Universität Köln
Table of Contents

The University.................................................................................................................. 3
International Office........................................................................................................ 4
  Contact Information...................................................................................................... 4
Location............................................................................................................................ 5
Travel................................................................................................................................ 6
Accommodation................................................................................................................ 6
Admissions......................................................................................................................... 7
Academics.......................................................................................................................... 8
  Libraries......................................................................................................................... 8
  Computer Rooms.......................................................................................................... 8
Practical Matters.............................................................................................................. 9
  Health Insurance.......................................................................................................... 9
  Acclimation and Immersion.......................................................................................... 9
  German Language Courses......................................................................................... 9
  Sports Facilities.......................................................................................................... 10
Tips from UCC Students.................................................................................................. 10
The University

The University of Cologne was established in 1388 as the fourth university in the Holy Roman Empire, after the Charles University of Prague (1348), the University of Vienna (1365) and the Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg (1386). The charter was signed by Pope Urban VI. The university began teaching on January 6, 1389. In 1798, the university was abolished by the French, who had invaded Cologne in 1794, because under the new French constitution, universities were abolished all over France. The last rector Ferdinand Franz Wallraf was able to preserve the university’s Great Seal, now once more in use.

In 1919, the Prussian government endorsed a decision by the Cologne City Council to re-establish the university. On May 19, 1919, the Cologne Mayor Konrad Adenauer signed the charter of the modern university.

At that point, the new university was located in Neustadt-Süd, but relocated to its current campus in Lindenthal on 2 November 1934. The old premises are now being used for the Cologne University of Applied Sciences.

Initially, the university was composed of the Faculty of Commerce, Economics and Social Sciences (successor to the Institutes of Commerce and of Communal and Social Administration) and the Faculty of Medicine (successor to the Academy of Medicine). In 1920, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Arts were added, and the School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences was split off from the Faculty of Arts in 1955 to form a separate Faculty.

In 1980, the two Cologne departments of the Rhineland School of Education were attached to the university as the Faculties of Education and of Special Education. In 1988, the university became a founding member of the Community of European Management Schools and International Companies (CEMS), today’s Global Alliance in Management Education.

The University is a leader in the area of economics and is regularly placed in top positions for law and commerce, both for national and international rankings.
International Office

The International Office supports and strengthens the internationalization of the University of Cologne – from the daily assistance for students, scholars and professors to the development of strategic plans. The University of Cologne’s International Office is analogous to UCC’s own International Office. If you have any questions, concerns, or troubles during your Erasmus stay at the University of Cologne, please do not hesitate to contact the university’s International Office.

International Office
University of Cologne
Albertus-Magnus-Platz
D-50923 Köln, Germany
Tel: +49 221 470 1661
Fax: 0221/470-5016
E-mail: aaa.zulassung@verw.uni-koeln.de

Contact Information

Head of the International Office
Dr. Stefan Bildhauer
Tel: +49 0221/470-2769
E-mail: s.bildhauer@verw.uni-koeln.de

Head of “German as a Foreign Language” Section of the Office
Dr. Hans Leitner
Tel: 0221/470-4431
E-mail: h.leitner@verw.uni-koeln.de

Secretary of “German as a Foreign Language” Section of the Office
Angelika Plaßwilm
Tel: 0221/470-4437
E-mail: a.plasswilm@verw.uni-koeln.de

Contact Person for Foreign Students
Karl-Heinz Korn
Tel: 0221/470-7350
E-mail: k.korn@verw.uni-koeln.de

Financial Administration for the Erasmus Program
Annika Uhlig
Tel: 0221/470-5804
E-mail: a.uhlig@verw.uni-koeln.de
Cologne

The distinctive flavour to the city of Cologne is often linked to the city's inhabitants, or Kölsche, who take an enormous amount of pride in their city. Cologne is a traditionally Ripuarian-speaking city, though this has mostly been replaced by German, which is now the main language of the city. English-speaking guides and information are available for many of the landmarks of the city. For tourists who speak German and wish to practice it, the citizens usually have a lot of patience with those trying to come to grips with the language. Cologne's citizens are very friendly and jovial people, welcoming tourists of all types and with all interests.

Away from the landmarks, workers of the Deutsche Bahn (German railways) often speak English reasonably well, and ticket machines have a language selection feature. In general, older people in Cologne tend to have little or no knowledge of English, while younger Germans and those working in the business world tend to be reasonably proficient. Language is rarely a strong barrier.

Cologne has an excellent public transport network consisting of trams, local trains and buses. Bicycles are also available for hire on the northern side of the Hauptbahnhof.
Travel

By Plane

- Cologne Bonn airport handles international and domestic flights, and is located fairly close to the city of Cologne. It is approximately 15 minutes by local train from CBA to the centre of the city of Cologne.
- Dusseldorf International Airport handles many intercontinental flights into Germany. A train ride from the airport to Cologne takes approximately 40 minutes.
- Frankfurt Rhein Main International Airport is the largest airport in Germany and is served by all major airlines. High speed trains cost approximately €58 for a one-way trip lasting about an hour into the centre of Cologne.

By Train

- Cologne is served by two major train stations: Köln Hauptbahnhof and Köln—Deutz.
- Cologne is linked with Amsterdam, Brussels, and the aforementioned Frankfurt Airport by trains.

Accommodation

As in other university cities, there is a definite housing shortage in Cologne. Only a few students manage to obtain a room or small apartment in one of the 84 dormitories owned by the Kölner Studentenwerk. There are other organisations that rent rooms to students, but they all have extremely long wait-lists. We therefore strongly recommend that you therefore apply for a room in a student dormitory before you leave for Germany!

If you are interested in obtaining a private room, contact a private rental agency (Mitwohnzentrale) or the private housing office at the Kölner Studentenwerk.

Note: The Kölner Studentenwerk is not affiliated with the University of Cologne

Student Housing Department
Köölnner Studentenwerk
Servicehaus, 2. Etage
Universitätsstraße 16
50937 Köln, Germany
Tel. 0221 942 65-218 bis -222
Fax 0221 942 65-212
http://www.studentenwerk-koeln.de
Admissions

Applicants from the following countries do not need a visa, but should bring a valid passport with them when they travel to Germany:
EU-countries, Andorra, Australia, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Liechtenstein, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, USA.

All other applicants must obtain a student visa at the German embassy in their native country before travelling to Germany. Please note: it can take as long as two months to process a visa application!

Requirements for a Student Visa:

- Proof of admission to a German university or
- Proof of admission to a Studienkolleg
- Proof of admission to a university-run German language course in Germany
- Proof of admission to a doctoral program in Germany
- And proof of financial support for the first year of study.

Possible Means of Proving Financial Support: Minimum €6420
(Current maximum BAföG rate: €585 x 12 months)

- Scholarship/grant confirmation
- Savings
- Blocked account in Germany with appropriate balance
- Letter or document stating the willingness of a third party to provide financial support, notarised if necessary.

A student visa is valid for 3 months.

Do not -- under any circumstances -- apply for either a tourist visa or a language course visa. These cannot be used to obtain a student resident permit once you have arrived in Germany!

More information can be found on the DAAD's homepage or acquired from the German foreign authorities in your native country.

As soon as possible after arrival, all foreign students residing in Cologne must register at the Bezirksrathaus (the City Hall office) in the district of Lindenthal.

The City of Cologne now offers an appointment service for all incoming students moving to any part of Cologne.
WHERE?

Bezirksrathaus Lindenthal (the City Hall office in Lindenthal), Aachener Straße 220 (on the corner of Aachener Straße and Oskar-Jäger-Straße).
Academics

In German universities a 1 to 5 scale is used to mark students’ academic work:

- 1,0-1,3 sehr gut (very good: an outstanding achievement)
- 1,7-2,3 gut (good: an achievement, which lies substantially above average requirements)
- 2,7-3,3 befriedigend (satisfactory: an achievement, which corresponds to average requirements)
- 3,7-4,0 ausreichend (sufficient: an achievement, which still meets the requirements)
- 4,3-5,0 nicht ausreichend / nicht bestanden (not sufficient / failed: an achievement, which does not meet the requirements)

Libraries

The University of Cologne operates a central library for its students and the citizens of Cologne. The Cologne University and City Library (USB) is responsible, along with the departmental libraries, for supplying the University with literature and materials. The Library has an extensive collection of textbooks available, a comprehensive research collection, and up to 560 individual work spaces. The Library makes no note of any Inter-Library Loan system, so the availability of materials not held in that library’s possession may vary.

University and City Library of Cologne
Universitätsstr. 33
50931 Köln, Germany
Tel.: 0221 470-2374

Computer Rooms

The University’s Regional Computing Centre (RRZK) operates several PC pools throughout the University. Many of these pools are available for student use outside of classes, though some are intended solely for faculty research use and others are used as the location for classes to be taught. While printing may be available at these pools for students, it is suggested that incoming Erasmus students purchase their own printers at an affordable rate to ensure the constant availability of printed documents.

Use of the computer rooms at the University of Cologne requires an S- or university-mail account, which is given to students upon the completion of their registration at the University of Cologne. Computer rooms may be reserved for classes or events. If a computer room has been reserved, it is unavailable for the posted time for students that are not a member of the given event or class.
Practical Matters

Health Insurance

In Germany, all students require health insurance. Citizens of EU member states are required to have a European Health Insurance Card. Students from Turkey require an A/T 11. The forms for both are available at health care institutions in the respective countries.

A semester fee is due upon enrolment that includes insurance coverage for accidents that may occur while on university grounds or en route from the university to the place of your residence. It is further recommended that students take out a form of liability insurance in Germany, as the liability insurance from their home country may not be valid in Germany.

Acclimation and Immersion

The University of Cologne operates a welcoming day programme, which serves as a student’s orientation to study at the University as well as life in Cologne. Beyond this, the University also operates a large number of clubs and societies that cater to a wide variety of student interest. These can serve as a primary method of adjusting to life in Cologne and immersing oneself in local culture.

Europa macht Schule" (Europe meets schools) encourages foreign students to come to local schools as representatives of their home countries (“mini ambassadors”). There, they present their home country by organising and realising a project on specific aspects of their culture in co-operation with the pupils and a supervising teacher. This includes three to five visits to the class. A closing event allows all participants of a city to present their projects to a wider public. European exchange students of all fields of study as well as all types of schools can take part in the programme.

German Language Courses

As opposed to other German universities the University of Cologne provides the ERASMUS-students, exchange students from partner universities and visiting scholars with the possibility of attending German language courses. However, they may only attend the courses especially set up for them, i.e. they may not attend preparatory German language courses. Courses are made available in the pre-semester period (March to mid-April; September to mid-October) and during the semester itself (mid-April to mid-July; mid-October to mid-February).

These courses focus on training specific skills such as reading comprehension, writing, speaking, listening comprehension, and grammar. Apart from courses focusing on certain skills there are also courses offered that deal with particular topics: German literature, German history, business German and German for students of law. The courses focusing on training particular skills are being offered for levels I-V or II-V, whereas the topic oriented courses are restricted to levels IV-V.
Sports Facilities

Two universities in Cologne have worked together to provide a comprehensive sports program and expansive sports facility for their students. While space in the facility can be used by any student freely regardless of enrolment in any course or programme, the universities operate over 500 hours of sports classes and activities per week. Many University clubs make use of space within the facility, or simply take their sport into the outdoors.

Tips from UCC Students

Academic Matters

- Make sure to introduce yourself to your lecturers and explain your situation as an Erasmus student. They will be much more flexible if they know your status.
- There is no fee attached to the German language courses, so make use of them. They’re very helpful.
- Courses on German linguistics can be difficult. Erasmus students can be singled out and given homework to ensure that they grasp the material.
- The Library system is quite different from UCC’s. Do not expect things to be the same and be patient with any differences you encounter.

Accommodation

- Private accommodation can be risky, so try to apply for student accommodation early.
- Be sure to keep in contact with the University of Cologne regarding your place in student accommodation. Otherwise, you may lose it!
- Bed linens are often provided, but are very cheap to buy if needed.
- Always be sure to look through the peephole before opening the door of your residence to visitors.
- Bring pictures of home to put on the walls.

Travel

- Cologne is a great place to travel from by train to other parts of the country and continent. Make use of this!
- If you don’t get accommodation through the University, try to arrive 2 weeks before orientation to have an easier time finding private accommodation.
- Students from Kerry might have an easier time flying to Frankfurt from the Kerry Airport on RyanAir than travelling to Dublin. It is a €15 1-hour bus ride from Frankfurt to Cologne.
Bureaucracy

- Carry your passport and student card with you at all times.
- The German bureaucracy can be difficult to understand at times. Bring copies of all the documents you might need, just to be sure.
- You will need to register at the Rathaus (town hall) after arrival into Cologne. Bring your passport, the contract for your accommodation, your proof of income, and your proof of health insurance with you.
- Get your European Health Insurance Card as soon as you can. You’ll need it in the event of any accidents.

Social

- Almost all of the sports programmes at the facilities are free. There is no excuse for not trying some!
- The International Office sometimes hoses trips and activities for Erasmus students. These are well worth the time put into them.
- There is no end to the places to find food or drink in Cologne. If you’re ever feeling a bit homesick, there are at least ten Irish places in the city.
- The Erasmus Nights hosted by the International Office are an absolute must if you want to meet other Erasmus students. It makes acclimating to Cologne so much easier.

General

- Don’t give up and go home early in the semester. It may feel difficult, but you’ll pull through fantastically. You will love your Erasmus study at Cologne!
- Unlock your mobile phone before you leave Ireland if you want to put a German SIM card in it.
- Look into phone cards – they are one of the cheapest ways to phone home.
- If you have a laptop and internet access in your accommodation, look into getting Skype or other internet phone packages.
- Look forward to Christmas. Cologne is at one of its best times during the Christmas season.