of the operating busses lines in Kaiserslautern.



From any airport in Germany

We advise our students to download **DB** and **VRN** application from your app store, as they are the ones responsible of the transportations in Germany and in and around Kaiserslautern.

Also, you can take a taxi but that will most likely be very pricey. Best advice is to take the train from the airport station to Kaiserslautern Hauptbahnhof (main station) and then take a bus from there. Taxis are also available if you like to get one to go to your accommodation/university.

For more information check out section 9. [Airports](#)

Arriving by car

If you want to travel here by car you can use the parking spots or the parking garage on campus. Both are free. In other locations in the city most parking spots will cost a fee and you can be fined if you don't pay it.

5. Enrollment

Health insurance

For your exchange semester, you need to make sure that you get the approval of a German health insurance that you are sufficiently insured. This is a free service. Also, there are some differences whether you are an EU student or a non-EU student.

In case you are an **EU student** and have a European insurance you can use this health insurance for your exchange. Therefore, you must contact a German health insurance company and send your current Health Insurance Certificate. They then will issue a certificate called "elektronische Meldebescheinigung", also often referred to as M10, and will send it to our university directly.

If you are a **non-EU student**, there are some different regulations. First, you need to provide the German Health Insurance Company with documents of your current insurance for your stay in German or English, your personal information and your (German) address. If your home country has an agreement related to social services such as health insurance (e. g. Turkey) your insurance at home is usually able to hand you papers to how your insurance status to the German health insurance. They then will issue a certificate called "elektronische Meldebescheinigung", also referred to as "M10", and send it to our university directly.

The written confirmation from the German health insurance is mandatory. Issuing comes at no cost for you. Enrolment cannot be processed until we receive an M10.

For instance, you can also get the confirmation in person (after your arrival in Kaiserslautern). You can find an on-campus office if the German Health insurance company Techniker Krankenkasse (TK) for you to visit. You can also contact them via email or phone.

How to get your Student ID (Studierendenausweis)

Firstly, you need to upload all the documents necessary to the Mobility Online platform. We will inform you via e-mail 1-2 months before the semester starts. This includes e. g. a chipcard document as well as the M10 from a German health insurance company. Only after this step is fulfilled, you can be enrolled and receive your Student ID. Also, the social fee has to be paid and a proof has to be uploaded. The fee might be dependent on the type of exchange (like ERASMUS etc.) you are taking part of. After enrolment, the ID can be picked up at the SSC (Studierenden Service Center) in Building 47. The enrolment is crucial for your stay here. In case your stay lasts two semesters you have to pay the fee twice. The second payment will have to be paid during the first semester. You don't need to pick up a new student ID afterwards.

Keep in mind that after you have arrived in Germany you also need to do the local ban in town at the 'Bürgercenter' located in the town hall.

Student ID

What offers the Student ID: The ID has many functions. First, it is a proof that you study at the RPTU Kaiserslautern at this moment. Also, it is a very important document you need to have with you when you are taking an exam to proof your identity. Additionally, you use the card for paying for food and drinks on campus. You can also use it for printing at the printing stations throughout the campus. For that purpose, you need to upload money to the card, which you can do on the money transfer stations at the mensa building. You can also use this card to borrow books at the university's libraries. At the end the ID can give you many discounts at different locations like the cinema.

Semesterticket

Since Winter Semester 2024/25, students have access to the Deutschland-Semesterticket. It is valid nationwide in all types of public transport (buses, trains, subway trains...). But be careful, the ticket is not valid for long distance trains, such as IC and ICE. You can get the ticket by purchasing it digitally in the myVRN app, as a physical ticket, or both. More information can be found on the [ASTA Website](#).

6. Studying at RPTU

At RPTU you can choose from more than 160 degree programs from technology to society. At RPTU more than 20 000 students and 300 professors get together for an amazing study experience. Maybe you are interested in one of our [International Master Programs in English!](#)

You might also want to learn a new language and take some German classes as soon as you get here!

For your exchange at RPTU we recommend visiting our website that provides you with more up to date information about exchange possibilities for you (<https://rptu.de/en/international/exchange/home>).

When looking at a German university, you might notice some slight differences in the system. The semester is usually divided in a lecture period and a exam period. The entire semester from April to September for the summer semester and from October until March for the winter semester. The Lecture period usually starts in mid-April until the end of July and from the end of October until the middle of February in the respective semester. When the Lectures have ended, the exam period starts.

Types of courses

If you take a closer look at the courses you want to take during your exchange, you might notice that there are different kinds of courses. The main ones are lectures, seminars and 'Tutorium/Übung'. **Lectures** (Vorlesung) are the usual courses that you go to on a regular basis. They are usually once or twice a week, and they usually result in a final exam at the end of the semester. Normally you do not have to attend them.

Then there are **seminars** (Seminar), that are mostly taught in smaller groups. You usually must attend them and actively participate. If there is a grade at the end of the semester, what you have to do for the grade can be very different from seminar to seminar.

Sometimes there is also a **Tutorium**, also called '**Übung**'. They are additions to some lectures. There you discuss questions and problems of this lecture field and there is usually homework. The work you do there should help you pass the exam. If you must attend and must do the homework and hand it in can vary though.

There is also the possibility that you might attend an internship, so called '**Praktikum**'. There you might go to a lab and work on different tasks but the conditions of the 'Praktikum' can be very different.

At the end of the semester, there are the infamous exams. But don't worry, you got this! There can be different kinds of exams. They might be taken on paper or orally. Also, there might be two exam dates per semester, and you can usually choose which one you want to attend. But as an exchange student you might want to take the first date.

For more information on the course you want to choose, please check out the module handbook. You can find it [here](#).

Learning Agreement

For your exchange at a university, you need to offer a Learning Agreement, or short LA. The Learning Agreement lists the courses/internship/PhD subject you want to participate in during your exchange. This list has to be approved and signed by your home institution, by the guest institution and the student itself.

If you are an ERASMUS student, the LA is transferred digitally from your home university. This form of LA is called a "Digital Learning Agreement" (DLA). This process is usually faster and easier to work with. Your home university will inform you about the process.

For that reason, you must inform yourself about the amount of ECTS as other frame conditions from your university. It also has to fit your academic study level, your language skills and your studies in general. Otherwise, your LA might not be approved.

KIS/QIS

At RPTU we use two web software tools for organization and administration purposes. There is the KIS/KIS-Office and the QIS.

The KIS is the communication and information system. There you can look up courses in general for example and check out the time and place they are held. It is also very helpful, since it has a searching function. There you can look for courses or get contact information of your lecturers. For the KIS-Office service you need to log in first. There you can create your personal timetable and can sign up for your courses if needed. You can find an online tutorial [here](#).

The QIS is used to administrate your student profile (name, study program, nationality etc.) and is mainly used for exam administration. As an exchange student you cannot register for exams there, but you can see all your transcripts and grades. In order to use this system, you need the university's VPN which you can get beforehand.

Examination administration for exchange students

All exams have to be registered at the examination office (Prüfungsamt) by e-mail.

This includes special examinations with no examination number or lecture code (e.g. oral examinations). The registration is done by filling out the "Examination Registration" form available for download on the [website](#).

To register, students must contact the person responsible for their department at the examination office. The usual registration deadlines do not apply for Erasmus/Exchange students. You can register at any time, up to 1 week before the exam.

If a student fails to attend the examination without excuse despite registration, this will be indicated by the note "Not appeared" ("Nicht erschienen") on the transcript of records. Failed examinations will also be noted. It is possible to deregister an examination up to one day before the examination date. Medical certificates can be submitted until two weeks after

the examination. The date of the medical certificate must not be later than the examination date. Otherwise, it remains "Not appeared".

Transcript of Records

Usually, you also have to offer a Transcript of Records to us so we can evaluate your academic level and also one after your stay from the guest institution to your home institution.

A transcript of records is a listing of the lectures you took and the grades.

Also, don't be confused by the German grading system. There is a scale from 1.0 to 5.0, where 1.0 is the best and 5.0 is the worst grade you can get. A 5.0 means that you have failed the exam/course. In the following you can see a table which shows the German grading system.

Grade/mark	Description	Pass/fail
1.0-1.3	„sehr gut“ – very good	Pass
1.7-2.3	„gut“ – good	Pass
2.7-3.3	„befriedigend“ – satisfactory	Pass
3.7-4.0	„ausreichend“ – sufficient	Pass
(4.3-)5.0	„mangelhaft“ – deficient	Fail

At the end of your stay, you can also obtain the Transcript of Records of the exams you took at our university.

This will be useful for your further studies.

This document will be issued by the Prüfungsamt (examination office), which you should contact via e-mail before you leave.

Library

The university library in Kaiserslautern is divided into a main library, which is situated in building 32, and several other libraries of the different faculties. Besides the main institution there are also eight other faculty libraries.

For further information like opening hours, check out the [library's website](#).

You can borrow library books using your student ID card after a registration at the library. This service is free. Make sure to give the books back in time. Otherwise, late returns might cost a fee. Additionally, every library has several PC workstations where you can do some research and also offers many different workplaces and work rooms where you can study by yourself or in small groups.

In the libraries and throughout campus there are print and copy stations that you can use to print, scan and copy documents. This service mostly costs a fee and must be paid using your student ID. For that, you need to convert part of your card's balance into 'print balance' (Druckguthaben) at the respective places at the RHRZ (Building 34).

Printing/Reprographing

There are two ways of printing documents:

Self-service printers/scanners

These are available in the library or other places at RPTU. To pay for printing, use the student ID card.

Printing service

The first few times, it can seem a bit of an obstacle course to finally get your 'Skript' (handout) printed in the right format and bound before the exam. A word of advice: do it as soon as possible! You can print documents at the RHRK. The university will give you 200 points per month. For example, an A4 single-sided black and white print costs 1 point.

You cannot print more than 10 documents at a time, i.e. 10 files (one file is "Kapitel1.pdf" for example). If you print 11 documents, nothing will be printed. You need to wait until you have recovered your first printouts before printing more.

To save pages, don't hesitate to print 2 or more slides per page. Here's a short tutorial to help you save precious time and sheets of paper. To print, go to OLAT, and save the course you want to print on the desktop. In fact, if you print directly from the online document, you risk getting blank pages! Next, open the document and configure the printing: double-sided, select the 'A4 schwarz/weiss' printer and 'multiple page per sheet'. Finally, to configure duplex printing, click on properties, select duplex and long edge, and all that's left to do is print.

You can pick up your printouts 1 or 2 days later at most in the 'Druckausgabe' room opposite the 'Infopoint' in the 'RHRZ Zentrum' (Building 34).

Especially at the beginning of the semester, there are a lot of students wanting to print, so you have to wait longer. To find your printouts in this room: the shelves are arranged by letter, so you have to look for your document in the shelves named by the first letter of your surname. On top of your print pack, there's a coloured sheet (printed automatically when you launch a document) with your name written on it. Handy for quickly finding your documents!

Mensa

Of course, studying hard will make you hungry! Don't worry, we got you. On campus there are many different places where you can eat and snack throughout the day.

The main possibility for a good lunch meal is to go to the 'Mensa' in Building 30. There you can choose from several meal options for a cheap price. At the moment you can have a meal (Essen 1) for 4,10 € and one (Essen 2 or Mensa Light) for 3,80 €. Also, there is an option called 'Robot Kitchen' where you can get a small meal prepared by a robot for 2,90€

You can have an overview [here](#).

Additionally, you can also check out the Atrium, which is a Cafeteria that offers a warm meal which varies in price and several other snacks and baking goods. The 'Bistro 36' which is located in building 36 works in a very similar way.

As a form of payment, you use your student ID so make sure your balance on the ID is high enough for the meal. You can put money on the card on different stations on campus. Therefore you can use cash or a bank account card, depending on the station. You find them mainly in the Mensa building and in building 36. Also, check out the autoloan-option.

Leisure Time Activities

If you want to spend some time in between or after lectures at campus, there are many opportunities for you to take. CampusPlus and Unisport can offer you many different activities like a sports program, fun events or even E-Sports! Please check out the websites for more information.

[Sports Offers A-Z KL - ZSGW Center for Sports, Health and Wellbeing at RPTU](#)

[CampusPlus - ZSGW Center for Sports, Health and Wellbeing at RPTU](#)

Unisport can also offer you a gym membership at the Unifit for the time of your stay!

Student Organizations

A big part of your social life as a university student might be a participation in some student organisations and groups. These groups can vary in their content and genre, so you might find yourself in a group with a political, religious, social, or international focus. Maybe you will find something of your interest on the [website](#).

For internationals there are also special organizations and offers at **IntClub**, which you can check out [online](#). There you can connect with locals and many other students from all over the world by participating in the many programs and activities they offer.

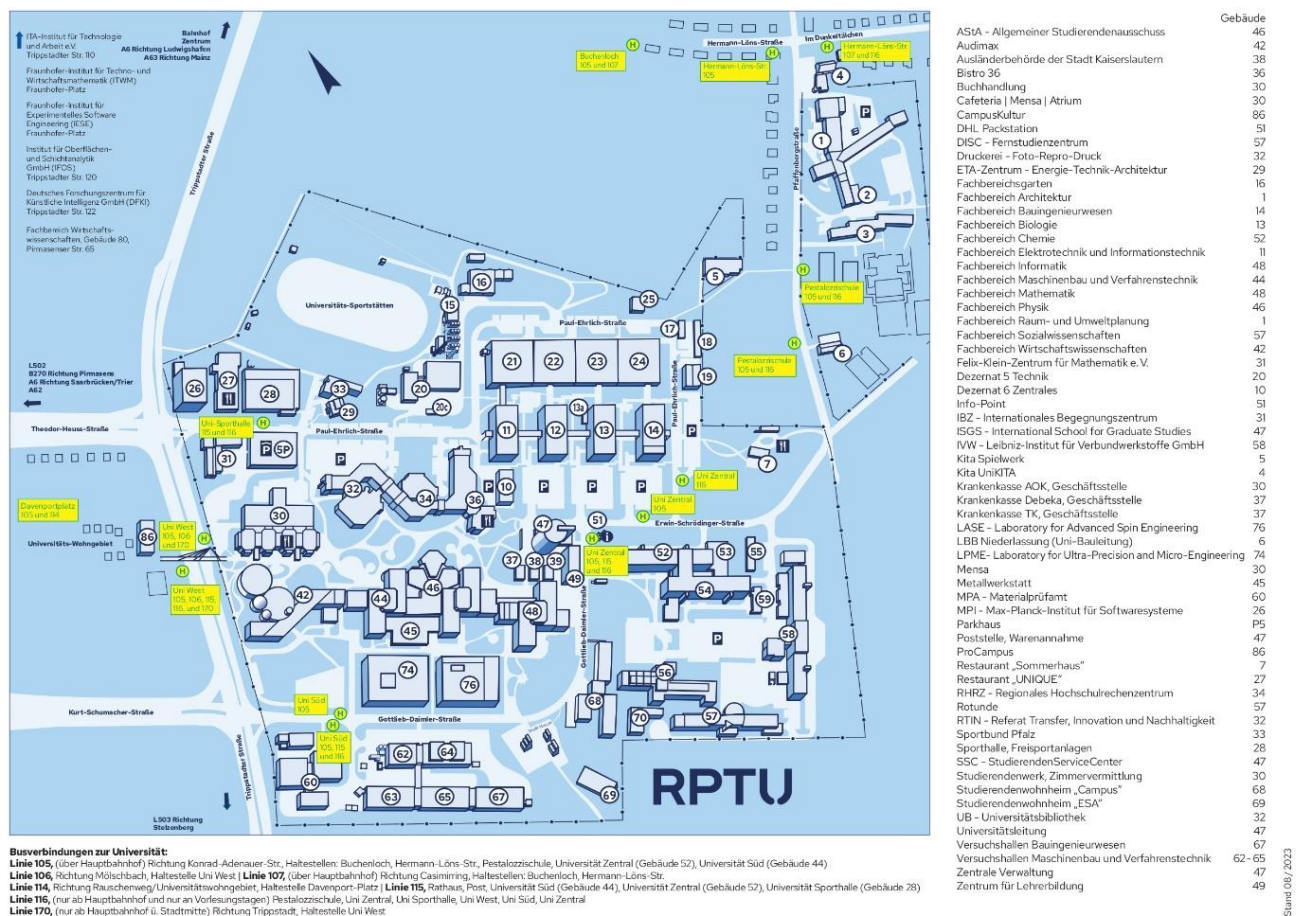
Also, there are elected student groups called 'Fachschaften' in every department. These students were elected by the students of the department to care about the students' needs and have a political power throughout the department. They can also help you with questions and concerns and can provide you with services like printing or get you a coffee. Mostly you can also use their offices to have a seat and relax for a second.

As another political device there are some elected students in a parliament called 'Studierendenparlament'. They represent all students at the university in a political way. There is also the 'Asta' which is quite similar but offers more services for the students as well. You can check out their [website](#) if you want to get more information.

Where to find us?

The office is located in Building 47 at the 6th floor.

This plan also shows all the locations of the buildings mentioned above, such as the Mensa.



7. Living in Germany

Basics

Germany is a country in the heart of Europe. With over 80 million citizens, it has the highest population of the continent! It is a federal state and consists of 16 so-called 'Bundesländer'. Kaiserslautern for example is located in Rhineland-Palatinate.

In Germany, the official language spoken is German. But be aware that there are plenty of regional dialects that can affect your understanding of the language! You don't need to worry though, since everyone basically is able to talk to you in Standard German. You will probably also hear a lot of different languages as you spend time here because Germany is actually a place where people from all around the world come together to live, work or study here!

Germany today still is shaped by its own culture, religion and history. For example, if you take a look at the public holidays or the fact that stores, with some exceptions, are usually closed on Sundays which is rather unusual in other states. You cannot go grocery shopping, but you actually can get a coffee at the local bakery!

Also, there is a unique drinking culture in this country. With an amazing history of beer and wine making, you will find countless different kinds of those drinks! Especially in the region of palatinate, you will find lots of beautiful vineyards with amazing wines. Maybe you are also keen on trying out a few of them.

Cost of living

The cost of living in Germany mainly depends on your accommodation and some variable costs. It is highly influenced by the city you are living in during your exchange. But you are lucky, since the town of Kaiserslautern is rather on the cheaper side compared to other cities like Hamburg, Berlin or Munich.

An apartment can either be quite cheap, for example in a student dormitory, or can be more expensive if you choose to live on your own in a single apartment on the private market. If you can get into one of the highly demanded student dorms, your cost of accommodation will start at around 200 to 300 Euros. If you are not that lucky, it is possible that you have to pay twice this much or even more than that. A good option you should also be looking for is a shared apartment, also called WG in Germany, which is usually also quite low in cost and is also a great way to make new friends! But since the student dorms have very limited space, you might want to look for an apartment elsewhere quite early. If you don't get into a dorm you might have to pay for utilities like electricity.

For food expenses, including groceries, the university's food offers at the Mensa and maybe occasional restaurant visits, you might need something between 150 and 250 Euros a month. Also you should always have some money left for personal expenses like free time activities and other shopping expenses like buying new shoes and so on. This might also take up another 100 Euros as well.

If you want to know more about transportation costs, look at the sections 5. [Enrollment](#) and 7. [Living in Kaiserslautern](#). With your Student ID you get quite far already. If you have the 'Deutschlandticket' you can travel throughout Germany.

The university's social fee that you need to pay to get enrolled and is paid for every semester, depends on the exchange program you are in.

All in all, most organizations recommend having around **900 Euros per month** on your disposal. Like stated before, these costs can vary.

Public Holidays

There are several public holidays in Germany throughout the year. Many of them are related to the Christian religion, as Christianity is still a big part of German history and culture. Some holidays are celebrated in entire Germany while others are regional and only committed in a few German states. So, if you have a day off can depend on your location! In the following, we have listed all the public holidays that are celebrated in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate (RLP) where the university is situated.

Holiday	Date	Area
New Year's Day (Neujahr)	January 1st	Germany
Easter and Good Friday (Ostern und Karfreitag)	Weekend after first full moon in Spring (Friday, Sunday and Monday)	Germany
Labour Day (Tag der Arbeit)	May 1st	Germany
Ascension Day (Christi Himmelfahrt)	39 days after Easter Sunday (Thursday)	Germany
Whitsun/Pentecost (Pfingsten)	50 days after Easter Sunday (Monday)	Germany
Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam)	60 days after Easter Sunday (Thursday)	RLP
German Unification Day (Tag der Deutschen Einheit)	October 3rd	Germany
All Saints' Day (Allerheiligen)	November 1st	RLP
Christmas (Weihnachten)	December 25th and 26th	Germany

Religion

Religion is still a part of Germany's culture and day to day life. Since Germany is mostly a Christian country you will probably be confronted with the Christian religion at some point. Whether it is because of the mentioned religious motivated public holidays or when you visit one of the many large churches during your stay in Germany.

Besides that, Germany is a multicultural place where many people from different countries, cultures and religions come together peacefully. If you want to practice your religion, feel free to do so and maybe find yourself a place at a local religious organization. Also, you may find student organizations where you can practice your religion with other peers. You can find student organizations like this online on this [website](#).

8. Living in Kaiserslautern

Travelling

In Kaiserslautern itself, you can easily take a bus anywhere throughout the city. You can take a bus to the city centre or to the main station or many other places. With your student ID, these bus trips are free. Also, it is possible to rent bikes via VRN Nextbike or DB Call a Bike.



You can rent an e-scooter via e. g. Tier as well. You can use and rent those services via the corresponding apps.

If you want to travel some more around Germany or even to other countries, you can easily take public transportation to other places. A nice way to travel to different cities like Mannheim, Köln or Heidelberg is to take the train. Regional train trips are also included in your Semesterticket. For more information about the benefits of the Semesterticket, take a look at section 5. [Enrollment](#) (→ Semesterticket).

For places and cities more far away it can be helpful to use the high-speed trains (ICE) to get more far away in a short amount of time.

You can book those trips online at Deutsche Bahn

(<https://www.bahn.de/>) or via app. A trip to Paris is also possible, by taking the French TGV directly from Kaiserslautern to the capital of



France! For most cities you can take a regional train to Mannheim and then take an IC (Intercity) or ICE (Intercity Express) to your preferred place like Berlin or Munich.

Alternatively, you can also take busses for some trips. Therefore, you can check out Flixbus (<https://www.flixbus.de/>). This transportation company can take you from Kaiserslautern to many other cities like Hamburg or Berlin!

Always make sure you have a valid ticket **before** entering the vehicle!

If you choose to spend some days in another location, you can find cheap accommodation options like youth hostels or Airbnbs.

Sightseeing

You can find some nice sights in an around Kaiserslautern. Here are some examples:

- Fritz-Walter-Stadion
- Gartenschau
- Japanischer Garten
- Humberturm
- Karlstal
- Burg Hohenecken

You can find some more right [here](#).

Restaurants

You sure can also find some good food locations, too! Whether you want to check out regional German cuisine at the 'Spinnrödl' or Asian food at 'Mr Lian' in the city centre. You can also choose from European over American, Mexican and even African restaurants. For more recommodations check out this [link](#).

For Fast Food Option you can find things like Burger King or McDonalds for sure! A more 'German' option would probably be Döner Kebap, which you can find almost everywhere.

If you prefer to order food from time to time, you can best use apps like Lieferando, which you can find in your phone's app store.

Grocery Shopping:

For grocery shopping, you have many options around campus and in Kaiserslautern. Near university you can find Lidl and Netto, which are on the cheaper side of stores. Also, you can find Wasgau which is a little more expensive. In the city center and around town you have some more options like Aldi or Penny which are also discount stores and tend to be a little cheaper. Rewe on the other hand can also be a little more expensive.

Also, you have the options to go to specialized stores like Asian and African stores/markets. They are located more towards the city center.

If you are a fan of fresh and regional food, you can also check out the farmers' markets in the city. They usually take place three times a week! More Information you can find [here](#).

Going out

Kaiserslautern has a huge 'Kneipen' (pub) culture! Especially in the Altstadt (Old Town) you find a lot of places to hang out and have a drink at nighttime. Maybe you also want to participate in a Kneipentour, where we can show you many different 'Kneipen' in Kaiserslautern and have a drink together!

In this area you will find a lot of places to drink beer and especially wine. You can try out some wine spritzers or 'Weinschorle' as they call it in Germany! Softdrinks are also available of course ;).

Nightlife

In Kaiserslautern you can also have a good time in many night clubs! If you want some loud music and a place where you can dance and party, there are many options like the Nachtschicht, Markthalle or Luther. If you prefer a more chill environment, you can also take part of the many Karaoke events throughout the city like at Harp on Wednesdays or at The Snug on Thursdays.

University parties

The university also offers many different parties throughout the semester. Those 'Foyerparties' usually take place on every other Thursday. During the winter semester there is for example the Welcome party, the Nikofete, a party for celebrating 'Nikolaustag', or the famous Maschfasch, as a Carnival Event. All over the summer semester there are parties like the Maifete, to celebrate labour day, the Weinfest, where you can have good local wine or the Sportlerparty which is always a great motto party!

During the summer semester there is a Grill & Chill event every Tuesday evening where you can hang out with friends and have a barbecue together.

Events in town

In Kaiserslautern we also have some big events where you can go to have a great time!

Twice a year, in May and October, there is a Fest called ‚Kerwe‘. You can find those events throughout Germany, often under different names. Essentially, it is a great Fest where you ride rollercoasters or ferry wheel and have some good food and drinks!

During Christmas time, there is also a Christmas market in town. There you can try some Christmas themed goods, foods and drinks, like some good ‚Glühwein‘. It always takes place from the weekend of the first Advent until Christmas.

Every July there is also a very big Event, called ‚Altstadtfest‘. It is a big celebration all over the Altstadt (old town) of Kaiserslautern! You can have some good food and drinks and listen to many different bands on the many different stages!

Always check out the homepage of Kaiserslautern and look for posters throughout the city for more nice events!

Sports

For sports enthusiasts there is definitely a place for you in this city!

You can find many different football clubs, such as the well-known 1. FC Kaiserslautern, and some smaller clubs where you can visit the matches. Especially the 1. FC Kaiserslautern offers some great and loud football matches every other weekend in the famous and big Fritz-Walter-Stadion! Don't hesitate to buy yourself a ticket and take part in this great Kaiserslautern experience!

For those of you who prefer different sports, there is e. g. a Basketball team of the 1. FCK where you can visit the matches and even the American Football Club Pikes.

If you want to participate in sports yourself, you can check out the many sports courses on campus at the Unifit or ask at the local sports clubs. Of course, there are also many Gyms where you can get a membership, just like the Unifit right on campus.

For a good swim, you can visit the swimming pools of Kaiserslautern. There is an inside swimming pool, the monte mare, and some open-air swimming pools such as the ‚Waschmühle‘, also called ‚Wesch‘ by the locals and the ‚Warmfreibad‘. Those open-air swimming pools are usually open during the summer months.

For other leisure activities you can try Bouldering in the local Bouldering Hall, Bowling or visit the trampolin arena!

Other activities

The city also offers plenty of other activities of course! For some nice quality time outside, you can visit the parks, like ‚Stadtpark‘ and ‚Volkspark‘ in town (those are of course free) or go ‚Gartenschau‘ or Japanese Garden to see some nice gardening work at those Garden Fairs! If you are interested in animals, you can also visit the local ‚Wildpark‘, which is totally free, to see some wild animals that originally come from this area or check out the local zoo.

If you prefer indoor activities, you can try things like Escape Rooms, Neon Minigolf or Lasertag. Also, you can go to the movies in the local cinemas. Sometimes they also offer movies in English/original language. Every winter you can also visit the Ice Rink!

Also, you can go to many concerts which usually take place in 'Kammgarn' or 'Fruchthalle' in the city centre if it's a rather formal event. Kaiserslautern has a great theater, the 'Pfalztheater', as well. There you can find many different plays in many different genres. Maybe you find something you like!

If you are interested in Art, you can find some in the Art Museum of Kaiserslautern, 'Pfalzgalerie', which always offers exhibitions, that change from time to time. You can also find the city's main museum the Theodor-Zink-Museum, if you are interested in history, and even a FCK museum of the well-known local football club for those of you who are into sports!

The many beautiful churches in Kaiserslautern might also be worth a visit!

Of course, you can also spend your time shopping in the city's big shopping mall or in the city center.

Tipp: always check if there is a student discount!

Surroundings

When you take a look at the environment around the city you might notice that there is a lot of forest. In the Pfälzer Wald you can always have a good hike and enjoy the beautiful landscape of this area. For example, take a good hike to the beautiful and rather mystic Karlstal! Besides that, you can also have a nice walk through the 'Mehlinger Heide', if you want to see open nature. For more information about the region of Palatinate (« Pfalz ») check out the following website : [Startseite | Pfalz.de](http://Startseite.Pfalz.de).

If you are interested, you can also check out the amazing vineyards which are not too far from Kaiserslautern and easily accessible by train. There you can do a 'Weinwanderung' ('Wine hike') where you have a guided informative hike while trying some good wines of the area! Also, you can visit the many 'Weinfeste' in that area which take place throughout the summer months or even visit a Wine tasting!

If historical subjects are more likely to catch your interest and want to know more about the life from hundreds of years ago, you might want to visit the old castles mostly from the Middle Age. You can find some of them right next to Kaiserslautern, like in Frankenstein or Hohenecken or you take a ride to the river of rhine where many old and beautiful castles are located. The famous Burg Eltz is also not too far from Kaiserslautern!

Also, you can take a quick train ride to many other cities like Mannheim, Heidelberg or Saarbrücken!

9. A few rules of good living in Germany

Traffic Lights

Whether you're in a hurry or not, pedestrians and cyclists are obliged to stop at red lights. As a pedestrian, running a red light is punishable by a €60 fine, but is tolerated if there are no children around.

Waste Sorting

Paper and cardboard go together in grey bags or blue bins, depending on the region.

The German art of waste sorting is now coming into its own, and is broken down into two elements: the deposit system and the 'Gelbe Sack'.

It must contain:

- Reusable plastics
- Cans and other metallic materials such as aluminium or metal lids.

Most bottles and cans now bear the small symbol of a can and/or bottle with an arrow on it. This is often accompanied by the word "Pfandflasche". If this is the case, it means that your bottle/can is returnable and that you need to take it to a supermarket and return it to a machine. In return, you'll get a voucher for the amount you recover by returning these bottles. You can either choose to have this amount deducted from your purchases at the checkout or ask the cashier to give you the amount in cash. Please note that not all bottles can be returned just anywhere. Shops have machines that will take back bottles of the same type as those sold in the shop.

All plastic bottles marked 'Pfandfrei' must be placed in the yellow bag. Glass bottles without the 'Pfand' symbol are collected in municipal containers and must be sorted according to the colour of the glass.

For organic waste, there is the 'Biotonne'. This is a brown bin for which you can buy suitable bags. But the cheapest way is to use a few sheets of newspaper to wrap them up, and that way you also avoid having too much liquid in your bin (which can be very annoying in winter if the contents of your bin are frozen and can't be emptied!).

If you want to get rid of batteries, you'll find a bin in hall 46 at university and at the checkout of some supermarkets. Otherwise, go to the 'Wertstoffhof' in Kaiserslautern to dispose of any unusual waste (bulky items, electronic waste, etc.).

Finally, for anything that doesn't fit into any of the above categories, there's the grey/black 'Restmüll' bin.

At the Restaurant

Don't forget to tip the waiter when you pay the bill!

To leave a tip, don't put the money on the table, otherwise it will simply be picked up by the next customer. When you pay your bill, tell the waiter how much you want to pay (for example, for a €3.50 drink, you can tell her/him to take €4). The waiter will give you change for the amount you told him. To get an idea, you can give a tip of around 10 or 15% of the initial amount, the simplest being to round a sum with a decimal point to a round sum or x.5€ (this will make it easier for the waiter to give you change and you will have fewer small coins in your wallet). If you want her/him to keep all the change you give her/him, you can say 'Stimmt so!'.

Another important piece of information is that you can ask to take the rest of your meal with you if you haven't finished it in all restaurants. The waiter will normally ask you if she/he should pack the rest of the meal (e.g. 'Soll ich das einpacken?').

Beware: if you order tap water in Germany, it's not necessarily a good idea and you may be charged €1 for your drink. It is common to order a drink or bottled water.

Sundays

Everything is closed on Sundays. A day of rest par excellence, no one has to work. This is known as the 'Sonntagsruhe', or Sunday silence. With the exception of emergency services, restaurants and cultural activities, all shops are closed.

10. Airports

Airport Frankfurt (FRA)

From Frankfurt (FRA) you can take the train to Kaiserslautern. For that you can use the high-speed train (ICE) to Mannheim and then take a train to Kaiserslautern main station. Also, you can take a train from Frankfurt to Kaiserslautern with one transit in Bad Münster am Stein. The train route usually takes 1.5 to 2.5 hours.

Alternatively you can also take the bus (Flixbus, not part of the public transportation) to Kaiserslautern. This trip also takes approximately 2 hours and is quite cheap. You can book Flixbus trips online or via app.

Airport Frankfurt Hahn (HHN):

From Frankfurt Hahn (HHN) you can also use public transportation to get to Kaiserslautern. Usually, you can take a bus and then transit to train afterwards to Kaiserslautern main station.

Airport Luxemburg (LUX):

From Luxemburg Airport you can get by taking a bus to Luxemburg-City (public transportation in Luxemburg is free!) and then take a train to Saarbrücken. From Saarbrücken you can easily take a train to Kaiserslautern.

Flughafen Saarbrücken (SCN):

From Saarbrücken Airport you can most easily take a bus to Saarbrücken and then take a train to Kaiserslautern.

Keep in mind that you need a valid ticket to enter trains in Germany.

11. Health issues

In case of an emergency, you can call the emergency numbers. The call is always free.

Medical emergency:

Ambulance/emergency doctor	112
Firefighters	112

Another emergency event:

Police authorities	110
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In non-emergency cases it is also possible to contact authorities or ask for medical advice.

Patientenservice/Medical help	116 117
Local Police department	0631 3690

The 'Patientenservice' 116 117 can be helpful, if you are in a non-emergency medical need which needs medical attention and your local doctor's office is closed (e. g. on the weekends) and it is not possible to wait until you can see your doctor.

In general, it is recommended that you find yourself a local doctor's office (general practitioner/family doctor) which you can contact with any medical issues.

When you are in need of any medications you can visit one of the many local pharmacies (Apotheke).

12. Useful Vocabulary

Hello & Goodbye

Hello!
Good morning
Good afternoon
Good evening/night
Goodbye
Bye!
My name is ...
Whats your name?
I'm from ...
Where are you from?

Hallo!
Guten Morgen
Guten Tag
Guten Abend/Nacht
Auf Wiedersehen
Tschüss!
Mein Name ist ...
Wie heißt du? Wie heißen Sie? (formal)
Ich komme aus ...
Wo kommst du her? Wo kommen Sie her? (formal)

General expressions

Yes/no/maybe
Please/Thank you
Sorry!
Excuse me!
May I?
Pardon?
I would like to ...
Have you got ...?
How much is ...?
I (don't) like this.
Good/bad
Open/closed
Help!
Caution!

Ja/Nein/Vielleicht
Bitte/Danke
Entschuldigung!
Entschuldige! Entschuldigen Sie! (formal)
Darf ich?
Wie bitte?
Ich möchte ...
Hast du ...? Haben Sie ...?
Wie viel kostet ...?
Ich mag das (nicht).
Gut/schlecht
Offen/geschlossen
Hilfe!
Achtung!

To go

Left/right
Straight ahead/back
Near/far
Entrance
Exit
Departure/arrival
Where is ...?/Where are ...?
Toilets
Ladies/Gentlemen
Bus/Tram/Underground
Taxi
Map
Station
Airport

Links/rechts
Geradeaus/zurück
Nah/weit
Eingang
Ausgang
Abfahrt/-flug/ Ankunft
Wo ist ...?/ Wo sind ...?
Toiletten
Damen/Herren
Bus/Straßenbahn/U-Bahn
Taxi
Karte
Bahnhof
Flughafen

Schedule
Ticket
Train/track
I would like to rent ...
A car/A bicycle
Gas station

University

Cafeteria/dining hall
Lecturer/professor
Fellow students
Lecture hall
Course
Seminar
Lecture
Building
Faculty/Department
Supervisor
Enrollment
Student ID

Food & Drink

May I have ...?
Knife/Fork/Spoon
Salt/Pepper
Vegetarian/vegan
(Food) Allergy
Receipt/Bill
May I have the bill please?

Fahrplan
Ticket
Zug/Gleis
Ich würde gerne mieten
Ein Auto/ein Fahrrad
Tankstelle

Cafeteria/Mensa
Dozent/Professor
Mitstudierende/Kommilitonen
Hörsaal
Kurs
Seminar
Vorlesung
Gebäude
Fakultät/Fachbereich
Betreuer
Einschreibung
Studierendenausweis

Kann ich bitte ... haben?
Messer/Gabel/Löffel
Salz/Pfeffer
Vegetarisch/vegan
(Lebensmittel-) Allergie
Quittung/Rechnung
Kann ich bitte die Rechnung haben?