



## **Pre-Departure Handbook**

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<i>What to Expect Moving Forward</i> .....	1
Who Do I Contact When? .....	1
Who Are the On-Site Staff Members? .....	1
The AJY Study Center .....	2
<i>What Do I Still Have to Do Before My Departure?</i> .....	3
<i>How Can I Prepare for My Semester in Heidelberg?</i> .....	4
<i>What Will Be Taken Care of by AJY Staff?</i> .....	4
<i>Health Insurance Coverage</i> .....	5
<i>Internet Access in Heidelberg</i> .....	5
<i>Cellphones</i> .....	5
<i>Withdrawing Money</i> .....	6
<i>Traveling In and Around Heidelberg</i> .....	6

## What to Expect Moving Forward

Now that you have been accepted to the AJY program you will start receiving Pre-Departure Information from AJY Staff in Germany. The most pertinent information can be found in this Handbook, but make sure to be checking your emails regularly for updates from us!

### **Who Do I Contact When?**

Up until now, you will have primarily been in touch with the AJY office at Heidelberg University in Tiffin. As your study abroad semester approaches, you will most likely have questions you will want to direct at us, the AJY staff in Heidelberg, Germany.

Contact the ...	if you have questions regarding ...
<b>American Office:</b> Tel. +1 (419) 448-2953 Email: <a href="mailto:ajy@heidelberg.edu">ajy@heidelberg.edu</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Your application</li><li>- Pre-Departure Forms</li><li>- Payment &amp; Billing</li></ul>
<b>German Office:</b> Tel. +49 6221 23874 Email: <a href="mailto:ajy@uni-heidelberg.de">ajy@uni-heidelberg.de</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Your semester in Heidelberg</li><li>- Academics and courses</li><li>- Your room and what to bring</li><li>- Internships and extracurricular activities</li></ul>

### **Who Are the On-Site Staff Members?**



**Martin Kley, Ph.D.**

Resident Director

[m.kley@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:m.kley@uni-heidelberg.de), [mkley@heidelberg.edu](mailto:mkley@heidelberg.edu)

Martin Kley studied at the universities of Augsburg, Pittsburgh, and Texas at Austin. Following his Ph.D. in German Studies, he was Assistant Professor of German at Gettysburg College from 2008 to 2013. Upon returning to his native Germany, Martin served first as Academic Director and then Center Director for CIEE's Global Institute Berlin. Combining his pedagogical and scholarly background with administrative experience in the field of international education, Martin works with AJY participants in various capacities – as teacher, academic advisor, mentor, and liaison to the University of Heidelberg.



**Cara Meysen**

Program Coordinator

[cmeysen@heidelberg.edu](mailto:cmeysen@heidelberg.edu)

Cara Meysen is currently pursuing her Master in Geography at the University of Heidelberg. As a German American, her research interests primarily include the United States and social and cultural geography. She spent a high school semester abroad at the Conserve School in Wisconsin and a year abroad at St. Mary's College of Maryland. In her capacity as Program Coordinator, Cara works closely with the Resident Director in helping students find their bearing in Heidelberg outside of academics. She enjoys sharing her hometown with the students and showing them all the possibilities a semester abroad in Heidelberg can bring them. Additionally, Cara oversees alumni relations and AJY's social media presence.

AJY Staff also includes **Program Assistants** Darlene Rieth, Julia Pinkow and Tom Drechsler, as well as several adjunct faculty. To read more about their backgrounds, visit the [AJY website](#).

**The AJY Study Center**

The Study Center is the hub of AJY life in Heidelberg and serves several functions. It houses our offices, three classrooms, a fully equipped computer room, as well as a student lounge and a kitchen with a balcony. The Intensive Pre-Semester Language Course is taught at the AJY Center during the month preceding each semester, as are all other AJY courses. The Study Center is also used for AJY meetings or events, and students have access to the classrooms and lounges to study, read and mingle. Because we are a fully immersive program, there is a "German-only" policy at the Study Center.

Each student has a mailbox at the Study Center. If you would like to have your mail sent here, please use the following address:

**Your Name**  
**c/o American Junior Year**  
**Hauptstraße 133**  
**69117 Heidelberg, Germany**

We advise against receiving packages from the US (such as care packages sent from your family)! Upon their delivery you will have to pay a customs fee which can cost more than the original price of the items in the package. **More information can be found on the [Deutsche Post website](#).**

You will be receiving your address for your room in the student dorm **approximately one month before your arrival**. Until then, you are more than welcome to use AJY's address for any official purposes.

## **What Do I Still Have to Do Before My Departure?**

1. Submit your confirmation form and deposit (**if applicable**) to the AJY office in Tiffin, Ohio by the deadline stated on your acceptance letter.
2. Submit all Pre-Departure Paperwork (listed below).
3. Make sure you have a valid passport! US citizens do not need a visa for their stay in Germany. Passport applications and instructions can be downloaded from the State Department website. Non-US citizens should contact the German consulate to find out their visa requirements.
4. Talk to your physician about any medication you are taking and make sure to bring enough for your entire semester abroad. Some medication might not be available for refill in Germany.
5. Book a flight to Frankfurt Airport (FRA) and a return flight home. You can find your semester's arrival and departure dates on the AJY website.
  - a. If you are arriving on Arrival Day, please make sure your flight arrives in Frankfurt between 8-10 am, otherwise a pick-up at the airport by AJY Staff cannot be guaranteed.
  - b. We recommend booking a direct flight to Frankfurt as this is less complicated and more environmentally friendly.
  - c. Early arrival before the official start of the semester can be arranged and is beneficial as it gives you a few days to settle and get over jetlag before orientation and classes start.  
**Please contact AJY staff before booking a flight if you would like to arrive early!**
  - d. Due to visa requirements, your return flight should be before December 31<sup>st</sup> (Fall Semester) or July 31<sup>st</sup> (Spring Semester). Students need to have moved out of their dorms by the end of December (Fall Semester) or the end of July (Spring Semester).

**The following Pre-Departure Paperwork needs to be submitted to Slate by June 1<sup>st</sup> (Fall Semester students) or January 1<sup>st</sup> (Spring Semester students):**

- Transcript with current semester grades
- Transfer Credit Approval Form (filled out by your study abroad advisor)
- Disciplinary Clearance Form (filled out by the judicial affairs office at your home campus)
- Medical History Form
- Health Clearance Form
- Liability Release Form
- Scanned copy of the front page of your passport
- Housing Form
- Travel Plans Form

## **How Can I Prepare for My Semester in Heidelberg?**

- **Familiarize yourself with AJY's Academic Calendar**

The Academic Calendar for your semester can be found on [AJY's website](#). Make sure you are aware of when the semester starts and ends, as well as when your classes start and when your breaks are.

- **Start reading and listening in German**

The best way to prepare yourself for your full-immersion experience is to brush up on your German language skills. AJY students often listen to German podcasts, read German newspaper articles, or watch YouTube videos about life in Germany.

- **Talk to your Academic Advisor**

AJY Staff is fully capable of helping you choose and register for courses once you arrive in Heidelberg. However, talking about your credit requirements with your academic advisor at your home university is strongly recommended. AJY's Guide to Current Course Offerings should help you get an overview of what classes will be offered during your semester in Heidelberg.

- **Look through the AJY Internship Guide**

AJY students are not required to do an internship while in Heidelberg. If you are interested, however, it is good to start planning in advance. Please contact AJY staff as soon as possible so we can talk through the details and find you an internship position with one of our local partners!

## **What Will Be Taken Care of by AJY Staff?**

Now that you have been officially accepted to the AJY program, we will be setting gears in motion to fulfill all requirements for you to be able to study abroad.

### **Before your departure, AJY will ...**

- enroll you at the Universität Heidelberg,
- place you in a room in one of the student dormitories,
- sign you up for health insurance with a German healthcare provider,
- assist you in finding internship opportunities (if applicable).

### **After your arrival, AJY will ...**

- assist you in registering as an official resident of Heidelberg,
- complete the paperwork for your student visa,
- advise you on academic placement and course selections,
- help you with any other needs you may have to facilitate a smooth transition into life as a study abroad student.

## **Health Insurance Coverage**

AJY arranges comprehensive health insurance coverage for you, which is recognized in both Germany and Europe. Coverage includes doctor's visits, prescription medicine, hospital care, routine dental and eye care, physical therapy, and psychological counseling. Upon your arrival in Heidelberg, AJY will have a Health & Safety session during which we invite the representative from your health care company to explain in detail how your coverage works. **If you would like to address any issues prior to this session, please contact AJY staff.** We are eager to make you feel comfortable with the services that German healthcare provides you.

Coverage starts on the date the program begins and ends on the last day of the last month of the program. If you plan to arrive early or to remain in Europe after leaving the program, you are responsible for your own insurance. You are also responsible for adding any insurance policies regarding medical evacuation, repatriation of remains or personal liability.

## **Internet Access in Heidelberg**

There will be many places you will be able to access WIFI networks in Heidelberg. First and foremost, the AJY Study Center has WIFI. Secondly, the Universität Heidelberg has several WIFI networks such as eduroam, which you might already know from your home campus. You can connect to the University's WIFI in university buildings and around town, however, these networks can sometimes be less reliable than the WIFI at the Study Center. In addition to the networks provided by the university, there are plenty of free WIFI networks in local cafes and shops, just like in the US.

You can access the internet in your dorm rooms via an Ethernet port. AJY will provide you with a travel router so you can turn your Ethernet into a WIFI network. If your laptop does not have a port for an Ethernet cable, AJY recommends buying an adapter before you come to Heidelberg.

## **Cellphones**

For safety reasons, AJY requires you to have a smartphone with a working phone number. During Orientation Week, AJY staff can help you buy an inexpensive pre-paid German SIM card. Most AJY students use these SIM cards and the very basic cellphone plans they include while in Heidelberg. However, depending on the smartphone you have and your provider, you might face difficulties switching from a US SIM card to a German SIM card. AJY recommends getting in touch with your provider early to discuss what options they can provide for you and whether you will be able to use a foreign SIM card with your current phone (for example, iPhones will have to be unlocked to be able to use a German SIM card).

**You will receive more information on cellphone use in Germany during the Pre-Departure Orientation Session.**

## Withdrawing Money

Most AJY students use ATM machines to withdraw Euros from their US bank accounts using a debit card. This is a convenient method of transferring money with relatively low transaction fees. **Please talk to your bank and determine what the best method for you will be.** You will be able to find plenty of ATMs in Heidelberg, including at the Sparkasse which is next to the Study Center.

Alternatively, you can create a multi-currency account using [Wise](#). This will enable you to transfer money from your US bank account as if it was a German bank account. Many AJY students create Wise accounts for their semesters in Germany and find them very useful. You can find more information about a multi-currency account on the website.

Although most restaurants and stores will accept payment with a debit or credit card, smaller stores and bakeries do not. It is good to always have cash on you, just in case.

## Traveling In and Around Heidelberg

Getting around Heidelberg is very easy! AJY will provide you with a public transportation pass (**Deutschlandticket**) which gives you unlimited access to regional public transportation in Germany. Additionally, Heidelberg has an extensive network of bike paths. Many AJY students buy a used bicycle for their semester in Heidelberg and use it to get around.

AJY organizes several study trips and excursions, including a longer excursion to Berlin. You will also have a Spring or Fall Break, during which you can travel. More information will be given during orientation.

*Wir freuen uns sehr, Sie kennenzulernen und in Heidelberg begrüßen zu dürfen.  
Falls Sie Fragen haben oder sich unsicher sind, kontaktieren Sie uns. Wir helfen  
Ihnen gerne weiter, sodass Sie sich ohne Sorgen auf Ihr Auslandssemester  
vorbereiten können.*

**Bis bald in Heidelberg!**

