



# **American Junior Year at Heidelberg University**

**Pre-Departure Handbook**

Academic Year 2020-2021

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Heidelberg University  
Tiffin, OH, U.S.A.  
[www.heidelberg.edu/ajy](http://www.heidelberg.edu/ajy)

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **American Office:**

American Junior Year at Heidelberg University  
Heidelberg University  
310 E. Market Street  
Tiffin, Ohio 44883  
Tel.: (419) 448-2062  
Fax: (419) 448-2217  
Email: [ajy@heidelberg.edu](mailto:ajy@heidelberg.edu)

### **German Office:**

American Junior Year at Heidelberg University  
Hauptstrasse 133  
69117 Heidelberg  
Germany  
Tel. 011-49-6221-23874  
Fax: 011-49-6221-167574  
Email: [ajy@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ajy@uni-heidelberg.de)

Should problems or concerns related to the program occur during your stay in Heidelberg, you may directly contact our home campus in Tiffin.

Address your concerns to:

Chris Abrams, Dean of Student Affairs  
310 E. Market Street  
Tiffin, Ohio 44883  
Campus Center 328  
Email: [cabrams@heidelberg.edu](mailto:cabrams@heidelberg.edu)  
Phone Number: (419)-448-2062

**➔ Please share this contact information with your parents.**

## **PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST**

**Once you have been accepted to the AJY program, there are a number of steps you must take in preparation for your stay in Heidelberg:**

- Submit your confirmation form and deposit to the AJY office in Tiffin, Ohio by the deadline stated on your acceptance letter.
- Make sure you have a valid U.S. passport. U.S. citizens do not need a visa for their stay in Germany. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the German consulate to find out their visa requirements. To find the consulate nearest to you, go to: [German Missions in the US](#)
- Book a flight to Frankfurt Airport (FRA) and a return flight home.

**By June 1st (December 1st for spring semester students), print, sign, and mail the following forms to the AJY office in Tiffin, Ohio:**

- 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)
- Universität Heidelberg Application and Matriculation Form
- 1 recent photo (passport standards)
- Medical History Form
- Health Clearance Form
- Liability Release Form

**By June 1st (December 1st for spring semester students), complete and submit the following forms online on the [AJY website](#).**

- AJY Housing Form
- AJY Travel Plans Form
- AJY Emergency Contact Form

## **AMERICAN JUNIOR YEAR AT HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY (AJY)**

### **Welcome!**

Congratulations on your acceptance to the American Junior Year at Heidelberg Program. We know you are excited about studying abroad in Heidelberg and improving your German. To help guide your preparation and answer common questions, we have put together this pre-departure handbook. It will ensure you are aware of important administrative, organizational, and logistical information prior to your departure. Furthermore, we hope the information provided will help alleviate any nervousness you may have about studying abroad. We very much look forward to welcoming you in Heidelberg and are committed to making your experience at Universität Heidelberg both academically and personally rewarding.

### **On-Site Program Staff**

The program staff consists of the Resident Director, two Program Assistants, and several adjunct faculty.

**Dr. Martin Kley**, the AJY Resident Director, coordinates the academic program and acts as liaison to the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin and taught at a number of U.S. universities and led a study-abroad program in Berlin before joining the American Junior Year program. He conducts academic advising sessions and assists students in choosing their courses. He is responsible for program policies and procedures, and functions as an adviser and counselor to AJY students.

**Carina Wiest and Cara Burmedi**, AJY's Program Assistants, are Geography students at Universität Heidelberg. As part-time staff, they help organize student arrivals and departures, plan AJY events, and support students with everyday matters.

Resident Director:                 Martin Kley, Ph.D., [m.kley@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:m.kley@uni-heidelberg.de)  
Program Assistants:                Carina Wiest, [carina.wiest@stud.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:carina.wiest@stud.uni-heidelberg.de)  
  Cara Burmedi, [burmedi@stud.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:burmedi@stud.uni-heidelberg.de)

### **The AJY Study Center**

The AJY Center is conveniently located on University Square in the city center's main pedestrian zone. The building itself was constructed as a private residence in the year 1703. The Center is the hub of AJY life in Heidelberg and serves several functions. It houses our offices, four classrooms, a fully equipped computer room, as well as a student lounge and kitchen. The Preliminary Course is taught at the AJY Center during the month preceding each semester, as are all other AJY courses. The Center is also used for AJY student meetings and social events.

The Center is open daily from 7:00 am until 11:00 pm. Students can access the Center during these hours to study, read, mingle, or just relax between classes. In the lounge, students can watch German TV and films, read magazines and newspapers, or enjoy meals. Each student also has a mailbox at the Center so packages and even luggage can be sent here in advance of your stay. AJY staff are available to meet with students during regular office hours or by appointment. From late May to early July, the Center is also home to the AJY Summer Program.

### **AUF DEUTSCH, BITTE!**

One of the main goals students have when coming to Heidelberg is to improve their German language proficiency. The program is designed to be an immersive experience and students learn German most effectively by consistently speaking, reading, and hearing German.

For this reason, **German is the language used in the Study Center** and for general communication and program activities. AJY therefore reminds all students to respect the “German only” rule while at the AJY Center.

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR STAY**

### **Travel Documents**

When obtaining or renewing your passport, please begin the application procedures early. Students who are U.S. Citizens only need a valid passport to enter Germany. If your passport will expire during the time you are in Heidelberg, apply for a new one now — prior to your departure. Passport applications and instructions can be downloaded from the State Department website: [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). First-time applicants must appear in person at a passport agency. The State Department website allows you to search by zip code for a list of locations where you can submit your passport application. Do not sign the form in advance because you need to do this in front of an official. If asked for an address in Europe, use the AJY office address below:

**American Junior Year at Heidelberg University**

**Hauptstrasse 133**

**69117 Heidelberg, Germany**

- ➔ We recommend you make a copy of the first page of your passport and leave it at home with a parent or friend. Alternatively, you can take a high resolution photo of your passport and send it to yourself via e-mail. If your passport gets lost or stolen, it is much easier to obtain a replacement when you have a copy of your old one.

**U.S. citizens do not need a visa to travel to Germany** and no inoculations of any kind are required. Your U.S. passport allows you to enter Germany and stay up to 3 months. **Paperwork for your residence permit will be taken care of once you arrive in Heidelberg.** All students should note that it may take 2-3 weeks to receive your residence permit through the AJY.

If you are not a citizen of the U.S., Canada, or a country within the European Union, you need to contact a German Consulate (or the German Embassy) closest to you to obtain a student entrance visa and residence permit. You will not be permitted to enter Germany legally without an entrance visa. *Please notify the AJY staff in Heidelberg if you are applying for a student entrance visa.*

## **Traveling to Heidelberg ... and back home**

AJY students must make their own flight arrangements to Germany, scheduling their flight to arrive on the day that the AJY program officially begins (see academic calendar). The nearest airport is Frankfurt International Airport (Airport code FRA). **Students will be met by AJY staff at the airport upon their arrival.** AJY arranges a group transfer to Heidelberg for students arriving by noon on the official day of arrival. **Approximately one week before the start of the program, we will provide you with detailed arrival instructions.** Students arriving independently in Europe before the start of the program can either join us at Frankfurt International Airport or meet us at Heidelberg's main train station.

To find your flights, use the flight search engine of your choice, or consult one of the following websites:

[GenerationFly.com](http://GenerationFly.com)

[StudentUniverse.com](http://StudentUniverse.com)

[STAtavel.com](http://STAtavel.com)

[CheapTickets.com](http://CheapTickets.com)

- ➔ Please be aware that these discount agencies will not provide the same level of service as travel agencies or airlines. They also usually have high fees for changes or cancellations, so read the fine print. You should also consider purchasing travel insurance that covers flight changes or cancellations.

Full year students may encounter the problem that they are not able to book their return flight in advance. In this case they may elect to either enter an assumed return date they can later have changed (check applicable fees in advance!), or simply book a one-way flight and book the return flight once they are in Germany.

## **What to pack – what not to pack**

Heidelberg's weather is moderate but damp. Winter brings more rain and slush than snow. You need to bring an all-weather coat and water-resistant shoes. Summers can bring frequent showers but otherwise, summer weather is warm and pleasant, seldom extremely hot, but sometimes humid.

German students usually dress casually. However, you will want to bring along at least one outfit for special occasions such as concerts or theater performances.

Students are not required to bring their own bedding. You will be supplied with a pillow, comforter, and bedsheets upon arrival. You should pack a towel however.

Above all, **try to pack light!** It is best to pack a small amount of clothing that will give you a good



number of combinations. Keep in mind that you have to carry your own luggage through airports and train stations and up and down stairs. Also consider that you may wish to purchase clothes and souvenirs during your stay in Germany, so leaving some room in your suitcase is a good idea. Regarding the costs of bringing bulky items such as musical instruments or sports equipment, please consult with your airline.

The **AJY Study Center hosts an AJY flea market on the date of your arrival.** Previous students will have left items at the center to give away or be sold, and this is a convenient opportunity for you to pick up inexpensive daily items such as prepaid phones, alarm clocks, radios, hair dryers, kitchenware, irons, desk lamps, extra blankets and towels, etc.

➔ Another way to avoid carrying extra weight is to ship a box to the Study Center ahead of your arrival. **Be sure that your package is properly marked with "Used items for personal use only – exchange student."** Be aware of customs regulations! **(please see p. 14)**

Please remember to bring:

- A sufficient supply of any prescription medicine you need,
- An extra pair of glasses, cleaning solution for contact lenses,
- Sturdy walking shoes,
- A towel and wash cloth,
- Your laptop computer. Virtually all laptops are configured to handle European as well as U.S. electrical current without the need of a separate transformer, but you may wish to check with your manufacturer just to be safe. **You will need a plug adapter to fit German electrical outlets; these are best purchased in the U.S. or at the AJY flea market.**
- Musical instruments. If you play an instrument, you can bring it with you, as there are many opportunities to join groups in the performing arts.

➔ **No street shoes are allowed in the university gyms. If you plan to do indoor sports, bring one pair of clean gym shoes or plan to purchase a pair upon arrival.**

We advise against bringing other electrical appliances – European current is 220 volts 60 cycles AC and will ruin American electrical appliances that are not made for international travel. Inexpensive appliances are available in drugstores or at the AJY flea market.

In general, almost anything you can buy in the U.S. is available in Germany. If in doubt, opt to pack light. There is a good chance you will want extra room in your luggage to bring back items you purchase during your stay in Germany.

## **Arrival and Departure Dates, Semester Schedule**

For detailed 2018-2019 academic calendars, please consult our website at [Program and Semester Dates](#).

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR STUDIES AT UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG**

You will find the adjustment to German academic life an interesting challenge. As an American student, you are most likely accustomed to detailed course syllabi, frequent tests, regular assignments, assigned textbooks and easy access to professors. All of these are much less common in the German system. German universities, renowned for their academic freedom, will challenge you to cultivate self-discipline, time management, and responsible study habits. You will notice a more pronounced difference between lectures and seminars, the frequent use of oral testing, and the expectation that all students participate actively in seminar discussions.

The philosophy of the AJY program is to grant you the freedom to experience the German academic system on your own while also providing you with access to support and structure if that freedom becomes overwhelming. Academic advising is designed to help you select courses that are appropriate given your interests, language ability, and curriculum requirements of your home campus.

### **The Preliminary Course**

This month-long course provides sixty hours of intensive practice in listening and reading comprehension as well as advanced German grammar and vocabulary. The course is designed to prepare you for the University's German Language Proficiency Examination (DSH Prüfung, see below) prior to the start of the semester. The course is supplemented by a number of excursions to various cultural institutions around Heidelberg, with an emphasis on experiential learning and the exploration of contemporary German society.

The preliminary course is mandatory for all students.

### **University Language Proficiency Exam**

Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang (DSH, German Language Proficiency Exam) is comprised of a written and an oral examination aimed at assessing your language skills. A threshold level of German proficiency is required to attend classes, read and analyze texts, and write term papers or exams.

The DSH examination is administered at the beginning of each semester by Universität Heidelberg. Students will receive a certificate upon completion.

Depending on the result of the DSH exam, you may need to make modifications to your initial course selection, but you will receive the full number of credits for the semester regardless of your score. Should you not pass the exam, you can retake the exam at the end of your stay and demonstrate your progress.

### **Academic planning for the semester**

Students participate in multiple academic planning and advising sessions prior to the start of the semester. The program's "Guidelines for Academic Planning" will be distributed and students will be provided with pertinent information about courses. Each student meets with the program director individually to make a preliminary selection of courses.

During the first two weeks of the university semester, students attend courses listed on the preliminary course selection form and, in consultation with the program director, determine which of these courses will ultimately be pursued for credit. During this time, you will also clarify any open questions you might have with your home campus advisors about course requirements.

By the end of the second week of the semester, a final course selection is agreed upon by the student and the program director. AJY then sends an official copy of this course selection to the student's home campus.

### **Grades and Transcripts**

It is the responsibility of the student to hand in a grade report ("Schein") from each course at the end of the semester. The program director translates these into U.S.-style grades and sends them to the AJY Registrar's office in Tiffin for the student's official AJY transcript.

You will be responsible for ordering a copy of your AJY transcript through your Pipeline account to be sent to your home school at the end of each semester. You should check with your study abroad office as to where it should be sent. Since transcripts are ordered online, you can easily do this from Heidelberg. Transcripts for the fall semester are usually available by mid-March and for the spring semester in late August. Note that a hold will be put on your transcript until any outstanding bills for room damages or cleaning has been paid.

Your AJY transcript is held on record permanently at Heidelberg University and you can (re)order

official transcripts at any time in the future (e.g. for graduate school applications).

## **MONEY MATTERS**

For your initial needs it is a good idea to bring approximately 200 Euro in cash when you arrive in Germany. It is possible to exchange currency at most banks as well as within major airports. There are multiple currency exchange booths at Frankfurt airport, though we recommend you exchange your money prior to your arrival so you won't have to be concerned with exchanging money once you get to Frankfurt.

The current exchange rate (August 2020) for U.S. Dollars/Euro is:

US \$ 1.00 = EU € 0.85

EU € 1.00 = US \$ 1.18

If you want to follow daily exchange rate you can use Google.com or [www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com).

- ➔ In addition to Euros, bring along your checkbook or some U.S. dollars in cash for purchases at the AJY flea market.

### **ATM Cards / Credit Cards**

Most AJY students use ATM machines to withdraw cash from their U.S. bank accounts using a debit card. This is a convenient method of transferring money with relatively low transaction fees. **Please inform your bank/credit card company that you will be using your card abroad.** Some companies require a clearance for the use of their card abroad. Be sure to ask about the daily limit on the amount you will be able to withdraw. Leave a photocopy of your bank card with your parents before leaving for Heidelberg. You may also wish to take a photo of your cards and e-mail them to yourself.

Credit cards are convenient to have in case of unexpected expenses. Visa and master cards are widely accepted in Germany, American Express cards much less so.

Very few AJY students elect to open a personal account at a German bank during their stay, though AJY staff is happy to assist you if you wish to open an account.

### **Employment/Job**

Can you earn money by working in Heidelberg? Yes, within limits. Students receive a residence permit that will allow them to work up to 90 days or 180 half days per calendar year while in Heidelberg. AJY staff can assist students with information on student jobs, however, AJY firmly believes that academic work should always have priority and discourages students from working more than 10 hours per week.

- Each semester, AJY offers paid, part-time student positions to help with office-related work. Students can also apply for the paid AJY Social Media Expert position.

## **STUDENT HEALTH**

### **Insurance Coverage**

#### **(Comprehensive Health, Personal Liability, Medical Evacuation, and Repatriation of Remains)**

AJY arranges comprehensive health insurance coverage for you with companies recognized in both Germany and Europe. In addition to health insurance, AJY also provides coverage for personal liability, medical evacuation, as well as repatriation of remains for the duration of the program.

**All insurance is included in your program fee.** Coverage includes: Doctor's visits, prescription medicine (except for the first few Euros of each prescription, for which you are responsible), hospital care (with the exception of 10 Euro per day, for which you are responsible), routine dental and eye care, physical therapy, and psychological counseling. There are special regulations regarding coverage of preexisting conditions or pregnancy.

During your coverage period you will have access to university hospitals, the university counseling center, family physicians, and specialists. The Program maintains a list of health professionals our students have visited in the past. Students should feel free to discuss any preexisting or unforeseen health issue with AJY program staff. Our staff is experienced in helping students seek routine treatment options as well as deal with emergencies. All health-related information is kept strictly confidential and handled with utmost discretion by our staff. *If you are currently in treatment for an ongoing health condition, or anticipate any other medical issues during your stay in Germany, please contact our staff prior to your departure from the U.S.*

Coverage begins on the date the program begins. It is valid throughout Germany and many European countries but does not cover students in their home country. You will not be covered for injuries sustained while participating in risky activities, e.g. bungee jumping. The insurance remains in force until the end of the month in which you terminate your studies with the program. If you plan to arrive early or to remain in Europe after leaving the program, you are responsible for your own insurance.

## **HOUSING**

### **Housing Policies**

All room assignments are made by the German AJY office in Heidelberg, not the American office in Tiffin. The American office does not receive your addresses in Germany in advance.

The Business Office in Tiffin, Ohio will bill you for your room rent, along with the billing for the general program fee. Full year students will receive two separate billings.

Your room in Heidelberg is available on the day of official arrival. No earlier check-ins are possible. It continues to be available until the last day of the program per the [program and semester dates](#).

**Extended fall and full-year students keep their rooms during the holiday break (December 21, 2020 through January 9, 2021). Full-year students also keep their rooms during the break between the two semesters (mid-February to mid-April).**

### **Room assignments**

All AJY student rooms are located in university dormitories throughout the city or in private dormitories for students only. Since there are different types of rooms, we give you the opportunity to list your preferences by filling out the online housing form on our website (see [pre-departure forms](#).) Once the university student housing office in Heidelberg informs us of your assignment we will forward you your dormitory address. *This is usually about one week before your arrival in Heidelberg.*

Please note that although the program does its best to accommodate student preferences, we cannot guarantee you will be assigned your preferred room.

All students are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and in accordance with posted dormitory housing rules. Failure to act responsibly and courteously may lead to students being asked to vacate their room.

### **What your room looks like**

All rooms are single rooms, usually in suite arrangements (3-6 people) with a shared kitchen and bathroom. Laundry facilities are available in all university dormitories. In addition, there are several laundromats throughout town.

Rooms are furnished with basic furniture such a bed, desk, desk lamp, chair, shelves, closet, rug, and

curtains. The program will also provide you with bedding (pillow, comforter, and sheets). Except for furniture and bedding (pillow, comforter, sheets, and some dishes), the dorm rooms are empty when you arrive, so you may wish to purchase additional items to make your room feel like home. Additional household items, such as kitchenware, can often be purchased inexpensively at the AJY flea market on arrival day or at local stores.

Upon arrival, you will be given an inventory sheet on which to record the condition of your room. *Please list any problems or damages.* Your room will be inspected at the end of your stay by the building superintendent, and you will be charged for any necessary repairs or cleaning.

## **DAILY LIVING**

### **Meals, Shopping**

Unlike American colleges and universities, German universities offer no semester-long meal plans in their cafeterias. Instead, you purchase each meal individually. There are two university cafeterias close to the AJY Study Center, which are open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday. You can get a healthy, well-balanced meal for less than 5 Euro. Of course, there are also many shops, restaurants, and eateries in the downtown area near the AJY Study Center which cater to students and tailor their prices to a student budget.

Most grocery stores are usually open between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Some supermarkets remain open until midnight. **Be aware that all stores remain closed on Sunday.** While the university cafeterias provide a diverse menu of tasty meals, many students quickly discover that cooking at home is a cheap and convenient option as well.

### **Clothing**

Do not forget to bring comfortable walking shoes! Sneakers or flip-flops will make longer AJY excursions and field trips less enjoyable. Although most German students dress casually, you may wish to also pack appropriate clothing for a visit to the opera, a festive dinner, or other social events.

### **Mobile Phones**

AJY requires you to have a mobile phone while in Heidelberg as part of our safety policy, so you must either have a plan in your home country that you can use in Germany or buy a pre-paid SIM card here in Germany. The majority of students chooses to purchase a prepaid SIM card in Germany as this tends to be less expensive than an international plan from the U.S. Prepaid phones and simcards are often available at the AJY flea market on arrival day and can be easily purchased at many locations throughout the city.

For more information on different providers and phone calls to and from Germany, you may wish to consult: [german-way.com](http://german-way.com) or [ricksteves.com](http://ricksteves.com).

### **Internet / WiFi**

High-speed internet is available throughout the AJY Study Center and in all Universität Heidelberg buildings. All dorm rooms are also equipped with internet access. You will be able to activate this connection once you are officially enrolled at Universität Heidelberg. Just like in the U.S., free WiFi is also available in many public spaces as well as shops, cafés, and restaurants.

### **Mail**

Be sure to give everyone your AJY address before you leave. Please use the following format:

**Your name**  
**c/o American Junior Year at Heidelberg University**  
**Hauptstrasse 133**  
**69117 Heidelberg**  
**Germany**

For customs purposes, mark your package as "Used items for personal use only – exchange student" Specific information on restrictions and regulations can be found on the German Customs Services [website](#).

### **Bicycles and Public Transportation**

Heidelberg is very accessible city, with an extensive network of bike paths. Many AJY students purchase an inexpensive, used bicycle (along with a helmet and a lock!) to get around town and most places throughout the city can be easily and safely reached within a 15-20 minute bike ride.

Heidelberg also has a convenient network of buses and streetcars that can take you nearly anywhere you wish to go. On weekdays, buses and streetcars run every ten minutes on most lines, with late night and weekend services slightly more limited.

The Heidelberg Semester-Ticket purchased for you by the program will grant you unlimited access to local and regional public transportation in a large area of southwestern Germany extending to Würzburg in the East and to Wissembourg, France in the West.

<https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/studium/studienorganisation/beitraege-gebuehren/semesterticket>



## **Personal Conduct and Responsibility**

As a foreigner, you are responsible for respecting the customs and traditions of the host country, obeying its laws, and observing the regulations of its institutions. In most cases you will be able to do this by using common sense and exercising courtesy and respect for the rights of others. In some cases, you will need to inform yourself about regulations and practices that are different from those at home.

AJY requires all students to familiarize themselves with the program's "**Student Code of Conduct**," which is distributed as part of the orientation materials you receive when you arrive in Heidelberg. All students are expected to adhere to the **rules governing the use of the AJY Center and the AJY Student Safety Provisions**. Our staff will also brief you on the **Heidelberg University Sex Discrimination Policy (Title IX)**.

The AJY program expects you to pursue your academic work earnestly, with discipline and integrity. The great amount of freedom you are afforded at Heidelberg University will require considerable amounts of self-discipline. Students are expected to adhere to the policies and guidelines outlined in this handbook. Additional materials on student conduct will be distributed at the orientation sessions taking place during the first few days of the program.

## **Places of Worship / Spiritual Life**

Regardless of your religious affiliation, you will find that places of worship provide an excellent opportunity to meet new people and become involved in community life in Heidelberg.

- The two major religious denominations in the area are the Roman Catholic Church, and the *Badische Landeskirche*, which draws from both Lutheran and Reformed traditions. See the following links: [www.kirche-heidelberg.de](http://www.kirche-heidelberg.de), [khg.unikativ.org](http://khg.unikativ.org), or [www.esg-heidelberg.de](http://www.esg-heidelberg.de).
- There is also a synagogue and an active Jewish community in Heidelberg: [jkg-heidelberg.org](http://jkg-heidelberg.org).
- There is a small mosque in Heidelberg (<http://www.islam-heidelberg.de>). A larger mosque is just a short distance away in neighboring Mannheim.
- Other churches and religious groups are represented in the Heidelberg area also: Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, Mormon, Quaker, Mennonite, Seventh-Day Adventist, and more.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

As a mid-sized German city with over 30,000 students, the possibilities for extracurricular involvement are plentiful and limited only by your imagination.

From Amnesty International to Environmental Groups, University and Church Choirs, Theater Groups, Sports Clubs – the opportunities are endless. For helpful information on navigating university life as

well as a list of university clubs, please consult the Universität Heidelberg Studierendenrat (Student Council) [website](#).

### **Service Learning**

The AJY program has a long tradition of student volunteers. Our students work with children, in nursing homes or senior citizen centers, food banks, homeless shelters, and more. During orientation, we will provide an overview of service learning options. If you would like to browse a catalogue of volunteering opportunities, please consult [Paritaethd.wordpress.com](http://Paritaethd.wordpress.com)

### **Cultural Opportunities and Sports**

You will find that Heidelberg and the surrounding area have an enormous number of cultural institutions and events to offer. You will be provided with a set of *AJY Culture Coupons*, which allow you to explore cultural events on your own or with friends. Showing your Universität Heidelberg student ID will often also grant you free or discounted access to museums, concerts, the theater, or other events.

Heidelberg's own municipal theater presents excellent performances in drama, opera, and modern dance. AJY students also frequently visit Germany's first national theater in neighboring Mannheim (15 minutes from Heidelberg). Students also frequent the Heidelberg Philharmonic Orchestra and attend events at the numerous festivals in or around town, from jazz to international film, from photo festivals to poetry slams; there is a wide variety of ways to use your AJY culture coupons for cultural opportunities!

Heidelberg is home to several museums, the best known being the *Kurpfälzisches Museum* with fascinating collections of Roman and Celtic archaeology, Heidelberg history, and fine arts dating from medieval times to the present. The city and the university also have interesting collections in the fields of pharmacy, ethnology, and classical sculpture. Universität Heidelberg maintains a museum covering the more than 600-year history of the university and permits tours of the university's student prison. The university library is home to the *Codex Manesse*, which is generally considered to be the finest existing collection of Middle High German poetry and scenes of courtly life.

For soccer fans interested in watching Bundesliga matches, there is the nearby Rhein-Neckar-Arena, home of the first league soccer club 1866 Hoffenheim. One of the leading teams in Europe's Champions Ice Hockey League, the *Mannheimer Adler*, also has its home arena a short distance outside of Heidelberg.

Aside from the [University Sports Facilities](#), Heidelberg has 120 community sports clubs (for example, rugby, lacrosse, and rowing), as well as two outdoor and three indoor pools. During the spring semester, you also have the opportunity to participate in the annual Heidelberg half-marathon or the “Heidelbergman” triathlon. For more information on sports in Heidelberg, please visit the city’s [website](#).

### **Staying with a German Family**

AJY students live in dormitories for the entirety of the program. However, short-term homestays (one to two weeks duration) with German families are available to full-year and full-semester students who wish to experience life with a German family. Typically, these homestays take place during the holiday season in December or during the break between the fall and the spring semester (mid-February to mid-April).

AJY cooperates with ‘Das Experiment’, a German non-profit organization that offers homestays throughout Germany. These homestays are available at virtually no charge to the student and are highly recommended. Interested students should consult the Experiment e.V. [website](#). Please be sure to contact AJY ([ajy@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ajy@uni-heidelberg.de)) well in advance to ensure placement since opportunities are limited.

### **Vacation and Travel**

AJY organizes a number of study trips and excursions during the preliminary course prior to the start of the semester. During the semester, we also encourage you to take advantage of the day and weekend excursions planned by the International Office of Universität Heidelberg. The destinations for these excursions include interesting cities such as Nürnberg, Würzburg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Strasbourg, or Hamburg. AJY Culture Coupons may be used to help pay for some of these excursions.

A very popular perk of the AJY program is the [German Rail Pass](#), which is included in your program fee. This train pass can be used for your individual travel during breaks or on weekends. **Full year students can opt for an Interrail Pass during their second semester.** Advice on student travel throughout Germany and Europe will be provided during orientation in Heidelberg.

As a full-time student at Universität Heidelberg, you will be issued a Student ID card. This card will provide you with many student discounts in Heidelberg and all over Germany. However, for traveling in Europe, you may wish to consider purchasing an International Student Exchange Identity Card (ISE or ISIC Card) in order to receive student discounts and services. Please visit [www.isecard.com](http://www.isecard.com) and [www.isic.de](http://www.isic.de) for further details.

We look forward to seeing you in Heidelberg. Bis bald!