

# Handbook for international doctoral candidates

Winter 2021/22



# Contents

Contents	2	Getting started – first steps after arrival	13
Herzlich Willkommen – Welcome!	3	Moving in and residence registration	14
The University of Münster (WWU)	4	Enrolment	15
Your PhD at Münster University	5	Student ID card	16
Your new roles, rights, and duties	6	Banking and taxes	17
Academic key dates and public holidays	7	Visa and residence permit	18
Dissertation and defence	8	Insurances	19
Good scientific practice	9	Life in Münster	20
The WWU Graduate Centre	10	Costs of living	21
PhD representatives	11	Accommodation	22
University services	12	Transportation	23
		German courses	24
		Medical care	25
		Leisure time	26

# Herzlich Willkommen - Welcome!

Dear doctoral candidates,

we warmly welcome you at the University of Münster – one of Germany’s biggest and oldest universities. It is our pleasure that you have chosen to undertake your PhD programme here and we look forward in supporting you during the next exciting years.

As a doctoral candidate you will perform new research – be it in a graduate school or simply under the guidance of your supervisor – and you will develop your professional skills at an incomparable level.

We encourage you to go beyond: try new things, make new friends, enjoy your life in Münster, and grow into your better self!

*Your Graduate Centre Team*



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*Sabine Schneider  
Coordinator International Doctoral Candidates*

# The University of Münster (WWU)



4220 doctoral candidates



800 PhD graduations per year

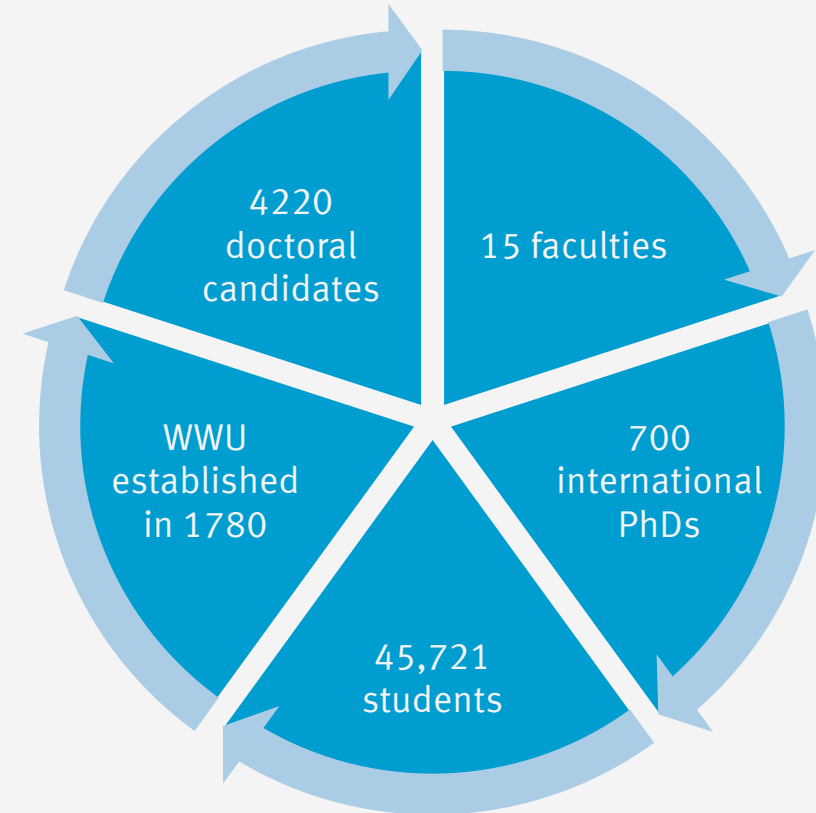


30 structured doctoral programmes

2 clusters of excellence



holistic support



# Your PhD at Münster University

- You will either pursue your PhD individually under the guidance of a professor (your supervisor) or within a structured programme (graduate school)
- Normally, the PhD is pursued in full-time
- On average, it takes 4,5 years to complete the PhD
- Some doctoral candidates are employed by the university, others have an external scholarship, or use their own funds to finance the PhD
- The requirements on courses, the thesis, the defence, etc. can be found [here](#)
- For research or study related matters you should contact your supervisor or the graduate school
- If you have other questions, feel free to contact the [Graduate Centre](#)

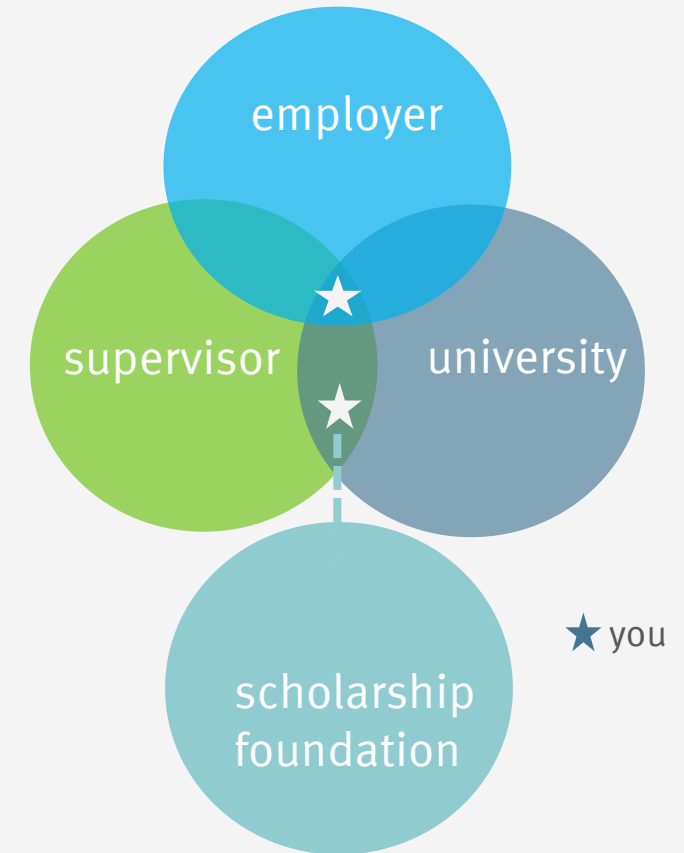


# Your new roles, rights, and duties

As a doctoral candidate you are in a very special position. Your role, and thereby your rights and duties, are mostly threefold.

First, most doctoral candidates are enrolled so they are **members of the university** (students). Second, all doctoral candidates have a **supervision agreement** with a supervisor (researchers under individual guidance). Some doctoral candidates are also **employees** of the university, or **scholarship holders**.

Your rights and duties might be different within these roles, e.g. as an employed doctoral candidate you might be expected to teach, whereas your scholarship provider might require updates of your advancement. Sometimes you might also find challenges, e.g. when you have teaching responsibilities but need to go on fieldwork abroad for your own research.



If you are in doubt about your rights and duties, you can contact various university institutions for support.

# Academic key dates and public holidays

Academic year	
<b>Winter Semester</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> of October – 31 <sup>st</sup> of March
Enrolment 15 <sup>th</sup> August – 15 <sup>th</sup> November	
<b>Summer Semester</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> of April – 30 <sup>th</sup> of September
Enrolment 15 <sup>th</sup> February – 15 <sup>th</sup> of May	

Public holidays	
3.10.21	Day of German unity
1.11.21	All Saints
25. & 26.12.21	Christmas
1.01.22	New Year
15.04.22	Good Friday
18.04.22	Easter Monday
1.05.22	Labour Day
26.05.22	Ascension Day
6.06.22	Whit Monday
16.06.22	Corpus Christi



# Dissertation and defence

Doctoral candidates demonstrate their ability in scientific research by a written doctoral thesis or a cumulative thesis.

- The thesis must meet specific formal criteria, which are defined in the **examination regulations** of the relevant departments.
- It is recommended to have a closer look at the examination regulations to be informed about the rights and duties of a doctoral candidate.
- The thesis does not have to be written in German as you and your supervisor can agree on another language.
- The doctoral examination process includes an oral examination, the *disputation*, which takes between one and two hours.

## Publishing

- In Germany, the doctoral title is only awarded to the candidate, once the thesis has been published. Information on publishing at the University of Münster may be found here: <https://www.uni-muenster.de/Publizieren/> [de]

## Cumulative thesis

- Some departments at the University of Münster allow doctoral candidates to complete their doctorate by combining several essays published in prestigious specialist journals. This is called a cumulative thesis and is an alternative to a single monograph and most common in the natural sciences or medicine.

Need to prepare for your defense? The Graduate Centre offers the workshop **thesis defence training** in English.



# Good scientific practice

Based on a Senate resolution, the University of Münster issued a code of ethics on 7 January 2002, entitled "Rules of good scientific practice", which obliges researchers and academic staff of the University to exercise fairness and honesty in academic work. Generally, the rules of good scientific practice are:

1. to conduct the work according to academic and scientific conventions
2. to provide correct information
3. to safeguard intellectual property
4. to do nothing that hinders or undermines the research activities of other academics.

Further information.

The Graduate Centre offers seminars on good scientific practice.



# The WWU Graduate Centre

The Graduate Centre is the central point of contact for current and future doctoral candidates and postdocs at the University of Münster. Offering a wide range of support services, the WWU Graduate Centre provides individualised advice, training in career advancement and planning, networking opportunities, and short-term stipends.



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Internationalisation is key, therefore we regularly organise [the European Doctoral Summer School](#) with our partners University of Maastricht and University of York.



Our ecological community garden “[InchbyInch](#)” aims to let you grow your roots in Münster and Germany.

The project MünsterXchange aims to connect international doctoral candidates with senior citizens of Münster – building bridges across cultures and generations.

Sign up for our [welcome events](#) at the beginning of each semester!

# PhD representatives

The PhD representatives (Promovierendenvertretung) is a group of three elected doctoral candidates who are representing the interests of all PhDs. They support doctoral candidates of all disciplines at the University of Münster on diverse issues, such as funding or supervision challenges. They also organise informal networking events – where you can meet doctoral candidates for a drink or a chat – regularly.

Sign up for the representatives' newsletter [here](#) to be informed about upcoming events, elections, and relevant news.

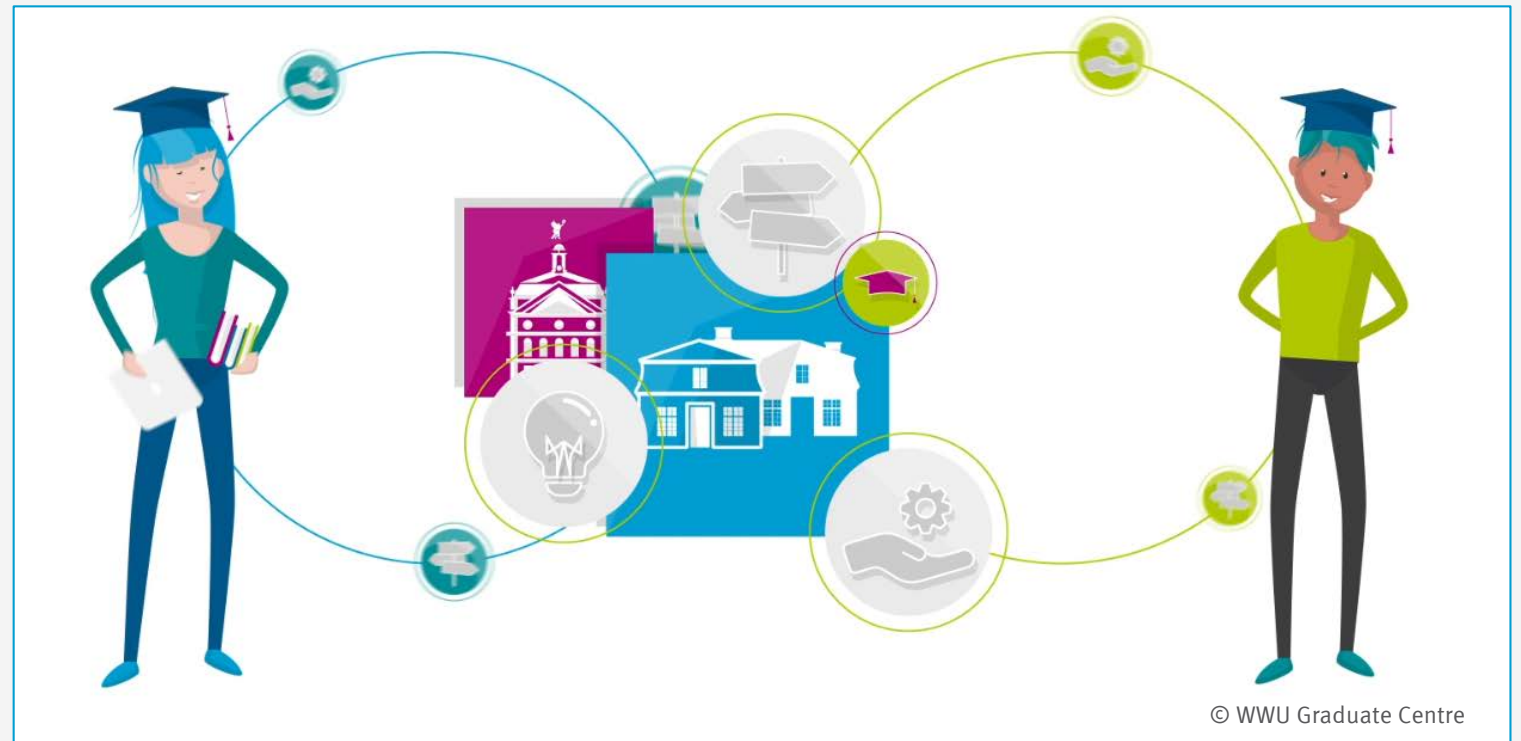


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# University services

Books, prints, sports – here you can get an overview of Münster University's services for students.

The university also offers research funding support as well as academic support services.



# Getting started – first steps after arrival



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# Moving in and residence registration

After you arrive in Germany, you must register with the local citizens' office within 14 days and provide your address to the office. Schedule an appointment online.

Where: Citizens Office  
Stadthaus 1 -  
Klemensstraße 10  
48143 Münster

Don't forget to bring:

- Your personal ID/passport
- The landlord's confirmation for your tenancy "Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung"

Yay, you have a place to stay in Münster! Despite all enthusiasm, keep a cool mind.

When moving into your new place, please make sure you understand the contract, in particular the conditions for the deposit and any possible extra costs. Normally, there is a handover protocol – ask for it, keep your copy.

## **Broadcasting License Fee (“Rundfunkbeitrag”)**

Every household in Germany has to pay a fixed monthly rate for public television and radio broadcasting. If you have an apartment for yourself, you will need to pay the fee. If you live in a shared flat, ask who is paying the fee, share the costs, and register accordingly. Please don't ignore any post as the fees may be asked from you even retrospectively!

# Enrolment

So you have now successfully completed the online enrolment form and sent the required documents to WWU by post. You will get your confirmation of the enrolment (either PDF or via post). Within two weeks you will receive a letter with further instructions and your WWU login details. To finish the process, you need to:

**1. Pay the semester fee (approx. 300€)**

- Go to [www.uni-muenster.de/stu](http://www.uni-muenster.de/stu) and log in (account details on the back of the paper)
- Choose “Studiumsverwaltung” (Administration of Study) at the left navigation, then “Bezahlen und Rückmelden” (Payment and Re-Registration). Now you will see how much you need to transfer, the payment details and a 13-digits reference number. Make sure that you transfer enough money to cover any currency rates. **REMEMBER!** Repeat this step each semester on time and check your university e-mail account regularly.

**2. Upload your photo here.**

Once you have done this, you will receive your student ID card to your correspondence address. Now you are fully enrolled!

# Student ID card



By presenting your student ID card, you identify yourself as a student at the University of Münster. Your student ID also entitles you to concessions at public facilities, such as the municipal swimming pools.

## **Library user ID card**

Your student ID also doubles as a library user ID for use at the University Library (ULB). On the back of your student ID card, you will find your personal ULB user number printed under the bar code. For security reasons, this ULB user number must be activated one time only. You activate your card by simply logging in to [WWU Self-Service portal](#)

## **Copy card**

With your student ID card, you can print and make copies on any of the 300 multifunctional devices available in the University's libraries, institutes and central buildings.

## **Mensa card**

Your student ID lets you purchase meals and beverages at all dining halls and bistros at the University at the student rate.

Find out more about the use as a [copy and mensa card](#).



# Banking & Taxes

You will need a German bank account to pay your rent or university fees but also to receive your salary if you are employed.

Most banks offer free bank accounts for students (sometimes with an age limit). Compare the conditions and costs from different banks. Check whether the bank has conveniently located ATMs. Paying with a visa card is less common than in other countries, therefore make sure to get a EC card. It's also better to always have some cash with you since some shops might only accept cash.

When opening a bank account bring your passport/ID card, certificate of enrolment, your residence permit card (if you already have it), and a confirmation of your registration in the city.

Your tax number will be sent to you via post once your address is registered. It is sent only once, so keep it forever!

If you are employed, your taxes and social contributions will be deducted from your gross salary automatically.

If you have a scholarship, you normally don't need to pay taxes.

At the end of the year, you may file a tax return to declare any expenses (e.g. costs to commute to work, childcare, etc.).

Contact the HR department if you have questions about taxes or other employment related concerns.

# Visa and residence permit

If you are a doctoral candidate from a Non-EU country, you need a visa to enter Germany. The visa allows you to enter the country and is commonly valid for 90 days. In most cases, you will need to get your visa transformed into a residence permit. Please request an appointment online before your visa expires and keep in mind that you need to bring several documents to this appointment.

Most doctoral candidates will apply for a visa/residence permit with the purpose of study (§16b). In a few cases, a visa/residence permit with the purpose of research (§18d) is an alternative.

## Study visa (§16b)

If none of the points at the right apply to you, you need a student visa irrespective of how you finance your PhD (scholarship, self-financed, employment at WWU)

## Research visa (§18d)

- You are a visiting doctoral candidate enrolled for a PhD abroad
- You are employed for research that is not part of your PhD
- You have been invited for a research stay before starting the PhD

Confused? Ask the Graduate Centre for advice: [internationals.gc@uni-muenster.de](mailto:internationals.gc@uni-muenster.de).

# Insurances

## Health insurance in Germany

Health insurance is mandatory throughout your stay.

As an employee, you are eligible for public health insurance. Your employer will register you. If you would like to choose the provider, you will have to notify your employer when signing the contract.

Unless you or your partner are employees, and hence eligible for public health insurance, you will have to take up private health insurance.

If you have a valid health insurance from another EU country, you might be eligible for public health insurance. However, it is quite expensive and in most cases not necessary.

## Personal liability insurance

In Germany, people are liable for accidents and damages they cause. Even though the liability insurance is optional, it is regarded as very important and useful. DAAD scholarship holders receive this insurance automatically.

## Accident insurance

Accidents which cause you damages such as disability and prevent you to work can be covered by accident insurance.

Further information [here](#).

# Life in Münster



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# Costs of living

Estimated costs:

- ✓ € 300-450 for a room
- ✓ € 100 for health insurance
- ✓ € 160 for food
- ✓ € 65 for leisure activities
- ✓ € 24 for books
- ✓ € 48 for clothing
- ✓ € 17,50 broadcasting fee (compulsory)
- ✓ € 14,50 for telephone/internet

€ 853 per month are approx. needed for living expenses. However, the costs can vary depending on your personal expenses.

Please also keep in mind, that you have to pay a social contribution every semester (about € 300).

Also, the costs right after your arrival are higher: e.g. the deposit for your room, buying/renting a bike, kitchen equipment etc.

More information on costs in Germany can be found [here](#).

# Accommodation

Münster is a growing city with lots of students. Be persistent and patient while looking for accommodation. Network to improve your chances.

Doctoral candidates at Münster University may apply for an apartment:

- in the student halls of residence (enrolled PhDs)
- or in the University's Guest Houses (maximum of the rental period: 1 year)

If you would rather rent privately, be it the whole apartment or a room in a shared flat search on:

- the BlackBoard of the students' union executive committee (AStA) of the University of Münster
- Check our **guide with tips** on **how and where** to look in the housing market.

Further information is provided by

- the city of Münster
- WWU Graduate Centre: internationals.gc@uni-muenster.de

# Transportation

The most popular and fastest transportation within Münster is the **bicycle**. Make sure to purchase a bike with functioning lights and brakes. Be sure to cycle according to the rules to avoid fines. You can find many second-hand bicycles on social media, in the local newspaper nadann and on ebay-kleinanzeigen.de. More information on cycling in Münster.



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Pier

Cycling is not your cup of tea? Don't worry, once you are enrolled, you will be able to use regional trains and busses in North Rhine-Westphalia with your semester ticket **for free!** The semester ticket is not valid on high-speed trains (IC and ICE). You simply log in to WWU Self-Service portal, download your ticket and print it.

## German courses

- As an enrolled doctoral candidate you can take German courses **for free** at the Language Centre (Sprachenzentrum) of the WWU
- The Language Centre also offers **fee-based courses** for researchers 270€ (60h).
- Find information of free courses [here](#). Registration is only open few weeks before the start of the courses.
- For most beginner courses you only need to log in with your student account.
- Before enrolment for advanced courses, you need to take a C-Test. For a date check here: [C-TEST](#).

If you are interested in more intensive-learning courses within a shorter period, private language courses may be interesting for you:

[Wissenschaftliche Internationale Partnerschaften WiPDaF e.V.](#)

[Inlingua](#)

[Kapito](#)

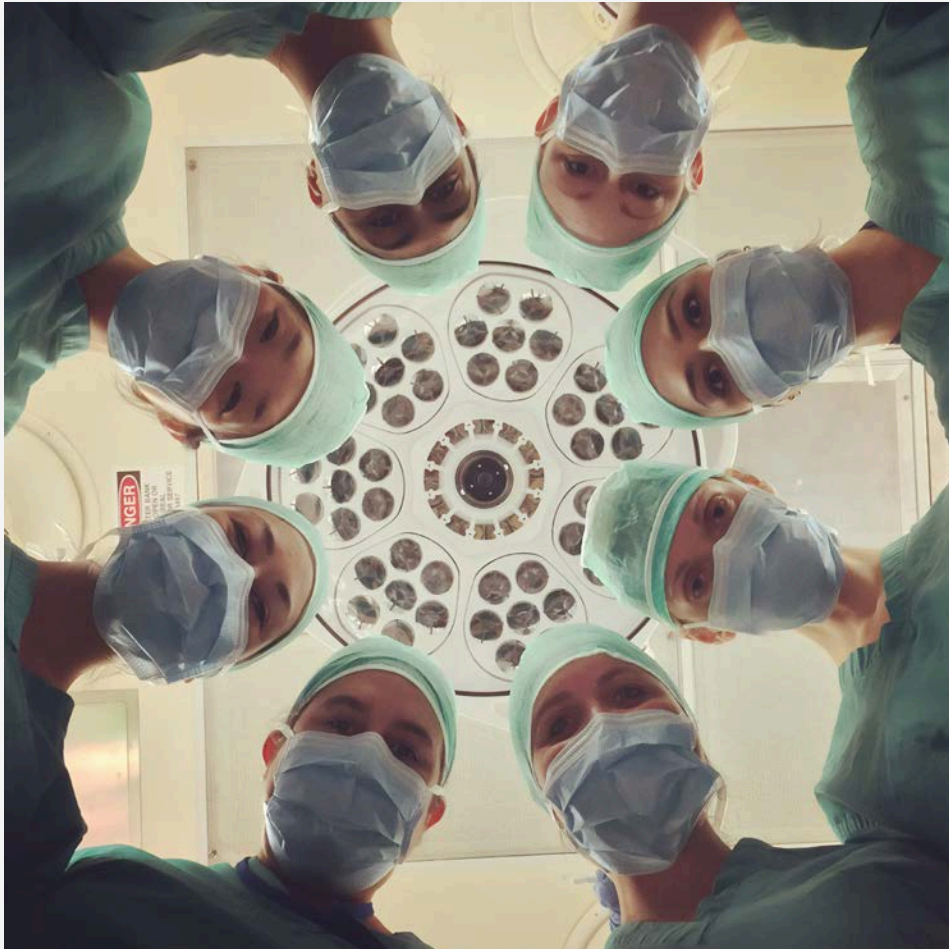
[Lernstudio Barbarossa](#)

[Volkshochschule Münster](#)

[Dolmetscher Institut Münster](#)



## Medical care



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The health system in Germany helps you out in many ways:

For medicine without prescription, you can ask for advice at a local pharmacy. Yet, some medicine needs prescription. Therefore, it is recommended to have a general practitioner (*Hausarzt*) for any cases concerning your well-being.

Your *Hausarzt* can send you for a further check up to the specialist (e.g. orthopedist, the cardiologist...).

To find an English speaking *Hausarzt* you may use this [website](#) and select “Fremdsprachenkenntnisse” in further settings.

### COVID Update:

Until December 31<sup>st</sup>, you can get tested for free in one of the [public testing centres](#), if you have been fully vaccinated with a vaccine that is not authorized in Germany (e.g. Sputnik V or SinoVac): You need to bring your ID, certificate of study, and proof of vaccination.

### Emergency numbers:

Fire department/Ambulance - call 112

Police - call 110

# Leisure time

## How to get informed about upcoming events

[nadann](#)

[City of Münster](#)

Social media

## Cinema & Theater

[Cineplex](#)

[Cinema & Kurbelkiste](#)

[Theater](#)

## Best of Münster

[Botanical Garden](#)

[LWL Museum](#)

[Local market on Wed + Sat](#)

Detailed and regularly updated information: [restaurants](#), [shops](#)

## Impressum

WWU Graduate Centre  
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September 2021



Gefördert vom DAAD aus Mitteln des Auswärtigen Amtes (AA)

DAAD



Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
Auswärtiges Amt