

White Rose University Consortium: College of Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities Research Culture in Germany

Academia

What TO DO and what NOT TO DO

TO DO

1. Address someone as 'Sie' if you're unsure – 'Du' is for friends, family, and peers only.
2. Do look others in the eyes when you're talking to them. This signals you're paying attention to what the other is saying and is the polite thing to do.
3. It's a cliché, but be on time for any meeting, and even when meeting friends. If you realise you're running late, let the other person know if you can, and apologise.
4. If you have a German bank account, make sure you know at which cash machines you can get money out for free. If you are with the Sparkasse but take money out at a Volksbank cash machine, you will get charged several Euros for using their machine.
5. When out for a meal with others, never simply start eating. You wait until everyone has been served, say 'guten Appetit!', and only then dig in!



NOT TO DO

1. Don't give rounds in pubs – it's unusual. Everyone tends to pay for their own drinks and food, both in bars and restaurants. People will feel uneasy about you paying for them if it isn't a special occasion. Among close friends, of course, this can be different.
2. Don't always rely on your debit card (even less on your credit card). In many smaller shops and cafés you will still need to pay cash. Also, in most shops you have to spend 10 Euros or more to be allowed to pay by card.
3. Don't just knock on a lecturer's or professor's door and expect them to have time for you because you happened to have seen they are in. If you want to meet someone, arrange it beforehand, either via email, or by putting your name down for a slot in their next office hours ('Sprechstunde') on a list attached to their office door. With your own supervisor, this might be different.
4. Don't try and do your weekly food shop on a Sunday: You'll be disappointed as German supermarkets still stick to the Christian tradition of closing on Sundays. They close early on Saturdays (c. 9-4pm), but are open for longer than in England on weekdays, usually until 8pm, in bigger cities until 10 or 11 pm.

5. Don't do your driving test in Germany if you can avoid it. It is much more expensive than in the UK to get a driving license, and easily costs between 1,000 and 2,000 Euros when you add up all the driving lessons, theory sessions, and costs of the actual examinations (both theoretical and practical).



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