

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAMME
GERMANY 2020/21

GERMANY COUNTRY NOTES

VERSION 1, SEPTEMBER 2020

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NOTES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS APPOINTED TO GERMANY IN 2020-2021

This document is version one of the Germany Country Notes for the 2020/21 English Language Assistants Programme. Any country notes relating to previous years should be ignored for the 2020/21 academic year.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However, the British Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors which may exist or for any subsequent changes.

FOREWORD

Congratulations on your recent allocation to a post as an English Language Assistant in Germany. Every year, around 2,500 Language Assistants from the UK support the teaching of English in 14 countries around the world. Each one is taking part in a programme that traces its heritage back to 1905. It began as an exchange programme to allow graduates from France to help English students learn French, with 'young Masters in English secondary schools' heading to France to perform a similar role. Shortly afterwards, a similar agreement was reached with the government of Prussia.

Since those early days, the programme has endured major global events, two World Wars, and the Great Depression to name a few. But while the global political, social and economic landscapes may have changed over the years, the Language Assistants initiative has remained committed to increasing language skills across the world.

This document contains important information and advice regarding a variety of practical and administrative matters affecting UK assistants in Germany. This document should be read carefully, retained for reference **and considered in conjunction with any papers issued by our German partners and the German authorities**. It is important that you take this information with you whilst undertaking your year abroad in order to be able to consult it at all times when problems/questions arise, although it is also available year-round on our website.

If your permanent (UK) home address, personal e-mail or phone number should change at any time from now, please inform us immediately by sending an e-mail to languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org. We may need to contact you during the year with updates to these notes, invitations or urgent messages.

We hope that you find the following information useful and that you enjoy the year ahead.

Best wishes,

British Council Language Assistants Team

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1. CO-OPERATING PARTNERS

1.1. BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of [arts and culture](#), [English language](#), [education and civil society](#). Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

Our work in English aims to bring high-quality language materials to every [learner](#) and [teacher](#) who wants them. In developing and post-conflict countries, we teach English and train teachers through radio, web and TV broadcasts. We offer more than three million UK [examinations](#) worldwide, helping people gain access to trusted qualifications to support their career and study prospects.

Our work in [education](#) and [society](#) helps transform national education systems, builds more inclusive and open societies and increases [young people's opportunities](#). We encourage international students to come and study in the UK, and British students to experience life abroad. We bring [schools](#) around the world together, so young people and teachers from different countries can learn from each other.

Our work in the [arts](#) involves the very best British and international artistic talent. We help increase audiences for international work in the UK and for UK work globally. We bring artists together and support the development of skills and policy in the arts and creative industries. Through this work, we ensure that culture in its broadest sense plays a vital role in connecting with and understanding each other.

In these ways, the British Council builds links between UK people and institutions, and those around the world, helping to create trust and lay foundations for prosperity and security around the world.

1.2. PARTNER ORGANISATION IN GERMANY

The [Pädagogischer Austauschdienst \(PAD\)](#) administers the Language Assistants Programme in Germany. They liaise with the *Bundesländer* (federal states) in Germany on British Council's behalf.

Contact details

Pädagogischer Austauschdienst (PAD)
Graurheindorfer Straße 157
53117 Bonn

Tel: +49 (0)228 501 0
Fax: +49 (0)228 501 333
Email: pad@kmk.org
Web: www.kmk-pad.org

Coordinator for British Council ELAs
Gisela Grütter-Probst

Email: gisela.gruetter-probst@kmk.org

2. ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are a paid member of staff with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to our website for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/english-language-assistants/prepare-placement>

As a language assistant you are also an ambassador for the UK and its culture. The way you behave will influence how those around you view the UK and you should endeavor to be a positive example. If you set a bad example, you could damage the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

“Be professional. It is a job so treat it as such. If you’ve got any problems, discuss them straight away and get the problem sorted out early on.”

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is an excellent resource and you should draw on this during your lessons. We provide a lot of advice to help you incorporate cultural content into your lessons – see [section 11](#) in this document below.

“Suggest ideas and interesting cultural resources, such as videos/music etc. from your home country.”

2.1. TEACHING ENGLISH

It is important to be resourceful and use your initiative. If you do not think that you are being used sufficiently, make suggestions of topics that you could discuss with the students or activities that you could get involved with. This document contains a whole chapter about teaching English but to get started the following links are useful.

- www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/whole_manual.pdf
- www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant/essential-uk

It is also important to make sure that you are familiar with the education system in Germany as it will help you know what to expect when you start teaching at your school(s). Please see the Eurydice webpage for specific information:

- <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Overview>



3. POSTING INFORMATION

Each region differs as to when they organise appointments and send out information. The British Council has no control over choice of town, size of town, school environment or when information is sent out. We encourage each region to send information out as early as possible. You should also write immediately to your school(s) confirming acceptance of the post. If you do not receive a reply by mid-August, it is a good idea to ring the school(s) to ask about accommodation and give them an idea of your anticipated arrival date.

You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities available and if you should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

3.1. SCHOOL ALLOCATION

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is three. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. After contacting your school, if you establish that there is no regular public transport which serves your school(s), and there are no lifts available to your school(s) please liaise with your mentor teacher.

3.2. DATES OF APPOINTMENT

The period of appointment for UK assistants in Germany will be from the first day of your induction course (early to mid-September, depending on the Bundesland you have been

allocated to) until 31 May 2021. The shorter programme officially finishes on the last day of February. Please check your contract to find out the last day of your assistantship.

It is strongly recommended to check the dates given on the *Schulzuweisung* (contract) which you will receive directly from the school authority of your *Bundesland* before your arrival.

Assistants in Germany are expected to work around 12 hours a week. Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school, which is usually the first one mentioned when you are sent details of your posting in your *Schulzuweisung*.

3.3. HOLIDAYS

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays, details of which you can get from your school(s). You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission.

3.4. STAYING A CONSECUTIVE YEAR

Those wishing to extend their appointment for a second year must request this with the PAD **before end of March 2021**. Please note: assistants cannot stay longer than two consecutive years on the programme in Germany.

3.5. PREDECESSORS

The British Council has already shared with you the contact details of assistants appointed to your area in 2019-20 if they have consented to this (due to GDPR rules). This list was included in the Summer Information Pack for Germany

It should be noted that schools do not necessarily receive assistants from the same Anglophone country each year, and the British Council holds records of assistants from the UK only. Past assistants have emphasised how useful it is to contact former assistants in their area and have described their advice as invaluable. If we have

not been able to provide you with information on past assistants, please do speak to your school. However, please remember that they may or may not be in a position to help with this.

Please check with your mentor teacher for the contact details of previous assistants that might be from other Anglophone countries. These previous assistants might have useful advice to share with you about the town, school(s), accommodation, administrative matters, etc.



4. PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

4.1. FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Before travelling to Germany you should ensure that you check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) travel advice pages: <http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/germany> and ensure that you have subscribed to updates so that you receive any important changes to the FCO's advice. During a crisis, advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and updated regularly, so by [subscribing](#) you will ensure that you are aware of any updates.

We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travelers' documentation provided by the FCO.

4.2. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Assistants must be in possession of a standard 10-year passport before leaving the UK and are advised to ensure that it will not need to be renewed before October 2021. Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online at: www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports.



4.3. BREXIT

The United Kingdom has now left the European Union. The current transition period ends on 31 December 2020.

The UK Government has launched a new [website](#) to help businesses, organisations, individuals and families check what they need to do to prepare for the UK leaving the European Union. The section [UK nationals living in the European Union](#) contains specific advice for British Nationals in Germany.

Please note, the advice provided is based upon current government guidelines. Language Assistants have responsibility to keep themselves informed of any change to German and UK Government advice on Brexit and the impact this may have on British nationals living in Germany.

We also strongly urge you to read any advice and links related to Brexit which our German partners send you. Please also follow the British Embassy in Germany on Facebook and Twitter for timely updates.

The [Withdrawal Agreement](#) sets out the terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and provides for a deal on citizens' rights. It sets out a transition period which lasts until 31 December 2020. During this time, you can continue to live, work and study in the EU broadly as you did before 31 December 2020.

If you are resident in Germany at the end of the transition period, you will be covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, and your rights will be protected for as long as you remain resident in Germany.

Any rights that are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement will be the subject of future negotiations. Read the [guidance page](#) for more information.

In the meantime, make sure you are registered as a resident in Germany (see [section 7.2](#)). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will update this guidance as soon as more information becomes available.

You should also read the FCO's [guidance on living in Europe](#).

4.4. TRAVEL TO GERMANY

You are responsible for the cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year. Booking in advance for all forms of transport is highly recommended. Past assistants have warned to check the baggage allowance for outward and return journeys when travelling by plane as sometimes the cheaper airlines have quite a low baggage allowance. The following websites may help you when booking your travel.

- www.skyscanner.net
- www.eurostar.com
- www.raileurope.co.uk
- www.lufthansa.com
- www.eurolines.co.uk
- www.eurowings.com
- www.britishairways.com
- www.easyjet.co.uk
- www.flybe.com
- www.opodo.co.uk
- www.expedia.co.uk
- www.ryanair.co.uk
- www.interrailnet.com

Working as a language assistant gives you a great opportunity to travel around Germany and you should make the most of your free time.

4.5. TAKING A CAR ABROAD

You will need to research the laws on driving in Germany, including adapting your head lights for driving on the right. The website www.gov.uk/driving-abroad provides useful information about motoring abroad.

If you plan to take a car to Germany for the period of your assistantship, please ensure that you take out adequate insurance for the full period and be aware that many insurance companies will only insure you for periods of up to 90 days. Past assistants have advised looking into insurance well in advance in order to have the time to shop around for a suitable policy. All UK motor insurance policies offer the minimum legal protection required by EU countries and Switzerland. This gives third party cover for bodily injury or damage to

property. The British Council is unable to recommend specific insurance companies.

Many insurers offer 24-hour UK telephone numbers in case you need help in an emergency. Make sure you have these details with you when you travel abroad.

The website of the Association of British Insurers www.abi.org.uk has general information on driving abroad, including the document 'Motoring Abroad' which has useful information on Motor Insurance cover and Green Cards. A Green Card is an internationally recognised document that provides evidence that the policyholder has minimum insurance cover.

If you require information on driver licensing you should contact Drivers Customer Services (DCS), Correspondence Team DVLA, Swansea SA6 7JL (Tel: 0300 790 6801), or using the online email service which can be found here:

www.emaildvla.direct.gov.uk/emaildvla/cegemail/dvla/en/. Information on vehicle licensing or registration can be obtained from Vehicle Customer Services (VCS), DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AR (Tel: 0300 790 6802) There is also a website at www.dvla.gov.uk. UK licences are recognised in all EU countries plus Switzerland, for as long as they remain valid.

For information on buying a car in Germany see [7.7. Buying a car in Germany](#) below.

4.5. DRIVING AND THE LAW

Alcohol limits: as of 2015, the alcohol limit in Germany is 0mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood for new drivers (those who have passed their test in the past 2 years and under 21), and 50mg per 100ml of blood for everyone else. Do not drink and drive. German police can breathalyse at random and drivers who test positive face fines up to €1500. Higher levels carry greater penalties and possible prison sentences.

Mobile phones: it is illegal to use your mobile phone whilst driving in Germany. Those in violation of this can face a fine up to €60 and a penalty point on your licence.

Further advice on driving and the law can be found here:

- <http://www.rac.co.uk/drive/travel/country/germany>

4.6. INSURANCE

By law, assistants in Germany must have insurance during their period of appointment.

Insurance is provided by the German authorities and includes limited health insurance, accident insurance, and private personal liability insurance. The PAD will supply further information about the insurance scheme and what the insurance covers during the online induction.

It does not cover pre-existing conditions (e.g. diabetes) or psychological/psychiatric diagnoses or treatment. If you need this kind of cover, you must arrange it yourself and pay for any treatment. The insurance cover also does not cover you for loss of personal property.

The health insurance cover provided to you starts on the first day working day in Germany and comes to an end on your last working day at your school(s). Before this you will need a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

Insurance in Germany

Whereas the policy provided to you will cover quite a lot, you are also strongly recommended to take out Personal Accident Travel insurance for the period between leaving home and taking up your appointment, the time during your appointment, and also the period between ending your appointment and your return to the UK. This should include the following standard elements of cover:

- Medical costs for treatment in case of illness or accidental injury
- Benefits for permanent disabling injuries, e.g. rehabilitation and living costs
- Benefits for death and costs of repatriation
- Cover for loss or damage to your personal belongings
- Cover for cancelled flights, e.g. if the airline goes out of business or on strike
- Personal Liability cover. This provides legal support and covers financial costs if you

cause injury or property damage to others and are found personally liable

- 24hr emergency assistance helpline

Many policies also have Legal Expenses cover, which is recommended in case you need legal assistance while overseas.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-insurance.

Many insurers are excluding Covid-19 as a cause of travel delay or medical expenses. Please check carefully with potential insurers what their policies cover.

The British Council is unable to advise on private insurance packages; you are recommended to consult an insurance broker for professional advice and to check whether you are covered by your parents' insurance policy, if applicable. Undergraduate assistants should consult with their university to check what cover is provided for them and you may find that a "study abroad" policy purchased online is an option. Please be aware that some insurance policies, usually 'backpackers' insurance, do not allow for trips home during the year and it is important to check the small print of your policy to make sure that you are covered.

The British Council will not be responsible for you while you are in Germany, although we will offer support when necessary. We recommend you research the various options available and consult other/former assistants before purchasing a suitable policy. Please note that it is unlikely that insurance companies will cover you in the event of a natural disaster (referred to as an 'Act of God' in insurance policies) or the outbreak of war.

Any package should cover repatriation, personal accident & civil liability, luggage & valuable items, and cancellation in extreme cases. Please note that you should organise your insurance before you leave the UK.

Insurance for travel outside of Germany

Remember that normally your insurance only covers you within your host country during your allocated time there, therefore if you travel

outside the country during or after that period, you may need additional insurance.

Experience from previous language assistants has told us that holiday periods provide the possibility for travel around or outside of Germany. If you do leave Germany at any point, it is highly advised to take out insurance for the country / countries that you visit.

4.7. GRADUATES WITH STUDENT LOANS

If you will be overseas for more than 3 months, you will need to complete an Overseas Income Assessment Form to enable the Student Loans Company to calculate how much you need to repay. On the Overseas Income Assessment Form you should provide them with details of your circumstances and prospective income. You will also be required to provide evidence of income or means of support. They will then send you a repayment schedule showing how much you need to pay each month. Your monthly payments will be based upon the earnings threshold for your destination country. More information can be found online here: <https://www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan>

5. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Please see the [Foreign Commonwealth Office website](#) for more information regarding healthcare in Germany.

All necessary information will be delivered at the online induction by our German partners and will also be referred to in the guidance documentation which the PAD will provide. Our partners will communicate the date and time of the online induction.

[PAD's guidance documents for Modern Language Assistants.](#)

- Benutzername: fsa-in-deutschland
- Passwort: fsaaid



5.1. HEALTH INSURANCE

As previously mentioned, assistants working in Germany will receive health insurance.

This covers the costs of necessary primary health care for acute illnesses. At the start of your assistantship you will receive an insurance card which will explain the terms of treatment. You will be reimbursed for any costs incurred by you within the confines of these terms.

5.2. VISITING A DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL

If you have developed acute symptoms you should arrange an appointment with a GP or a specialist doctor (e.g. ENT, eye specialist, gynaecologist, dentist, etc.) depending on what your symptoms are. You must show them your insurance card and the Arzteinformation (information for doctors) so that the terms for settlement are clear.

After being examined you will receive a prescription for any necessary medication. You can then buy the medication from any pharmacy with your prescription.

You will have to pay for the medication yourself at first. The insurance company will then reimburse you for the costs after you send them all invoices and prescriptions (originals only) with an application form for a cost refund (Antrag auf Kostenerstattung). Please be advised that only those costs that are covered by the insurance, in accordance with the terms of the policy, will be reimbursed. You will receive the application form for a cost refund at the beginning of your assistantship.

If you require in-patient treatment in a hospital you should also present your insurance card. You should ask for a shared room and general nursing care (i.e. not treatment as a private patient). The costs of hospital stays are very high so the hospital will generally settle bills with the insurance company directly. The hospital will submit a cost acceptance statement in advance to the insurance company where the doctor's fees are paid directly to the hospital.

The following cases are not insured:

- Pre-existing conditions (e.g. diabetes, allergies, etc.) so please take the appropriate measures in the UK to make sure you have enough medication to cover you
- Illnesses caused by alcohol or drug abuse
- Orthodontic procedures
- Regular antenatal examinations and costs incurred by childbirth or the treatment of newborn babies

The following cases are partially covered:

- Pain-relieving dental treatment, simple fillings up to max €500
- Dentures, dental restoration: 50% of total cost up to max €500
- Aids following an accident (crutches, wheelchair, etc.) up to max €250
- Therapies required following accident/illness (massage, physiotherapy, etc.) up to max €250
- Mental illnesses: first-time acute treatment only, up to max €1200

5.3. HEALTH INSURANCE OUTSIDE GERMANY

The health insurance you receive also applies to all EU countries for up to 6 weeks. This means if you fall ill or have an accident in another EU country you will be reimbursed for the costs of necessary medical care, medication and surgical dressings in accordance with the terms of the policy. It is however advised you take out comprehensive insurance (loss/damage to belongings, repatriation, personal liability, etc.) if you intend to travel to any EU or EEA countries.

5.4. ACCIDENT INSURANCE

You are also covered if you suffer damage to your health on account of a sudden event caused by a third-party. The insurance cover will not extend to any accidents caused by mental disorders. It will cover you up to a maximum of €105,000 where total disability (100%) has been caused.

5.5. EHIC CARD

Please note: Until 31 December 2020, you can use your UK-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in Austria. Further details regarding the validity of your EHIC after the end of the Brexit transition period will be available here.

Information on applying for an EHIC can be found at the following link:

www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card. If you're planning to go abroad as part of your university degree, you can apply for a time limited Student EHIC. More information is available online here.

The EHIC card will also be useful for any trips to other EU countries. It covers any medical treatment that becomes necessary during your trip, because of either illness or an accident. The card gives you access to state- provided medical treatment only. It provides no top-up on the cover of the national health scheme while you are in Germany during the period of your contract. To apply for a card please use the following link: www.ehic.org.uk. You can also obtain an application form from the post office.

Residents of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card. Residents of the Isle of Man need to take out fully comprehensive insurance (which should include repatriation by air ambulance) before travelling to another country. Applicants from Guernsey should contact the Health and Social Services Department for advice. Applicants from Jersey should contact the Employment and Social Security Department for advice.

“As for health insurance, make sure you bring your European Health Card, just in case it is asked for, or in case of emergency.”



5.6. MEDICATION

If you take regular medication, please ensure that you have a supply before you leave. It is also important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and always advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

“Bring medicines that are hard to get in the place you’re going to (E.g. your specific contraceptive pill, branded things like day nurse / your preferred hay fever tablets - the brands I wanted were unavailable)”

In addition to health insurance, it would be wise to consider insuring your personal possessions. You should also check your parents’ household insurance as this sometimes covers possessions away from home. Furthermore, cover for personal liability is often overlooked but it is extremely important. If you were the cause of an accident of any kind – e.g. cycling on the road – the resulting costs, practical and legal, could be prohibitively high.

5.7. MENTAL HEALTH

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Lack of familiar support systems disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations can intensify stress levels rather than alleviate them.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. It is advised to read this information even if you are not currently suffering from mental health problems.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office provides information about mental health and travel via the following links.

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health
- www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues

The leaflets hyperlinked below contain guidance on travelling abroad and mental health, and information about how the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is able to assist British nationals with mental health needs abroad. The leaflets detail the type of assistance you may find in the country. The leaflet also explains some of the differences between English law and practice and that of other countries.

Travel and Mental Health

www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues

Mental Health: Travelling Abroad Checklist

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/466425/Mental_Health_Checklist_-_Final.pdf

6. ARRIVAL

6.1. INDUCTION COURSE

The Pädagogischer Austauschdienst (PAD) is organizing an online induction webinar in mid-September. They will contact you directly with details so please check spam folders in case their email lands there. Please note, ***the British Council has no involvement in the organisation of these meetings.***

The webinar will provide you with extremely useful information about your placement, the German educational system, school life, and information and advice on administrative matters and teaching methods.

7. SETTLING IN

“It was quite difficult to integrate at the beginning but if you keep trying it will eventually happen!”

7.1. ACCOMMODATION

“Always contact your mentor teacher to see if they have any advice before paying deposits/making plans etc., especially before you leave the country. My initial plan was to live elsewhere and commute to work, but I was informed that I'd be able to live on site, with no additional responsibilities, for an unbeatable price.

The British Council is not in a position to provide or to help find accommodation.

Equally your school(s) are not obliged to provide or find you accommodation, but they may be able to offer you somewhere temporary to stay for the first few days or weeks, thus giving you some time to look for more permanent accommodation. You should however not assume that your school will do this and you should discuss your arrival and initial accommodation arrangements with them in advance. Please note that if your school does offer you accommodation you are not obliged to accept it but remember, if you do accept it, you will have to abide by the school's rules.

The first thing to do when looking for permanent accommodation is to ask your mentor teacher if they can recommend anything. For example, they may know a local family with a room to rent, or already have somewhere in mind for you to stay. If your school cannot help, your best contacts are your predecessors at the school or in the area. Previous assistants are also often able to offer advice on how to find accommodation locally.

Consider going to your teaching location to arrange accommodation in advance of the induction course or of starting your job. Past assistants have emphasised the need to look for accommodation as early as possible. The first weeks of your assistantship will be busy as you will be finding your way around an unfamiliar

town, dealing with bureaucracy and trying to make a good impression at school. Having accommodation lined up can make this easier. For temporary lodgings while you look for something permanent, investigate the possibility of staying in a youth hostel. Remember that you will need your passport to check into hotels/hostels. Do not take out a contract on your accommodation until you know the location of your schools.



“Don't panic if you don't have accommodation before leaving the UK. I was really scared about having nowhere to live... but it's definitely easier to stay in an airBnB for a few days to properly visit houses in the country, rather than signing for a house before you've seen it and it being rubbish.”

Once you get to Germany the following suggestions may be of interest:

- search for a room or flat on the internet
- advertise on the school/staff notice board and ask around the staff; do NOT advertise in local papers or public places
- buy the local newspapers early in the morning and phone likely numbers immediately

- ring the local university halls of residence or check their flat share adverts and notices, or advertise on their notice board that you are looking for a room
- ask local friends'/acquaintances' landlords if they have any further accommodation to let
- write to or visit as soon as possible any student or youth organisation in the area that might have details of available lodgings: the local tourist office may have a list of such organisations
- find out about local religious organisations as they often know of rooms to let
- accommodation agencies may be able to help but you should be very wary of paying large fees and deposits, and always read the small print in any leases or agreements to be signed. Look for small agencies as often their fees are lower
- families sometimes advertise for lodgers on noticeboards. If you are interested in this possibility you must clarify whether or not you will be allowed visitors and will be expected to help with housework or children (12-15 hours per week is typical)

Some websites you may find useful are:

ACCOMODATION TYPE	USEFUL LINKS
Temporary accommodation:	www.hihostels.com www.hostelbookers.com www.hostelworld.com www.airbnb.com
Permanent accommodation:	www.wg-gesucht.de www.studenten-wg.de www.immobilienscout24.de www.mitwohnzentrale.de www.easy-wg.de www.homecompany.de www.quoka.de

suggested format attached. Alternatively, your mentor teacher or a friendly teacher at school might be prepared to 'take the risk'. It is worth trying

Tip: The Deutsches Jugendherbergswerk (tel: +49 5231 74010) coordinates all affiliated Hostelling International hostels in Germany: www.jugendherberge.de

Beware! Some ads in papers do not make it clear if the rental is handled by an individual or an agency. Check when arranging a viewing; otherwise you may have to pay an agency fee which may be the equivalent of one month's rent.

When you go out looking for accommodation, take a dossier of papers with you including as many of the following as possible: your confirmation of appointment (Schulzuweisung), proof of your salary (which you should be able to get from the *Bundesland*), and a copy of your passport or ID (Ausweiskopie),

Landlords may ask for a Kaution (security deposit). This can sometimes be as much as three months' rent in advance so please check with the landlord/agent in advance. Always ask (insist if necessary) for a receipt for the money you pay, both deposit and rent. If you do live in privately rented accommodation, check your contract carefully to see how much notice you must give to move out – in Germany a minimum of one- or three-months' notice is usually asked of the tenant. You may also have to give this notice in writing by registered mail.

You should check what the terms are regarding payment of utility bills before you sign any rental agreements. You should look out for the terms Kaltmiete ('cold' rent) which means no utility bills are included and you'll be liable for all additional costs, and Warmmiete ('warm' rent) where utility costs are included (usually water, electricity and gas only, although check exactly what is included in the rent). You should also check if there are any additional Nebenkosten (side costs) for which you will be liable.

A formal contract to rent an apartment sometimes requires the signature of a Garant(in) (guarantor). If you do not know anyone resident in Germany who is prepared to act as your guarantor (i.e. undertake to pay your rent/debts should you default), it may help if you have a formal letter from your parents, written in German, stating their financial guarantee: see to find a German guarantor as a number of landlords are reluctant to accept a guarantor from outside Germany.

We recommend that you take photos of your room and the flat when you move into your long-term accommodation and when you leave to help you get back any deposit you may have to pay, which is usually dependent on the accommodation being in the same condition as when you first arrived. When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts, e.g. internet or utilities.

When you do find accommodation, please ensure that you have checked health and safety issues (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electrics, water etc.

When looking for accommodation please follow the advice given in our [Personal Safety leaflet](#). When you have found somewhere to live, even if it has been arranged for you, do not sign any agreement you are not comfortable with and make sure that there is a period of notice written in the contract to avoid problems, should you decide to change your accommodation during the year.

7.2. REGISTRATION

Please cross-reference this information with any information our German partners give you.

All assistants must register (anmelden) with the authorities in the town, city or municipality where they live as soon as they have found accommodation and within 2 weeks of the start date of the lease.

The municipal authorities may be called the Einwohnermeldeamt or Bürgeramt and are usually found in the town hall, city hall or municipal offices where you live.

You must bring with you the following:

- your passport
- confirmation of appointment letter/email (Schulzuweisung)
- rental agreement from your landlord (Mietvertrag)
- A completed registration form (Anmeldeformular), which you will be able to download from the internet or you can get this form from the authorities themselves

In the Anmeldeformular you will include your personal information, your old address and your new address. You should also tick nicht erwerbstätig (unemployed) on the form in the appropriate section. Officially you are paid through a grant from public funds and not directly by the school. This will therefore entitle you to a tax-free salary and exemption from social security deductions.

Note: please check with the authorities in advance what documents you should bring with you as this can vary in each *Bundesland*.

You will then be issued with an Anmeldebestätigung (certificate of registration), which you should keep safe.

If you change your accommodation during your time in Germany, you must re-register (ummelden) with the authorities. At the end of your stay and before you leave Germany, you must unregister (abmelden).

7.3. CREATING SOCIAL NETWORKS

Even if you have been to Germany before it is possible that you will find some things strange at first and will need a little time to settle in. On arrival, the thought of making friends and mixing with the locals can seem like a daunting task, but as long as you are prepared to put yourself out there, it is a part of the experience which previous assistants have found the most enriching. Give yourself some time to adjust – you don't need to feel like a local within a week and in the beginning, you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with.

“Get involved in activities in your area. Going to the tourist information centre, looking online, walking around can be great ways to find out what’s going on. Join a choir, orchestra, sports team, boules club, whatever - it may seem daunting but a great way to meet people (even if you don’t see them outside of the context of the activity) and get in some language practice.”

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

- Live with students/native speakers
- Enrol for an evening class; join a sports club (*Sportverein*), music group (*Musikverein*), choir (*Chor*), etc.
- Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures as a *Gasthörer*
- Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK
- Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

Former assistants have recommended that you don't spend all your free time with other assistants, as you will not be able to integrate into your community and life in Germany. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – assistants can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other's experiences. Don't forget that there may be language assistants from other countries in your area. You may wish to ask your employer if they have contact details for them.

As a golden rule, try to say yes to every social opportunity presented to you that does not compromise your personal safety. Accept invitations to places and activities even if they do not sound interesting as you might meet other people there who do share your interests; however at all times, please follow the advice given in our Personal Safety leaflet.

- Start at school

The best way to start is with colleagues at school. Make sure that you always seem positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn. Socialize as much as you can with colleagues and accept all invitations to events, dinners, etc. Tell people what your interests are and ask them to let you know what's going on in the local area. Do keep in mind that teachers can be very busy, especially during exam periods.

Apart from your work in the classroom you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school 'open days' or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people. If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.

“Get to know the teachers in your school(s) as they may offer to show you around a few different places and recommend things to do and places to go wherever you are based.”

- Previous Assistants

It is also a good idea to get in touch with other people in the area before you leave. One useful way to do this is to get in contact with a previous assistant in your region and ask them to give you any e-mail addresses or numbers of contacts they made.

- Languages

Another excellent way to meet new people is to set up language exchanges with local people who want to practise their English. You could also enrol at a local language school, join Erasmus societies (at a local university), offer English lessons to colleagues/locals, join a club and join assistant groups on social networks such as Facebook.



“There are a lot of people who would love to learn English so the best way to integrate is to arrange Language Exchanges. This can be done by joining groups on Facebook or by asking friends/colleagues if they are aware of anyone who would be interested in an exchange. This way, you learn more about the culture and can seek advice from your language exchange buddy on activities and things to see and do around the city.”

- ESN

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a non-profit international student organisation. Their mission is to represent international students, thus provide opportunities for cultural understanding and self-development under the principle of Students Helping Students. ESN can sometimes assist with finding accommodation in university towns and cities. Assistants completing their third year abroad can often affiliate to local ESN groups and register for an ESN student discount card. Often ESN groups run events and trips throughout the year which provide a great way to meet new people and explore Germany on a budget.

- Social media

There are often Facebook groups for people who are new to the city/town, which organise different events to help people make new friends - just search for 'new in "city name"'. Previous assistants have also suggested joining a local Couchsurfing group as they often organise social activities.

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an ELA. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you say on your wall and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behaviour. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or

outside school.
www.britishcouncil.org

It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

You are welcome to connect with your fellow assistants via Facebook and set up groups to keep in touch and share information. However, you must not use the British Council's name in the group name. Any group creators using British Council's name will be contacted by us and you will be asked to change the name of the group. If you do not do this in a timely fashion, we will have to contact Facebook directly to intervene.

- Rural Post

It should be noted that a lot of the posts in Germany are in rural areas. Past assistants to rural areas have had very positive experiences as they have been able to see the "real Germany". Sometimes assistants posted to rural locations find it can be more challenging to adapt to, especially at the start, however it can be a very enriching experience on a personal development level and a real immersion in German culture and language. Often assistants in rural postings comment that they receive much more support from their school which can help with setting into life in Germany.

It important that the British Council and the PAD send assistants to rural as well as more urban settings both in the UK and Germany as pupils in both settings must be given the opportunity to benefit from exposure to other cultures and language learning.

7.4. SETTLING INTO SCHOOL LIFE

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are. It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning.

You will have to make an effort to get to know your colleagues. Showing that you are enthusiastic and keen to get to know staff will go a long way. Start with a simple hello or ask how their weekend went. Learning some simple conversation starters in the target language is always useful. Remember however that you will be working in a school environment therefore staff may not have a lot of free time. Don't be put off if a teacher doesn't have time to talk to you in the first instance, they may be in-between or preparing for a class. It doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to talk to you.

Whilst it's important to get to know the colleagues you will be directly working with, it's always useful to get to know other staff too. Try introducing yourself to staff you may not directly work with, for example teachers in other departments, lunch time staff, receptionists, caretakers etc. If there are social occasions or team meetings try to make an effort to attend. It's a great way to get to know colleagues in a different environment.

Language Assistants that are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.



“Be enthusiastic, punctual, and make a good impression. Maybe ask teachers for advice/tips etc. to establish trust and better relationships with them, it might be the start of a great friendship.”

“Make an effort to speak to the staff you're working with and get to know them in the staff room. Don't be put off if it sometimes (or often!) feels like they don't have time for you. In general they mean well, even if they are busy people and perhaps have their minds occupied by other things. They'll always appreciate you making an effort.”

8. MONEY MATTERS

8.1. MONTHLY ALLOWANCE

You will receive a monthly allowance, or *Stipendium*, of €800 per month without any deduction for tax or social security contributions. In addition, you will be provided with medical, accident and liability insurance (see [section 5](#)).

Please note that you will not receive the full payment until October or later, so you should ensure that you take around €1000 - €1500 (though some assistants can manage with less) to cover initial costs. This amount may differ depending on your location and how much rent you are required to pay in advance.

You may wish to consider taking a credit card to cover initial costs. Be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad. You may wish to check what your bank will charge you to use this service. Your monthly allowance is adequate to survive on but you will need more if you intend to travel.

Please note that most *Bundesländer* pay your allowance at the end of the month. This means, for example, that you will be paid on 31 January for the month of January.

Note: you will not be paid more for doing extra hours at your school.

8.2. ADDITIONAL INCOME

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition (*Nachhilfe*) in English, you are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places (please read the relevant sections of our [Personal Safety leaflet](#)). In general pupils are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word-of-mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils. The going rate for private one-to-one tuition is approximately €10 - €25 per hour depending on how much preparation for the lesson you plan to do and how much

your pupils can afford. Please ensure that any additional work does not conflict with your school timetable.

Should you wish to obtain any other paid work, e.g. working at a festival, teaching work in the public or private sector, you must clear this with the *Bundesland* to which you are appointed beforehand. Each *Land* has slightly different rules on what type of extra work you are permitted to take on, if at all, so it is imperative that you check with them before you accept any other work. If they do not allow it, you must abide by this ruling.



8.3. ERASMUS+ GRANTS

Language Assistants who are completing the assistantship as a year abroad as part of their degree **may** be entitled to an Erasmus+ Traineeship grant. Individuals can benefit from an exchange abroad with Erasmus+ multiple times, either as a student or as a trainee, but the total time abroad (study abroad periods included) may not exceed 12 months within one cycle of study. An undergraduate degree is considered as one cycle. In some cases, students can go for an Erasmus+ traineeship abroad as a recent graduate. In this case, the traineeship must occur within one year of graduation and individuals must apply while still being enrolled in their higher education institution. It is advised to discuss options with your university Erasmus+ / International coordinator as soon as possible to see if you would be eligible for additional Erasmus+ grant funding as a Language Assistant 2020/21.

Please also note that the British Council is not the employer or traineeship provider of English Language Assistants. This means that ***we are unable to complete any Erasmus+ related documents and you should not put the British Council as the traineeship provider.*** You should put the name of your host institution (school) once you receive these details. Our understanding is that there is a one-month grace period following the start of your placement in which to submit any Erasmus+ documents, however individual universities and Erasmus+ coordinators will have their own internal deadlines. Please liaise with the Erasmus+ coordinator at your university should you have any questions.

8.4. CURRENCY AND BANKS

You are advised to wait until you arrive in your town of appointment in Germany before opening a bank account. This will allow you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and choose what will be most convenient for the rest of the year.

It is essential that you open a bank account soon after arriving in Germany in order to receive your payments. You will be paid by your *Bundesland* in Euros.

Assistants are usually entitled to open a normal Girokonto (current account) which provides a cash card; some banks also offer a 'student account'. When opening a bank account, you can ask for a cheque book and a Debitkarte (debit card, otherwise known as an EC-Karte).

NB: Make sure that you do not end up opening a savings account as the *Bundesland* may not be able to pay your allowance into this.

You may find a glossary of German banking terms useful: [German banking terminology](#) and the following website gives some advice on opening a bank account in Germany although it is not specific to language assistants: <https://www.angloinfo.com/how-to/germany/money/banking>

The number of official documents required in order to open a bank account can vary from one bank to another, but you are likely to be asked for the following:

- Passport
- The Anmeldebestätigung you receive from the Einwohnermeldeamt or Bürgeramt
- Your Schulzuweisung

You may be asked for (where required):

- Written confirmation from your landlord of your permanent accommodation
- Your visa and/or residence permit
- Your national/international student identity card (for student bank accounts)

It is advisable to take with you photocopies of the documents listed above (including the relevant pages of your passport) as these may well be requested.

The name of the bank, the *Bankleitzahl* (sort code) and your *Kontonummer* (account number) should be given to the school secretary as soon as possible. The school will inform the *Bundesland* authorities who will arrange payment into your account.

If, at the end of your assistantship, you leave the country before your final salary is paid, you will need to arrange for your German bank to transfer your money to your UK bank account and then close the German account. This transaction is called an *Überweisung*. You will be charged for this.



8.5. LOST OR STOLEN CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS

If a credit or debit card is lost or stolen, immediately call your bank to cancel it. If stolen, the theft should be reported to the police.

8.6. INCOMETAX

A Double Taxation Agreement exists between the UK and Germany. Under this agreement UK assistants are normally exempt from German income tax for a period of up to 2 years. However, it is normally the case that 100% of the remuneration received abroad will be liable for UK tax. It is important to know that the agreement only covers teaching jobs. You might be taxed for any non-teaching jobs and should check how much you are allowed to earn per year without having to pay taxes.

You are reminded that the UK tax year extends from 6 April to 5 April and that income earned in the UK between April and the start of your assistantship may be taken into account when your own or your parents' tax liability is being assessed.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local Inspector of Taxes, **not to the British Council**. We cannot assist you in this area because we are not trained in tax, cannot give advice on how your personal circumstances will affect your tax, and for data protection reasons. Please check www.hmrc.gov.uk for information about who to contact.



9. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

9.1. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s) and local education authority (if applicable) immediately and within 48 hours by telephone. You may be asked to provide a letter from a doctor. This letter should cover the entire duration of the absence and must be sent to the school and, if applicable, local authority as soon as it is issued. Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to the PAD and to the British Council.

Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of the school(s) who is within his/her right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation, your allowance will be discontinued from the first day of your absence.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, the PAD and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you are an undergraduate, you must also inform your university/college in the UK.

9.2. SOLVING PROBLEMS & LINES OF REFERRAL

“When you have a personal problem - be that at work, your health, or problems in the UK - talk to someone as soon as possible, even if it’s not your mentor teacher, speak to any member of staff at the school.”

Conditions in schools in Germany differ from those in the UK. Any difficulties should be discussed with your mentor teacher and/or the teacher of the class concerned in the first instance. If the problem cannot be solved, then talk to the head teacher or get in touch with your contact at the local education authority (if

applicable). Satisfactory solutions can usually be found through such consultations but if the problem remains unresolved, you may contact the PAD (contact details can be found in [section 1.2](#)). The British Council in the UK should only be contacted for advice when all other attempts to solve the issue have been made. Problems are dealt with most quickly and effectively locally and the British Council will instruct you to take the steps mentioned above.

Please refer to the [Line of referral](#).

To avoid problems at school, it is a good idea to form a good working relationship with other members of staff. You should introduce yourself to all members of the English department. It is important to be patient and polite, and to be aware of the work pressures of others. Please remember that it is not good practice to correct the teacher in front of students. You should always be punctual, responsible and prepare adequately for your lessons. Furthermore, meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues.

Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise they will assume everything is fine. The authorities will not be as sympathetic if you suffer in silence and then make a complaint months later. A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in Germany was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low, especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.



10. IN-COUNTRY ADVICE

10.1. PERSONAL SAFETY

It is very important to stick to the same health and safety rules as you would at home and always heed advice given by local people. Please refer to the [Personal Safety Leaflet](#) which provides an emergency telephone number as well as essential guidelines on how to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

We strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided. We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travelers' documentation which can be found here: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Ensure that you regularly check the Germany travel advice page:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/germany>

Please also refer to the FCO website for information regarding sexual attacks: www.gov.uk/government/publications/rape-and-sexual-assault-abroad

10.2. TRAVELLING AROUND GERMANY

[“The 12-hour week is fantastic as you have time to travel and experience the culture.”](#)

Working as a language assistant gives you the great opportunity to travel around Germany and you should make the most of your free time. Germany has a lot to offer and every region is different. You can go walking in the Alps or Harz mountains, enjoy the beaches of the Baltic Sea, explore the lake district of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, go on a scenic journey along the Rhine and discover lively cities such as Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg and Cologne.

Try to avoid coming home every holiday and experience as much of the surrounding area as possible!

Germany.travel: Germany's tourism portal. This is a government-supported tourist information website and provides a lot of information about its tourist destinations, events, food and heritage.

Other useful travel websites are:

- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/germany>
- www.roughguides.com
- www.worldtravelguide.net
- www.tripadvisor.de

10.3. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport in Germany is generally very good with even mid-size cities and large towns having their own metro or tram services, as well as local bus services. The transport system is world-renowned for its punctuality. You should check the area you will be living in to find out more about the local transport available.

The following website provides a lot of information about the public transport system in Germany and how you can get around with ease: <https://www.german-way.com/travel-and-tourism/public-transport-in-germany/>

Please note that in more rural locations, services will generally be more limited and may not run in the evenings or at the weekend.

10.4. TRAINS

Deutsche Bahn: the main website for train travel in Germany is www.bahn.de.

Train travel can be expensive in Germany but there are ways to make it cheaper. The BahnCard (www.bahncard.de) offers a reduction on rail travel within Germany. It is valid for one year and is highly recommended. BahnCard25 offers a 25% reduction whereas BahnCard50 offers a 50% reduction. If you are a student aged 26 or under, you will be able to purchase

the BahnCard at a reduced rate. Please note that you will need your student card when purchasing the BahnCard. If you get Railplus in addition to your BahnCard, you get reductions on fares for other journeys in other European countries. You'll find out more about Railplus on the Deutsche Bahn's website (see link above).

Past assistants have highly recommended getting a BahnCard and to wait until you get to Germany before getting one. However, a few assistants have mentioned that the BahnCard50 does not offer a reduction on advance fares where there is already a 50% reduction. If you wish to book in advance you should regularly check the bahn.de website for offers and reductions. The sooner you book, the cheaper the ticket. Please note that some assistants say that the BahnCard25 offers better deals than the BahnCard50 if you are booking a long time in advance.

You can also purchase *Länder-Tickets* or *Schönes-Wochenende-Tickets* for a day of travel during the weekend or within a particular area. These can be used by groups of up to 5 people and are valid in local trains only (*Nahverkehr*). For more information search for *Angebotsberatung* on www.bahn.de; monthly regional passes are also available.

10.5. MITFAHRGEGELENHEIT

This is a system of shared journeys for a small fee which has become quite popular in recent years and has been suggested by previous assistants. Please be careful when using this system. The website is www.mitfahren.de.

10.6. ISIC CARDS

International Student Identity Cards are available online and from student travel agents such as STA and BUNAC. They can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries throughout Europe. They may also entitle you to certain travel concessions. Please see www.isic.org for further information. Please note that in order to obtain an ISIC card you need to be a full-time student.

For non-students who are under 26 there is the International Youth Travel Card, which can be bought in the same way – see www.statravel.co.uk/youth-identity-card.htm for further information.

All assistants under the age of 30 (or 26 depending on the country or region), can also buy the European Youth Card. Holders of the card are eligible for discounts at a range of places and on a range of services. For more information on the discounts and where you can buy the card, go to www.eyca.org

10.7. PHONING HOME, MOBILES, INTERNET & TV LICENCES

The Country code for Germany is +49.

To phone abroad from Germany the code is 00 followed by the country code. When phoning Germany from abroad the first 0 of the standard number must be omitted (as when dialing an area code in the UK from abroad).

Previous assistants have recommended using pre-paid phone-cards to reduce costs phoning the UK. For mobiles, previous assistants have recommended pre-pay SIMs as contracts are usually for 24 months. Check the conditions of phone and internet contracts carefully before signing – check the cancellation costs! You could take an unlocked handset to Germany so you can buy a new SIM once in-country. There are deals for calls and messages between phones on the same network so you might want to check which networks your closest contacts use so that you can avail of these deals.

Be aware that calls to the UK from a mobile can be expensive. Previous assistants have recommended using Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook messenger as alternatives.

All TV and radio owners are required by law to obtain a licence. Forms are available online (<https://www.rundfunkbeitrag.de/>) or at post offices.

11. TEACHING TIPS AND RESOURCES

“Always show a willingness to help out the students and the staff when possible. Be patient with any last-minute changes and always have something prepared for a plan B.”

11.1. OBSERVATION PERIOD

When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as to get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English.

Try to note the following:

- How the teacher starts and ends the lesson;
- How the teacher speaks to pupils;
- How the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity;
- What the teacher’s attitude is to pupil errors and error correction; and
- How the teacher controls disruptive behavior, lateness and lack of effort.

11.2. TEACHING MATERIALS

One way of making language learning real for your pupils is bringing authentic materials from the UK into the classroom. Take the opportunity to collect a variety of resources while you are still at home.

Past assistants have found that the following materials worked well: Photos of family and friends and your home town, lots of postcards, examples of UK coins and notes, train tickets and timetables, stamps, posters and tea towels to decorate walls, Christmas cards and crackers, posters and games, UK TV programmes and listings, magazines and local newspapers, CDs, photos of school uniforms, a school timetable and school report, flashcards, word searches, maps, tourist brochures, UK food (marmite, jelly, chocolate, custard, mince pies, gravy granules, etc), adverts, menus, cartoons, comic books,

DVDs, YouTube (e.g. Ready Steady Cook for catering students), simple recipes e.g. scones, recordings of the weather forecast, London tube map, tapes of friends’ accents and conversations, bingo, Taboo etc.

The more materials you can find the better. Think about what worked well for you as a language student and about which items you find interesting when you are in a foreign country. You can also ask your host school(s) whether there is something specific they would like you to bring and to find out about topics you are likely to be asked to cover during your assistantship.

11.3. BRITISH COUNCIL TEACHING RESOURCES

The British Council produces and co-produces a range of resources specifically for Language Assistants. Making use of these will help you greatly to deliver interesting and useful classroom activities and will support you in solving problems in the classroom. The British Council is also closely involved with the teaching of English abroad. Local branches develop useful resources and organise a range of cultural activities, which may be of interest to you and your school. For information on forthcoming events, go to <http://www.britishcouncil.de>.

11.4. LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS MANUAL

‘Language Assistant’ by Clare Lavery is a resource book designed for language assistants and provides information on all aspects of the role. Please read this carefully as it is extremely useful in preparing you for your assistantship. <https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/attachments/books-ela-manual.pdf>.

11.5. SCHOOL LINKING

Please note that many foreign schools are anxious to establish links with UK counterparts in order to share information and arrange pupil exchanges. Assistants are encouraged to help in whatever way possible in establishing such links

and there is information and guidance on the British Council website:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/partner>

You may also wish to find out if your school has any eTwinning projects or set up a project yourself. eTwinning can be accessed via www.etwinning.net. eTwinning is a free online community for schools in Europe which allows schools to find partner schools and collaborate on online projects within a secure network and platform. Through participating in eTwinning, your school will be able to:

- enrich learning and motivation of pupils (aged between 3 and 19) and staff;
- access high quality professional development and ready-made resources;
- raise standards across the whole school community;
- gain recognition for commitment through eTwinning awards; and
- search for an Erasmus+ partner to carry out projects with and apply for mobility funding.

11.6. BILINGUAL PROGRAMMES

Many schools in Germany are implementing bilingual programmes. You may find yourself supporting teachers who teach science or PE in English. In some instances students need to go through external exams in the school (PET from Cambridge University, GESE from Trinity College London, etc). It is one of the roles of the language assistants to improve students' oral fluency and conversation skills.

www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/preliminary-for-schools/

11.7. TEACHING ENGLISH WEBSITE

TeachingEnglish.org is an online resource center produced jointly by the British Council and the BBC: www.teachingenglish.org.uk. On the site you will have access to:

- Teaching tips
- Essential UK: Seasonal lesson plans based around UK topics
- Primary tips: Help getting started with primary-level students
- Classroom games

11.8. USEFUL TEACHING WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids
www.learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org
www.cartoonstock.com
www.tes.co.uk
www.puzzlemaker.com
www.bbc.co.uk
www.slideshare.net
www.prezi.com
www.macmillanenglish.com
www.eslcafe.com
www.eslpartyland.com
www.eslgold.com
www.esl-lab.com
www.eslflow.com
www.eslflashcards.com
www.onestopenglish.com
www.prezi.com
www.bogglesworldesl.com
www.royal.gov.uk
www.projectbritain.com
www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc
www.developingteachers.com
www.lyrics.com
www.busyteacher.org
www.letsingit.com
www.visitbritain.com
www.visitscotland.com
www.discovernorthernireland.com
www.eslprintables.com
www.cambridgeesol.org/teach
www.enchantedlearning.com

11.9. BOOKLIST

You are not obliged to purchase any materials, however some assistants have commented that some of the books below are useful for English Language Assistants; particularly those who may wish to engage in private tutoring or pursue a career in language teaching in the future. Also look out for the series of handbooks and source books for language teachers published by CUP, Longman, Macmillan and OUP.

Dictionaries

- BBC English Dictionary (BBC English/Harper Collins)
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman)
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Oxford University Press)
- Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Longman)

Grammar Reference Books

- A Practical English Grammar (A.J. Thomson & A.V. Martinet, Oxford University Press)
- Current English Grammar (S. Chalker, Phoenix)
- Basic English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Practical English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Discover English (R. Bolitho & B. Tomlinson, Macmillan Heinemann)
- English Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- Advanced Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- How English Works (Michael Swan and Catherine Walter, Oxford University Press)
- Learner English (Michael Swan & Bernard Smith (eds.) Cambridge University Press)

Basic Methodology Books

- The Practice of English Language Teaching J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach English J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach Grammar S. Thornbury Longman
- How to Use the Internet in ELT D. Teeler & P. Gray Longman
- One to One Peter Wilberg Language Teaching Publications



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12. SPOTLIGHT ON GERMANY

The German population is now around 82 million, making it the most populous country in the EU, second most populous in Europe, and 16th most populous in the world. There are also about 5 million Germans who live overseas. The Euro is the official currency.

Germany is a highly urbanized country, the biggest cities being Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt and Stuttgart. It is also home to the Ruhr - a polycentric urban area in Nordrhein-Westfalen, the third largest urban area in the EU.

German is the official language of Germany but there are many regional dialects which are prevalent in the different *Länder*.

12.1. REGIONS

Germany is divided into 16 federal states (including two city states - Berlin and Hamburg) with each state having its own state constitution and autonomy. They are called the *Bundesländer* and together make up the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Federal Republic of Germany). Each *Land* (federal state) has responsibility for the administration of education within the state. See below a list of the *Länder* (in German) with their abbreviations:

- Baden-Württemberg (BW) Saarland (SL)
- Bayern (BY) Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV)
- Berlin (BE) Nordrhein-Westfalen (NW)
- Brandenburg (BB) Rheinland-Pfalz (RP)
- Bremen (HB) Sachsen (SN)
- Hamburg (HH) Sachsen-Anhalt (ST)
- Hesse (HE) Schleswig-Holstein (SH)
- Niedersachsen (NI) Thüringen (TH)

12.2. NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Germany has many official public holidays every year, some observed nationwide, some local (see parenthesis). In all cases you should check public holidays with your school. The following holidays will be observed in 2020/21:

- 3 Oct: German Unity Day
- 31 Oct: Reformation Day (BB, MV, SN, ST, TH only)

- 1 Nov: All Saints' Day (BW, BY, NW, RP, SL)
- 21 Nov: Repentance Day (SH only)
- 25 Dec: Christmas Day
- 26 Dec: St Stephen's Day
- 1 Jan: New Year's Day
- 6 Jan: Three Kings Day (BW, BY, ST)
- 19 Apr: Good Friday
- 22 Apr: Easter Monday
- 1 May: Labour Day
- 30 May: Ascension Day
- 10 Jun: Whit Monday
- 20 Jun: Corpus Christi (BW, BY, HE, NW, RP, SL)

12.3. EMERGENCY SERVICES IN GERMANY

In any emergency: call 112

Medical assistance: call 112

Fire Brigade: call 112

Police: call 110

Urgent assistance from the British Embassy:

Tel: +49 (0) 30 20 45 70

British Consular Emergency Service for any emergency queries at any time of any day. Leave a message and someone will normally get back to you within one hour of your call.

12.4. BRITISH EMBASSY AND CONSULATE

For up-to-date British Embassy and consulate contact details in Germany please refer to: www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/find-an-embassy. Please take note of the address of the British Embassy in Germany below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own Consulate/Embassies in Germany.

The British Embassy Wilhelmstraße 70/71
10117 Berlin, Germany

Tel: +49 (0) 30 20 45 70
email: ukingermany@fco.gov.uk

British Consulates-General are also provided in:

- Düsseldorf

British Consulate General Dusseldorf
Oststraße 86
40210 Dusseldorf
Germany

e: ukingermany@fco.gov.uk
t: +49 (0) 211 94480

Open Mo. – Th., 9am – 5pm;
Fr., 9am – 4.30pm

- München

British Consulate General Munich
Möhlstraße 5
81675 Munich
Germany

e: ukingermany@fco.gov.uk
t: +49 (0) 89 211090

Open Mo. – Th., 9am – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm;
Fr., 9am – 12pm, 1pm – 3.30pm



13. OTHER INFORMATION

13.1. DRUGS

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for drug offences which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

13.2. POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for taking part in unlawful political demonstrations which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

13.3. SPOUSES / PARTNERS / DEPENDANTS

Assistants should note that the allowance is intended to provide for one person only. However, if an assistant's spouse remains in the UK and is unemployed, he/she may be barred from income support or be required to refund whatever was received as such since the start of the assistantship. Enquiries should be made well in advance in order to prevent financial difficulties from arising during a period of appointment.

13.4. REFERENCES

Please note the British Council is not the employer of UK assistants abroad and should not be given as a referee in future job applications. In general, the head of the school would be the most appropriate referee.

13.5. SOCIAL MEDIA

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an ELA. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you say on your wall and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behaviour. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school. It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

13.6. USEFUL WEBSITES/INFORM ATION

You can read a case study written by former assistants on our website here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-many-languages-do-you-need-learn-year-abroad>

Other useful websites include:

- www.thirdyearabroad.com
- www.gov.uk/government/world/germany
- www.britishcouncil.de/
- www.google.de
- www.welt.de
- www.spiegel.de
- www.web.de

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