

Frequently Asked Questions

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ISCO & GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

What is ISCO?

The ISCO is the [International Summer Campus Office](#) of the [University of Potsdam's](#) International Relations Office. The ISCO develops, organizes and supervises special course programs taking place outside of the regular course calendar of the University of Potsdam. Moreover, the course office is responsible for visitors coming to the University of Potsdam on a study trip.

What kinds of courses are offered?

ISCO offers [three program types](#) with different courses:

Summer School Programs	are subject-specific courses for international students, PhDs and PostDocs and mainly taught in English.
Tailor Made Programs	are customized courses designed for and with our partners (closed groups).
Intensive Language Programs	are language courses to deepen your knowledge of German culture and language. Courses provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deutsch(land)kurs Willkommen – Orientation course mainly targeting ERASMUS and exchange students taking place twice a year in spring and fall• International Summer Academy Sans Souci – Intensive language course offering additional seminars and project courses on German history and culture.

Am I matriculated at the University of Potsdam during the ISCO courses?

This depends on the course you take, but usually you are not.

Will I receive a student ID and the associated student discount?

Yes. You will receive temporary participant ID offering you reduced prices at our canteens as well as at scientific and [cultural institutions in Potsdam and Berlin](#). You will also have access to the library and computer pool room of the University of Potsdam. Please note that you may not take books out of the libraries because this requires a permanent address in Germany.

Who teaches ISCO courses?

Our [lecturers are qualified teachers of the University of Potsdam](#) or visiting lecturers with many years of teaching experience. Many of them have studied or worked abroad, speak several languages and have experience in working with groups of diverse backgrounds.

To combine 'theory and practice' we bring representatives from the world of work into the classroom as well.

Will I receive credit points for the completion of the courses?

This varies from course to course – but in the majority of courses you will receive credit points. Please refer to the respective course website.

If credits are given, you will receive credits of the University of Potsdam which are calculated following the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). One ECTS credit corresponds to a workload of 25-30 hours. The amount of work includes attending class as well as individual work or study outside of class and in some cases extracurricular activities as well.

Will credit points be accepted by my home university?

Please note that every academic institution proceeds by its own directives when accepting study achievements of other academic institutions. Therefore, we recommend that you speak with your academic advisor or professor before you register for ISCO courses to make sure that the credits you receive will be recognized by your home university.

Will I receive a certificate at the end of a course?

This varies from course to course – in any cases you will receive a confirmation of participation.

Our certificates list the duration of the program, the course titles, the number of contact hours and the number of credits earned and grades if applicable.

Where can I find information about courses from previous years or experience reports from former participants?

A selection of courses can be found in our [program archive](#). Experience reports can be found under "[Summer Stories](#)".

Where do the courses take place?

The courses and sessions usually take place within the premises of the University of Potsdam, primarily at [Campus Am Neuen Palais](#).

Is the venue accessible for people with a disability?

Not all rooms of the University of Potsdam are accessible. You can find a map for accessibility [here](#).

APPLICATION**Who can participate?**

Usually courses are offered for international students, PhDs and Post Docs.

For the Intensive Language Programs and some Summer School Programs we might accept minors and non-students as well. Please contact us directly.

What general conditions of participation are there?

Please read our [Conditions of Participation](#) for this.

Which prerequisites for course participation exist?

For the [Deutsch\(land\)kurs Willkommen](#) we recommend to have A2 German language level ([according to the European Reference Framework](#)) and you need to be at least 18 years old.

For the [International Summer Academy Sans Souci](#) we recommend to have B2 German language level and you need to be at least 16 years old.

For the [Summer School Programs](#) you usually need a B2 level for English (please inform yourself on the respective course website)

For further participation requirements please check the course website.
Exceptions are possible after consulting with [ISCO](#).

Do I need to take a language test?

No. [Intensive Language Courses](#): We will do a placement test at the beginning of the course. The results serve to better allocate you to the respective language course. Please note, that with a lower language level than required you might have difficulties to follow course instructions or content.

How do I apply/book the course?

This information you can find on the respective course website. In most of the cases registration will be done via an online form or directly per mail.

What kind of documents do I need for the application?

For the application you only need a bank account and, if necessary, a valid identification document.

What payment options do I have?

Payment is only possible via bank transfer. Possible transaction or other bank fees are required to be paid by the participant.

Can I receive grants/scholarships?

The University of Potsdam does not offer scholarships on a regular basis. In case funds do become available, this will be published on our website.

For the International Summer Academy Sans Souci you have the possibility to apply for a [scholarship](#) via the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service).

Furthermore, students may want to do some research for scholarships offered by their home university and organizations in their home country.

Is there an application deadline?

Yes. Please refer to the respective course website.

Can I get the course fee back in case I have to cancel?

There are cancellation regulations in place. Please refer to our [Conditions of Participation](#).

Do I have to participate in the recommended free time activities or excursions?

No, but please note that most of these activities are included in the course price and that non-participation does not result in any reimbursement.

Can I change the course?

Upon request we will always try our best to find the best solution for you. However, we cannot give any guarantee due to capacity reasons.

ARRIVAL

Do I need a visa to enter Germany?

As an EU-citizen you usually do not need visa to enter Germany. Please inform yourself early (at least 3 months before arrival) if you need a visa by contacting the [German embassy](#) about possible requirements. If you need a visa, you must apply for a tourist visa which covers the time of the course. German Embassy or the consulate in your home country will issue visas.

Can ISCO help me during the visa applying process?

Upon request ISCO can issue a letter of participation for you, confirming that you will be studying during the respective period at the University of Potsdam. The condition for receiving such a letter is that you have already registered and paid all incurred costs. We can e-mail the document to you as a PDF file or fax it directly to the respective German embassy. In this case you will need to send the necessary contact data of the embassy (including contact person and fax number).

What are the current COVID19 regulations?

Please check regularly for international travel and quarantine regulations for your country of departure. Current information is available on the following websites:

[BMI](#)
[European Commission](#)
[German Foreign Office](#)
[Federal Ministry of Health](#)

Please also note that proof of vaccination with an EU-approved vaccine may be required for some countries. A list of approved vaccines can be found [here](#).

When should I arrive?

If you have booked accommodation with us, please refer to our website for the specific arrival and departure dates. Earlier arrivals or later departures are not possible.

How can I get to the University of Potsdam (Campus "Am Neuen Palais")?

We recommend using the "[VBB Journey Planner](#)". Enter your current location and "Potsdam, Park Sanssouci Bhf." as your destination. From there it will be a 10-minute walk to the campus. You need a ticket valid for the area "Berlin ABC".

Further arrival information and how to reach us you may find [here](#).

What should I bring with me?

The most important things you need to bring are:

- Passport
- [Visa](#) (if applicable), valid test/vaccination or convalescent certificate (if applicable)
- Invitation letter of the university (if applicable)
- Enough cash for the first days (depending on your personal life style we recommend 100-300€)
- Valid [international health insurance](#) (we further recommend an accident and personal liability insurance)
- Clothing:

In summer the weather is quite variable. It is advisable to bring clothes for hot summer weather as well as closed shoes, pants and sweaters for chilly days. Average temperature in Potsdam is between 13°C and 30°C. In winter the temperatures lie between +10 °C and -10 °C. You should bring a warm jacket, a scarf, a hat, gloves and water resistant shoes

- Medication (if applicable): If you have a medical condition that requires you to travel with medication, you should have your physician write a letter describing your condition and prescription medications, along with a list of any generic names of the prescribed medication. You should leave your medications in their original containers. You may want to check if your medication is considered a narcotic drug in Germany via the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices. A list of substances subject to special regulations can be found on the following [website](#): If your medication is on this list, you will have to fill out a special form, which can be found [here](#).
- Adapters
- Mobile Phone: Do not forget to check your international mobile tariff and/or to unlock your SIM
- Laptop
- If you will live in a student dormitory: LAN cable and bed covers for pillow and bedspread

Do I have internet access?

In student dormitories: Access via LAN-cable or WLAN router. Please bring your own or buy one upon your arrival. You further need to inform ISCO on the [MAC address](#) of your computer.

On campus: You will receive WLAN vouchers upon arrival to connect.

In host families: Usually, WLAN is offered.

Private accommodation: Please consult the owner/landlord/reception

When and how will I receive information material?

At least two weeks before the arrival you will receive our general information package via mail. WLAN-vouchers and your temporary student ID as well as course material (if applicable) you will receive upon arrival.

ACCOMMODATION**Where do I live during the course?**

For some courses we can offer a limited allotment in [student dormitories](#).

For [Tailor Made Programs](#) we can offer accommodation in host families, hotels or hostels. Please find more information on our [website](#).

Of course you can always book a [private accommodation](#) on your own. If you need any help, we will be happy to provide you with [some tips and suggestions](#). Please note, accommodation costs in Potsdam are relatively high, especially during the summer months. In Germany, it is furthermore customary that short-term leases are relatively more expensive than long-term leases - one can expect to pay more than twice as much for a short-term stay. Make sure you book your private accommodation well in advance.

Exchange and ERASMUS students/ participants of [Deutsch\(land\)kurs Willkommen](#): Usually, you apply for a room in the dormitories yourself.

When will I know at which student dormitory I will stay?

The allocation of the rooms will be done by the [Studentenwerk \(landlord\)](#) – that is the reason why you will get to know this information only on arrival day. Please note that we have no influence on allocation and are therefore not able to consider any preferences.

What do I need to bring if I stay in a student dormitory?

All rooms' furnishing serves basic needs. Every room has a bed (including bed linen: pillow, linen, blanket), a cupboard, a desk and chair, a shelf and partially a refrigerator as well. Kitchen and bathroom facilities will be jointly used.

Not in place: bed linen (covers, sheets), pillows (included for participants of International Summer Academy Sans Souci), adapters, hair dryer, towels and LAN-Cable. Crockery is sometimes available in the kitchen (basic lay-out).

Can friends stay with me at the student dormitory?

No. Disregard can lead to an expulsion of the rooms.

Where can I buy groceries or food?

No matter where you are located, a supermarket is usually close by and within easy reach. Here you can find an [overview map](#).

Are meals included in the price for the accommodation?

No. Divergent regulations are possible, e.g. if you have booked a hostel or stay in a host family.

Where can I go to have low-priced lunch?

With your participant ID you can a discount at the canteen (so called "[Potsdamer Mensen](#)"). The price for lunch, dessert included, will be maximum EURO 3.

Is public transportation available at the student dormitories?

The "Studentenwerk" has various dormitory locations within Potsdam – always closely located to public transport stations. The [public transportation system](#) (tram, Bus, S-Bahn, metro, Regional trains) is well established. Furthermore, there are several rental facilities for bicycles.

Who do I contact in case of any problems in the dormitory?

Please contact the respective [caretaker](#) of your dormitory. This person is available via mobile phone as well as during consulting hours.

OTHER

My question is still not answered. What shall I do?

Please contact us directly via [mail](#) or via telephone number +49 (0)331 977 1724.