

Tips for finding a shared flat in Germany

In Germany it is very common for students to live in a shared flat, in German called "Wohngemeinschaft" or short "WG". Each person has their own room but you share kitchen, bathroom and sometimes a communal room.

What does the process from searching for a WG to moving in look like?

1. Select criteria for your WG search:
 - a. Mixed genders, all-female, all-male?
 - b. How big should the room be?
 - c. Furnished, partly furnished, unfurnished?
 - d. In which area should it be situated?
 - e. How much can you realistically pay?

2. Contact the person that offers the room in a WG. Remember: there is a shortage of affordable housing, so the landlords/landladies or future flat mates have many candidates to choose from. It is not recommended to simply apply by saying that you are desperate and that they need to help you out. **While you may be desperately searching for housing, the future flat mates are at this point looking for someone to share a part of their life with – not to help someone in need.** Write a personal introduction text, which should include for example:
 - ✓ General information: name, age, studies/work, do you already live in Cologne/Gummersbach or nearby or are you moving to our region from somewhere else?
 - ✓ What do you like to do (hobbies, weekly activities, traveling etc.)?
 - ✓ How would you describe yourself (your character, your social life etc.)?
 - ✓ Have you ever lived in a WG?
 - ✓ What is important for you when it comes to living together?

Pro-Tip: refer to information that you can take from the advertisement, show interest for the WG (a common activity that was described in the advertisement / cooking together, going out, parties etc.). If they look for a flat mate to actively share the daily life with and maybe become friends, adjust your text to this. If it is a "sharing cost" situation only (often called a "Zweck-WG"), phrase your application accordingly.

3. Apply for several WGs to increase your chances

4. During the WG casting / first meeting:
 - ✓ Behave in a friendly and open manner
 - ✓ Know that you may be asked to come with several other candidates to a group interview
 - ✓ Respond to the questions of the flat mates and ask about life in the WG
 - ✓ Pay attention to any possible problems in the WG, in case they are obvious (is it clean, how do the flat mates interact with one another)?
 - ✓ Let the potential future flat mates know promptly whether you are seriously interested

5. If you are accepted, arrange an appointment to sign the rental agreement and the handover of the key(s) and clarify further details – and then move in! 😊

Good luck for your search!