

Finding Accommodation

A Guide for International Students
in Gießen & Friedberg



Impressum

Published by:

Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen (THM),
Studentenwerk Gießen,
Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen

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Layout revision third edition: THM Printmedien

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Services, Technische Hochschule
Mittelhessen (THM) Press Office

Edition:

3rd updated edition January 2017

Inhalt

Contents	3
1. Halls of residence	4
1.1 Student halls of residence run by Giessen Student Services	4
1.2 Privately run halls of residence in Giessen	5
2. Looking for private sector accommodation	6
2.1 Help from Giessen Student Services	6
2.2 International apartment sharing for THM students	8
2.3 Online accommodation portals	8
2.4 Other places to look for private accommodation	9
2.5 Short-term accommodation	11
3. Shared apartments (Wohngemeinschaft/ WG)	12
3.1 General information	12
3.2 Living in a shared apartment	14
4. Furniture and furnishings	16
5. Tenancy agreements and tenancy law	17
6. Abbreviations in ads for apartments and rooms	18

Introduction

This booklet contains useful advice to help you find somewhere to live. In Giessen and Friedberg, that is not always easy.

Rooms in halls of residence and shared apartments can be in short supply, particularly in the winter semester.

We therefore recommend that you start looking for somewhere to live as soon as you have your university admission certificate and have decided that you want to study in Giessen or Friedberg. The closer you get to the start of the semester, the more difficult it will be to find accommodation.

As more students apply for a place in a hall of residence run by Student Services

than there are rooms available, students often need to look for private sector accommodation in shared apartments, halls of residence or individual apartments.

We cannot vouch for the quality of the rooms or apartments or for the completeness of the information in this booklet. There could be other useful tips for students looking for accommodation in the area that we know nothing about. We would therefore be pleased to hear from you if you have any comments, ideas or suggestions for improving this booklet.



1. Halls of residence

1.1 Student halls of residence run by Giessen Student Services

Student Services has reasonably priced rooms in halls of residence (upwards of EUR 180 a month) in Giessen and Friedberg. However, many students apply for these rooms. You may therefore find yourself unable to obtain a room in the first semester.

If that should happen, put your name on the waiting list for a room in a hall of residence. Your name is kept on the waiting list for twelve months.

The twelve months start from the date on which you wish to move in. If you have not been offered a room in a hall of residence after that date and would still like to be considered for one, you must let Student Services know.

Once a month Student Services carries out a survey before the six months are over to find out who is still interested in being allocated a room. The survey will be sent to you by email. **You therefore need to make sure that the Halls of Residence Management at Student Services always has your current email address.** If you do not reply to the Student Services survey, your name will be removed from the waiting list. A reply means that your application will run until the next survey.

If you would like to be considered for a room in a student hall of residence, please apply to Giessen Student Services.

Giessen Student Services

Student Accommodation

📍 Otto-Behaghel-Str. 23
35394 Gießen
phone: 0641 40008-300
fax: 0641 40008-309
wohnen@studwerk.uni-giessen.de

General information

🌐 www.studentenwerk-giessen.de/Studentisches_Wohnen/

Hall of residence application

🌐 www.studentenwerk-giessen.de/Studentisches_Wohnen/Wohnheimantrag.html

1.2 Privately run halls of residence in Giessen

Apart from the halls of residence run by Student Services, there are also privately run halls of residence in Giessen.

Private hall of residence

Marburger Strasse 84
35396 Giessen
Management: H. Munch
phone: 0641 34522
40 single rooms, 30 split-level apartments

Private hall of residence

Bleichstrasse 37
35390 Giessen
Management phone: 0641 73691
23 single rooms

Private hall of residence

Watzenborner Weg 7
35394 Giessen
Management phone: 0641 73691
Tue, Thu: 6.30 pm - 9.30 pm, Sat: 9 am - 12 noon
123 single rooms with cooking facilities and a fridge

Private hall of residence

Am Bergwerkswald 2a
35390 Giessen
Management: W. Steinbrecher
Turnstr. 1, 35418 Buseck
phone: 06408 940225
11 apartments, 28 rooms in shared apartments



2. Looking for private sector accommodation

This section provides useful advice about looking for private sector accommodation in Giessen and Friedberg. Of course, we cannot vouch for the quality of the apartments or rooms. It is always advisable to look at the room before agreeing to rent it.

There are good train connections between Giessen and Friedberg and the two towns are only about 20 minutes apart by train. As there are more shared apartments in Giessen than in Friedberg, students in Friedberg might well be advised to look for accommodation in Giessen, too. Apart from looking for somewhere to live in Giessen and Friedberg, it is worthwhile extending your search to the surrounding areas. Rents are frequently far lower in smaller villages not far from Giessen and Friedberg and the bus and train connections are often reasonable. A JLU or THM semester ticket allows you to use the local public transport services free of charge, so that having to take a bus or train will not entail additional expenses.

2.1 Help from Giessen Student Services

Giessen Student Services can help you with your search for private sector accommodation in Giessen and Friedberg.

2.1.1 “Housing for Help”

As an alternative to applying for a room in a hall of residence or looking for private sector accommodation, the “Housing for Help” scheme proposes a special form of shared accommodation. People living in Giessen provide low-rent accommodation for students in exchange for help with small jobs around the home or in the garden or with the children. Student Services has set up a website at **www.wohnen-fuer-mithilfe.de** where landlords and students can advertise. The website also contains further information about the scheme. More students usually advertise than landlords, so the “Housing for Help” scheme cannot guarantee that you will find a room quickly. At the same time, the scheme has considerable advantages for both landlords and students. First and foremost, students benefit from greater social integration and gain an insight into life in the town.

Giessen Student Services

Student Accommodation
 Otto-Behaghel-Str. 23
 35394 Gießen
 phone: 0641 40008-300
 fax: 0641 40008-309
 wohnen@studwerk.uni-giessen.de
 www.studentenwerk-giessen.de
 www.wohnen-fuer-mithilfe.de

2.1.2 Accommodation ads

Student Services maintains a list of apartments and rooms currently available to rent. Students seeking accommodation

can also advertise on this website free of charge.

www.studentenwerk-giessen.de
 Click on Wohnbörse
 (http://134.176.79.136/wohnboerse/main.php)

2.1.3 “Accommodation Network” before and at the start of each winter semesters

Through “Accommodation Network” (Netzwerk Wohnen) Student Services provides an additional service before and at the start of each winter semester. For around two months “Accommodation Network” maintains a service point at the entrance to the Otto-Behaghel-Strasse Refectory in Giessen. The list of current housing vacancies is updated daily and two computer terminals can be used free of charge so that, for example, you can see what accommodation is advertised on the Student Services website (www.studentenwerk-giessen.de). Free editions of the local newspapers with accommodation ads can also be consulted.

If you spot an interesting advertisement, you can telephone the advertiser directly and free of charge from the service point to arrange a viewing. If needed, minicabs can also be booked directly via the service point. Students at the THM in Friedberg can contact the team at the service point in Giessen and use the computer terminal in the Refectory on the THM campus in Friedberg

to look for accommodation online.

Giessen Student Services

Student Accommodation
 Otto-Behaghel-Strasse 23
 35394 Giessen
 phone: 0641 40008-300 (Service Point Team: 0641 40008-330)
 fax: 0641 40008-309
 wohnen@studwerk.uni-giessen.de
 www.studentenwerk-giessen.de

2.2 International apartment sharing for THM students

“International Apartment Sharing” (WG International) helps international students at the Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen (THM) to find rooms in shared apartments in the area and provides:

- Advice and information on sharing an apartment in Germany and on general accommodation matters
- Help to look for vacant rooms or information on current vacancies
- Support by accompanying students going to view a shared apartment or room

The team searches the housing market for shared apartments where the occupants are interested in living in a cross-cultural environment. “International Apartment Sharing” is an initiative with an impact on society and encourages greater openness towards international students on the housing market and cross-cultural exchange.

Contact

wg-international@admin.thm.de
 go.thm.de/wg-international.
 THM, International Office,
 Platz der Deutschen Einheit 2, Giessen
 Room A13 0.09,
 phone: 0641 309 1332

2.3 Online accommodation portals

The best way of looking for a room in a shared apartment or for accommodation in the private sector is to use online portals. Many of them allow you to place an ad free of charge. Here is a selection of online portals:

Gießener Express

The online edition of the Express magazine contains a particularly large number of adverts for shared apartments in Giessen:

www.marbuch-verlag.de/okaz
 Click on Wohnen + Leben: Biete Giessen

Many rooms in shared apartments are advertised on the following websites:

www.wg-gesucht.de
 www.studenten-wg.de

Here are some other examples of online portals:

www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de
 Click on Immobilien+ Mietwohnungen
 www.immobilio.de
 www.studenten-wohnung.de/suche.php
 www.homecompany.de
 www.wohngemeinschaft.de
 www.meinestadt.de/giessen/immobilien
 www.immowelt.de

2.4 Other places to look for private accommodation

The AStA (General Students' Committee) at the THM in Giessen and Friedberg also have online ads and folders with details of vacant accommodation. The AStA at Justus Liebig University can give advice on looking for private accommodation.

AStA der Justus-Liebig-Universität (JLU)

📧 Otto-Behaghel-Str. 25
D Building
Next to the Otto-Behaghel-Strasse Refectory
💻 woso@asta-giessen.de

AStA der THM in Gießen

📧 Wiesenstr. 14
C14 Building, Room U11-U17
💻 www.asta.thm.de/giessen/service/wohnungsangebote

AStA der THM in Friedberg

📧 Wilhelm-Leuschner-Str. 13
💻 www.thm.de/asta/friedberg/

The THM AStA has a folder in Giessen and in Friedberg with details of rooms and shared apartments to let. The folder in Friedberg is outside the AStA room on the ground floor in C Building. (If you cannot find the AStA room, you can ask at the Information Desk.) The folder in Giessen is in the AStA Secretariat in C14 Building, Room U11-U17.

Noticeboards

Many people living in shared apartments put up a notice when they have a room to

let. There are noticeboards at the THM in Giessen (e.g. entrance to the THM Refectory; the CampusTor Cafeteria; transit areas between A10, A15 and C10 Buildings on the THM campus; faculty areas), but there are more of them at the University, e.g. Otto-Behaghel-Strasse Refectory; Philosophikum I bus stop, Rathenaustrasse; Old Refectory Mildred-Harnack-Fish-Haus – Leihgesterner Weg; entrance to the Philosophikum II building complex; Philosophikum II Cafeteria; University Library, Philosophikum I, Otto-Behaghel-Strasse; main university building, Ludwigstrasse.

Local newspapers and magazine

The local newspapers and magazines are good places to look for shared apartments and other accommodation. The following website contains a list of local newspapers and noticeboards:

💻 www.uni-giessen.de/studium/studienbeginn/wohnen/anzeigen



Here are a few examples:

Gießener Anzeiger

💻 www.giessener-anzeiger.de
↳ Click on Anzeigen • Immobilien • Miete, Zimmer / WG

Apartments and rooms to let are advertised in the print edition on Fridays. Exactly the same ads are published in the Giessener Allgemeine.

Gießener Allgemeine

💻 www.giessener-allgemeine.de
↳ Click on Anzeigen • Immobilien • Mieten
Apartments and rooms to let are advertised in the print edition on Fridays. Exactly the same ads are published in the Giessener Anzeiger.

Wetterauer Zeitung (for Friedberg)

💻 www.wetterauer-zeitung.de
↳ Click on Anzeigen • Immobilien • Mieten

MAZ - Mittelhessische Anzeigenzeitung

💻 http://maz-verlag.de/rubrik/vermietungen

The newspaper is published on Wednesdays and is delivered free of charge to all households.

Pendleton Barracks housing project

Information on accommodation vacancies at Pendleton Barracks in Giessen is available from the "Gesellschaft für soziales Wohnen mbH" at

💻 http://gsw-giessen.de/wohnprojekt-pendelton

The company has shared apartments for students and social housing.

Accommodation managed by the Protestant and Catholic student associations

The Protestant Student Association (ESG) rents rooms for students in shared apartments in Henselstr. 7. The rooms are in apartments shared by six, four or three people. They are between 13 and 17 m² in size with shared use of the bathroom and kitchen. The accommodation is provided for national and international students who are interested in intercultural exchange and who are willing to work at the ESG. If you would like to apply for one of the rooms that become available in the next semesters or if you would like more information, please contact the ESG.

Protestant Student Association (ESG)

📧 Henselstr. 7
35390 Gießen
phone: 0641 76757
💻 www.esg-giessen.de
Applications to: info@esg-giessen.de

The Catholic University Association Giessen (KHG) has two shared apartments, one with five and one with three rooms. They are furnished. They can be let to needy students. Commitment to the various KHG forums is required. Please send your applications to

Catholic University Association (KHG)

📧 Pfarrer S. Karl,
Wilhelmstr. 28
35392 Gießen
phone: 0641 78031
💻 www.khg-giessen.de

2.5. Short-term accommodation

The following addresses may be useful if you are looking for accommodation for an interim period or while you are waiting to hear whether you have been offered a room in a shared apartment.

2.5.1 Giessen

Short-term accommodation run by Giessen Student Services

Giessen Student Services has short-term accommodation for students who have to travel great distances to look for accommodation in Giessen or Friedberg. The accommodation is available all year round and can be rented for one or more days at a reasonable rate per night. The rooms contain beds and you share the room with other students looking for accommodation. Accommodation in these rooms is not intended to be a long-term solution but only for a limited period of 10 days at the most. The accommodation can be booked centrally through Giessen.

Giessen Student Services

Student Accommodation

📍 Otto-Behaghel-Straße 23

phone: 0641 40008-300

fax: 0641 40008-309

📧 wohnen@studwerk.uni-giessen.de

Hostel Shepherd Inn

📍 Wetzlarer Str. 103

35398 Gießen / Kleinlinden

phone: (0641) 28552

📧 service@tellervision.de

Single from EUR 25, Double from EUR 56 per night

Giessen youth hostel

📍 Marcus Winter

Richard-Schirmann-Weg 53

35398 Gießen

phone: 0641 65879

📧 www.giessen.jugendherberge.de

jh-giessen@jugendherberge.de

One night with breakfast from EUR 20

Gästehaus Wilhelma

📍 Wilhelmstr.3

35392 Gießen

Tel.: 0641-792665

📧 info@gaestehaus-wilhelma.de

Single from EUR 25, Double from EUR

56 per night / Appartements: Single from

EUR 46, Double from EUR 50 per night

2.5.2 Friedberg

Gästehaus Alder

📍 Königsberger Str. 6

61169 Friedberg

phone: 06031 62239

📧 info@seminar-und-gaestehaus.de

Single rooms from EUR 21 per night

Double rooms from EUR 42 per night

Pension Alfred Dollwet

📍 Dorheimer Str. 4

61169 Friedberg

phone: 0173 4650810

Single rooms only: 1-3 nights EUR 30€

per night, from 3 nights: EUR 25 per night

Gaststätte Hotel „Hanauer Hof“

Familie Bernd Heinrich

📍 Fauerbacher Straße 6

61169 Friedberg/Hessen

phone: 06031 5575

📧 info@hanauerhof-friedberg.de

www.hanauerhof-friedberg.de

Single rooms EUR 45 for one night /

EUR 40 for each additional night

Double rooms EUR 75 per night

3. Shared apartments (Wohngemeinschaft/ WG)

3.1 General information

In a shared apartment, each person usually has his or her own room. The bathroom and kitchen are shared with the other occupants. Shared apartments are a common form of accommodation for students in Germany. To rent an entire apartment or house, you frequently need to provide proof of income or a guarantor. If you rent a room in a shared apartment, that is not usually the case.

3.1.1 Furnished / Unfurnished

It is not usual for the rooms to be furnished. Sometimes you can negotiate a price for some of the furniture but unless otherwise stated in the advertisement, you should be prepared to find an empty room. It is only usual for rooms to be fully furnished when they are sublet. Further information on subletting is given in the next section. For information about where to find inexpensive furniture and furnishings, please go to section 4 "Furniture and furnishings".

3.1.2 Subletting

Subletting means that the room is let for a specific time only. That often occurs because the person who normally occupies the room is spending a semester abroad or has a practical placement in another town. Subletting can be a good solution while you

are finding your feet. Although you usually have to move again at the end of the specified period, the competition is less fierce for sublets as they are generally less popular than long-term lets. While you are subletting you have time to look for a room with an open-ended tenancy agreement. What is more, someone sharing the apartment occasionally decides to move out while you are subletting and you can then take over his/her room on a long-term basis. Private rooms to let (often from Giessen outgoing students subletting their flats for incoming students) can be found on Giessen University's flat exchange on

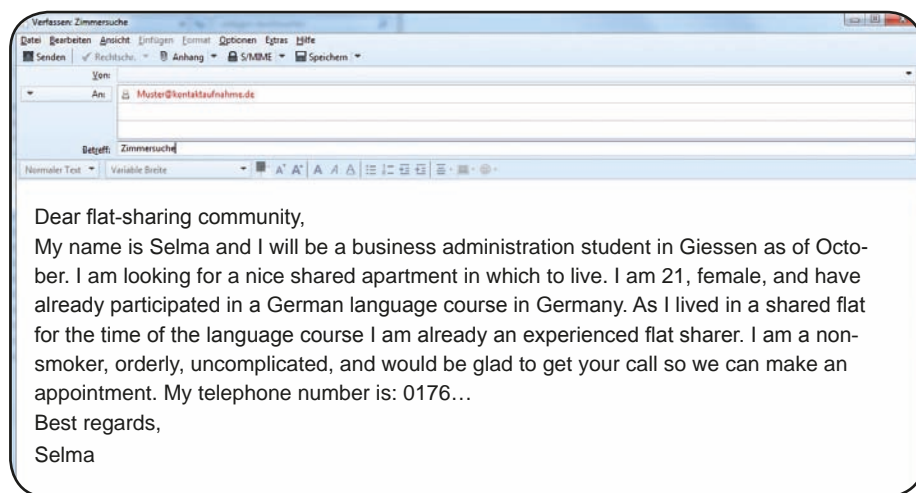
📧 www.uni-giessen.de/wherelive



3.1.3 Contacting people in a shared apartment

Sharing an apartment usually means living with people of roughly the same age as yourself. It is therefore not usual to be formal when you contact them; the occupants usually say "du" to each other. You generally contact the people sharing an apartment with a spare room by phone or

email. If you contact them by email, the best thing to do is to give your telephone number and to say something about yourself in the message. Here is an example of an email enquiry:



3.1.4 Viewing the shared apartment

The next thing is to go and look at the room and to meet the people already living in the shared apartment. After you have viewed the apartment, it is usual for everyone to spend 15-30 minutes getting to know each other to see whether you could all get along together. As apartment sharing is very popular in Germany and there is a shortage of rooms in Giessen and Friedberg, several applicants will probably view the room. The people living in the shared apartment then choose the applicant who seems to fit best. They generally let you know whether or not you have been chosen to share the apartment a few days after the viewing.

3.2 Living in a shared apartment

3.2.1 Communal living or a means to an end?

The extent to which life in a shared apartment is truly communal varies from one apartment to the next. In some shared apartments the occupants frequently meet in the kitchen, go shopping and cook together.

In other shared apartments the occupants hardly spend any time together. The indication "Wir sind keine Zweck-WG" (We are not just a means to an end) in an advert for a room in a shared apartment generally means that occupants want a form of community life. "Zweck-WG" is the term used for shared apartments whose occupants hardly spend any time together and live together primarily because it is generally cheaper to share an apartment.

3.2.2 Communal kitty

The fridge is often divided into sections or shelves, giving each occupant space for his/her own food items. In some shared apartments, however, some food items and other consumables are bought and used communally (e.g. butter, milk, salt, sugar, oil, cleaning products). Shared apartments also exist in which all foodstuffs and consumables are paid for out of a communal kitty to which everyone contributes on a regular basis.

3.2.3 Cleaning rotas, snow clearance

To make everyday life as pleasant as possible and to avoid arguments, many shared apartments have a cleaning rota that specifies who cleans what part of the apartment and when. Many shared apartments also have special rules about washing the dishes.

Snow clearance may also be included in the cleaning rota. If there is no caretaker and the town council is not responsible for snow clearance, the people sharing the apartment must clear the snow outside the building. This is very important as if someone slips and falls over because the snow had not been cleared, the tenants can be held liable and they will then have to cover the cost of medical treatment. A similar rule applies to corridors and hallways in apartment buildings. Tenants of the individual apartments are often responsible for kee-

ping them clean. The rules governing these matters and how often the areas have to be cleaned vary from one shared apartment to another. To avoid conflict, ask.

3.2.4 Sorting waste

Waste is sorted in most households in Germany. There is generally a "biowaste" bin for compostable waste (leftover food, etc.) and a "Yellow bag" for packaging with a green dot that is not made of paper or glass. Waste paper and glass are also collected and disposed of separately. Most other waste is placed in "residual waste". If you have any questions about sorting waste, ask your flatmates and get someone to explain the system to you.

3.2.5 Smoking

The rules about smoking also vary. Some shared apartments ban smoking in the apartment, including in your own room. In other shared apartments smoking is allowed in your own room, while others still allow smoking in all rooms. If it is important for you to know how this matter is dealt with, the best thing to do is to ask about it when you first view the apartment or when you make an appointment to view it.

The above points are just some examples of rules in shared apartments; each shared apartment has its own rules for communal living. If in doubt, it is better to ask once too often than once too few how certain matters are settled.

4. Furniture and furnishings

In addition to the large furniture shops in Giessen and the surrounding area there are a number of ways of acquiring low-price or second-hand furniture and furnishings. Some examples are given below.

The online edition of the Giessener Express has some ads for inexpensive, second-hand furniture and furnishings in the section "Möbel/Hausrat":

www.marbuch-verlag.de/okaz/
 ↳ Click on Wohnen + Leben:
 Möbel / Hausrat

Flea markets and jumble sales: e.g. the flea market and jumble sale on the Karstadt bargain store car park in Giessen:

Karstadt bargain store car park
 📍 Rodheimer Straße 116
 35398 Gießen

Flea market and jumble sale from April to October, Saturdays from 6.00 until 15.00

www.marktcom.de/veranstaltungen/8702-Am-Karstadt-Schnaepchenmarkt

Online student ads: second-hand furniture advertised by students for students:

www.studenteninserate.de/moebeleinrichtung/giessen.d/

Jugendwerkstatt in Giessen: second-hand and repaired furniture at very low prices:

www.jugendwerkstatt-giessen.de/daskaufhaus

Every Tuesday and Wednesday, the daily newspapers Giessener Anzeiger and Giessener Allgemeine have a "flea market" with items for sale up to EUR 25. Furniture and furnishings are also advertised.

www.giessener-anzeiger.de/anzeigen/flohmarkt/index.htm
www.giessener-allgemeine.de
 ↳ Click on Anzeigen / Marktplatz

It is also worth looking at the noticeboards at the THM or JLU and in the Refectories for furniture for sale.



5. Tenancy agreements and tenancy law

Before signing a tenancy agreement, check it carefully. There are various kinds of tenancy agreements. For example, a fixed-term tenancy agreement will include a fixed date for the start and end of the agreement, i.e. landlord and tenant cannot terminate these agreements before the agreed end date (except for termination without notice).

NB: Not all fixed-term tenancy agreements are lawful, so please have them checked (e.g. by the Legal Advice Department at the JLU AStA, Otto-Behaghel-Strasse 25D, Room 16.1; consulting hours: see below).

In the case of open-ended agreements, the period of notice for tenants is generally no later than the third business day of the third month before you intend to vacate the apartment. For example, if you want to move out of your apartment on 31 August, you will have to give notice by the third working day in June.

Longer periods of notice are not legal. Notice must be given in writing and signed. An email is not sufficient. The best thing is to hand over the written notice in person and in the presence of a witness or to send it by recorded delivery.

In the private sector it is customary to be asked to pay a deposit of two to three times

the monthly rent (Student Services deposit: EUR 250). You have to pay this right at the start when you rent an apartment or a room. Your money is refunded when you move out unless you owe the landlord money (e.g. for unpaid rent or an unpaid utilities bill) or if your room has not been cleaned or has been damaged.

The JLU Giessen AStA provides free advice for students on matters relating to tenancy law. It is available on Monday and Wednesday from 11.00 to 13.00 during the lecture period and from 12.00 to 13.00 during the lecture-free period, in Otto-Behaghel-Strasse 25D, Room 16.1.

Further information on tenancy law and standard tenancy agreements is provided on the website of the Deutscher Mieterbund e.V.:

www.mieterbund.de



6. Abbreviations in ads for apartments and rooms

2 MM KT	deposit of 2 months' rent
Abstand / Ablöse	If the outgoing tenant asks for "Abstand" or "Ablöse" e.g. for a bed or other furniture, this means that part of the accommodation's furnishing has to be purchased but then belongs to you. It may also mean a small contribution towards a new washing machine or kitchen equipment.
AR	storage room
BaWa	bath
BeKo	extra charges/utilities
Blk	balcony
DaBo	attic
DG	top floor
EBK	fitted kitchen
EG	ground floor
HK	heating costs
Inet	internet
KM	rent excluding heating charges
KT	deposit
m	male, number followed by m or w (e.g. 2 m, 1 w)= number of male or female flatmates (in the example: 2 male flatmates, 1 female flatmate)
MV	tenancy agreement
NK	additional charges (usually for water, heating, electricity, building maintenance, etc.)
NkVz	additional charges payable in advance (advance monthly payment of the additional charges, the amount is checked and adjusted at a later date, as necessary. If not all the money has been used up, you will get some of the original payment back; if consumption is high, you will have to pay an extra amount.)
NR	non-smoker
OG	upper floor
ÖPNV	local public transport (e.g. bus)
renov.	newly decorated
SpüMa	dishwasher
SS	summer semester
TGB	bathroom with daylight, i.e. there is a window
VB	negotiable
w	female, number followed by m or w (e.g. 2 m, 1 w)= number of male or female flatmates

WaMa	(in the example: 2 male flatmates, 1 female flatmate)
Whg.	apartment
WK	kitchen/diner (large kitchen/diner, with enough space to sit together)
WM	rent usually including heating and water charges, but usually excluding electricity
WS	winter semester
ZH	central heating
ZKB	room, kitchen, bathroom
zzgl.	Plus

**Disclaimer**

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