UNIVERSITY OF AUGSBURG

Study strategies at the University of Augsburg



Important information before starting your studies



The International Office of the University of Augsburg has put together a series of presentations for international first-year students with the most important information about studying and living in Augsburg.

This presentation is the fourth of seven. It covers **strategies to help you get through your studies.** We recommend that you carefully review all presentations so that you are well prepared to start your studies and can clarify any important questions.

All presentations are available online and can be downloaded via the following link: https://www.uni-augsburg.de/en/portal/internationals/abschluss/study-preparation-course/.

Making contacts at university

Why is this topic important?

“You always have to be proactive yourself, otherwise you won't make any friends. It's somehow the case that Germans don't even talk to other Germans that often. You should always ask if they want to go to the movies or, for example, to a café to chat.”

(Quote from an international student)



Making contacts at university

Where can you meet other students?

- Before, during, and after classes ⟶ Talk to the people sitting next to you, ask questions, and exchange numbers!
- In the cafeteria ⟶ Ask if you can sit with someone and start a conversation!
- At the "Hochschulsport" (= sports courses offered by the university) ⟶ these courses are a great way to meet other students!
- In student associations⟶ Attend events organized by student associations or—even better!—become a member yourself!
- At socio-cultural events organized by the International Office, the ESG, the KHG, or ESN!
- In the dormitory ⟶ Talk to other students or approach the dormitory tutors!



Participation in university life – **Einfach mitmachen**!

Fachschaft (= student association)

= A group of students from a particular degree program who act as support and contact persons for all students in that program.

⟶ They provide tips and recommendations for studying.
⟶ They often share lecture notes and old exams to help students prepare for exams.
⟶ They organize events.

Not every degree program has a student council, but most do.

AStA (= General Student Committee)

= (cross-faculty) student representation
⟶ organizes various projects
⟶ consists of the executive committee and departments dealing with the following topics:

- Queer
- Culture
- Public relations
- Anti-racism
- Digitalization
- Society and political education
- Gender and equality
- Health
- Higher education policy
- International affairs
- Social affairs and inclusion
- Student freedom
- Environment and climate



Groups and initiatives

- Political university groups
- Amnesty International university group
- UNICEF university group
- OpenAfroAux
- Law Clinic Augsburg
- Chess club "Universität Augsburg Schach"
- CampusKunst (Art group)
- Theater groups
- Choir and orchestra

⟶ Keep an eye out for flyers and bulletin boards!

Presentations and term papers

As a general rule, exact requirements vary from program to program – and sometimes even from lecturer to lecturer!

Presentations:

- Present scientific discussion on a topic in a compact and comprehensible manner.
- Provide an overview of a field of research.
- Create a basis for discussion.
- Summarize and discuss theses.
- Present one or more texts.
- "Preliminary stage" of the term paper.

⟶ Pay attention to the lecturer's specific instructions!

Term papers:

- Relate your own thinking to the opinions of others and contribute the results to scientific discourse.
- Objectivity: It is not about presenting a "universal truth," but rather about arguing comprehensibly for a relevant thesis.
- Research:
  - Reading recommendations from lecturers/seminar syllabus.
  - If needed, take an introduction to using the library!
- Plagiarism = theft of intellectual property/ incorrect citation/lack of source references ⟶ can lead to disenrollment!
- Be careful when using AI!

⟶ Follow the **style sheet**/lecturer's instructions on topic selection, number of pages, AI use, etc.

Emails to lecturers

Why do students write emails to lecturers?



When you have clear questions that can be answered quickly:

- Requesting an appointment
- Postponing a deadline
- Short inquiries (bibliography, seminar start date, exam requirements)
- Registering for a course

Important:

- State the course title so that the recipient knows which course you are referring to
- Be polite but concise and brief, as lecturers receive many emails (avoid "filler sentences").
- Read through your email again before sending it.
- For complex topics, visit the office hours (if necessary, you can also arrange an appointment for a phone call or Zoom meeting).
- Check your mailbox regularly for a reply.
- If an appointment has been suggested, confirm it (otherwise the lecturer may not be available).

Emails to lecturers

Notes and recommendations:



Subject line:

- Provide a brief and specific subject line in keywords.
- Establish the relevant context for the recipient to help them place your message.

Form of address:

- ‘Dear Ms. (Prof. / Dr.) + surname’
- ‘Dear Mr. (Prof. / Dr.) + surname’
- Pay attention to how you are addressed and respond accordingly.

Closing:

- “Best regards” is always appropriate

⟶ Be sure to phrase your request politely!

Consultation hours with lecturers

How can you prepare well for consultation appointments?

- Find out where the consultation hour takes place so you don't arrive late.
- What information can you easily find elsewhere? (Website, Digicampus, etc.)
- Think about the topic, structure, and secondary literature for an upcoming presentation/term paper in advance.
- Write down specific questions.
- Think about possible solutions to problems you want to address.

How can you make your consultation appointments more effective?



- Be on time for appointments ⟶ don't show up at the end of the consultation hour.
- Introduce yourself (name, context, seminar).
- Inform the lecturer about your own preparatory work (research, topic suggestions, etc.).
- Ask specific questions and ask for clarification if you don't understand something
- Take notes on important points
- Don't talk about personal concerns (unless explicitly asked)
- It is not customary to give gifts (could be misunderstood)

Consultation hours with lecturers

Requesting a "reference" regarding professional quality or personal suitability, e.g., for applying for a scholarship or internship:

- Contact a lecturer who knows you well, e.g., through presentations, term papers, exams, or student assistant work.
- Contact them at least four weeks before the deadline.
- Compile your previous academic achievements with details of:
  - Course titles
  - Grade overview (STUDIS)
  - Type of achievement and, if applicable, titles of term papers / presentations given
  - Curriculum vitae
  - Letter of motivation
- Are there already forms for your request? (e.g., reference letters or guidelines for writing a reference letter?)
- Explain why you need the reference letter (background information on the scholarship/internship).

Open questions?

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If you still have questions after reviewing all the presentations, please feel free to send us an email at: svk@aaa.uni-augsburg.de.