



For International Visitors – Finding the Right Visa

Tourists – Interns – Short-term-Students – Doctoral Students – Visiting Scholars – Visitors from Countries without a Visa Requirement

International visitors coming to the University of Heidelberg for several months must often figure out ahead of time what type of visa they need to obtain from their German embassy or consulate. If you are planning a longer-term stay in Germany, you must expect a waiting period of at least 6 weeks for your visa to be processed by the embassy. The various types of visas can differ greatly as to the application procedures and entry and work regulations, therefore; the host institute or project leader should use the following information as a guideline when writing the letter of invitation.

► **Tourist visa/Schengen visa/for the purpose of a visit/ for business purposes**

The following documents must usually be submitted with the visa application:

- a letter of invitation
- proof of the necessary financial resources to cover living costs while in Germany
- proof of health insurance

In some individual cases, additional documents may be required. Please be aware that:

- this visa is valid for a stay of a maximum of 3 months in Germany.
- this visa cannot be extended and cannot be changed into a visa valid for a scientific or academic visit to Germany

► **Visa for an internship**

The Federal Employment Office and the German Embassy define interns also to be:

- students who are registered at a university in their home country OR
- doctoral students who are carrying out their doctoral training in their home country

AND who come to Germany for several months for research purposes or to carry out practical training in connection with their studies or doctoral training.

In addition to the 6-week visa application process, the internship must be registered with the Federal Employment Office, in accordance with §2 Nr. 3 BeschV, and the host institute must submit extensive documentation to this office. More details are available at:

- www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/Veroeffentlichungen/Merkblatt-Sammlung/Merkblatt-Studienfachbezogene-Praktika-i.pdf (in German) **or**
- www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_226324/Navigation/zentral/Unternehmen/Arbeitskraeftebedarf/Beschaeftigung/Auslaender/Studenten-Praktikanten/Studenten-Praktikanten-Nav.html (in German)

Therefore, it is generally better to apply for a visa for study purposes and to register at the University of Heidelberg as a short-term student (see information on short-term student status).

▶ **Visa for study purposes with short-term student status**

Students can register with short-term status at the University of Heidelberg in order to carry out a concrete exchange program or as a “free mover”. Additionally, it is possible to register as a short-term student in preparation for doctoral training to be carried out at the University of Heidelberg or at a university in the student’s home country.

To apply for a visa you will need to submit:

- a letter of invitation from your host institute or project leader stating your intention to register as a student at the University of Heidelberg and/or written confirmation of a reading desk in the institute library. If the institute has agreed to cover tuition and living costs (by means of a scholarship or work contract), the letter of invitation should confirm this fact and state a concrete sum and time period. **OR**
- a letter of acceptance from the International Office of the University of Heidelberg. You must apply for admission ahead of time in order to receive a letter of acceptance.

▶ **Visa for doctoral training**

To apply for a visa you will need to submit:

- a letter of invitation/acceptance from a doctoral supervisor **OR**
- if you plan to register at the University of Heidelberg, the letter of acceptance from the international Office of the University. Application for admission must be made in advance.

If the doctoral training is being funded by the host institute through an employment contract or fellowship, the letter of invitation should confirm this fact and give a concrete sum and time period for the funding.

▶ **Visa for visiting scholars**

To apply for a visa you will need to submit:

- a letter of invitation from your host institute or project leader stating the purpose and time period of the visit.

If the institute has agreed to contribute to the costs of the stay (by means of an employment contract or fellowship), the letter of invitation should give a concrete sum and time period. The letter should also state any other services that will be provided, such as accommodations or health/liability insurance.

▶ **Visitors from countries outside the EU without a visa requirement**

Visitors from countries outside the EU that are not subject to a visa requirement can enter and stay in Germany for 3 months without a visa. However, this type of travel is not recommended for visitors coming with any kind of an employment contract, fee contract or contract for services if the length of the contract could extend beyond three months. In such cases, visitors should contact the embassy prior to coming to Germany.

This does not apply for nationals of Island, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland as well as nationals from Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand and USA. Citizens of these countries can apply for a residence permit after their arrival in Germany at a local Foreigners’ Registration Office.