

Housing fraud

Goal: to steal your private data or money

This information is provided to the best of our knowledge and, when in doubt, does not replace legal counselling!

In order to spot a scam, we encourage you to use your common sense and the information that we provide. Please remember that students in desperate need of accommodation can unfortunately be targeted by fraudsters. Even if you are urgently looking for accommodation – always think twice before signing or paying anything!

A deal that is “too good to be true” often is not real!

A landlord will not lower the rent for an apartment to “help you out”!

Just because a landlord sends you a scan of a passport, does not mean they are real, passports scans are available all over the internet!

English housing offers (unless bilingual) should make you think twice: why should a landlord in Germany only publish an offer in English?

Is the rent realistic for this type of apartment?

- A room in a shared flat cost on average: 300€-450€
- A single apartment / studio cost: 350€ - 500€
- Furnished accommodation is more expensive than unfurnished

Which type of prepayments are needed?

- A payment of a security deposit before moving in is normal, if you are not sure, check in with us
- Viewing fees are likely a scam, you should never pay just to visit an apartment
- Some dormitories require the prepayment of one month’s rent, private landlords usually do not.
- If you try to rent from abroad from a private person, try to get a video call with the owner set up to verify that they are real.

Are there contradictions in the offer?

- Check the location in maps
- Do the pictures match the description and the location on Maps?
- Are there inconsistencies in the description?
- Type the name and Email of a potential landlord into a search engine
- and see the results. Does this person exist in our city? Do you maybe
- find the landlord offering houses all over Germany in different cities
- (bad sign!)
- "I am the landlord, but I am currently living abroad and therefore
- cannot show the flat...." is a frequent indication of spam these days.

Is the description realistic?

- Parking spots are limited and usually come with an additional fee
- German apartments usually do not have air conditioning
- German apartments usually are not furnished, so furnished apartments should be more expensive
- Rental contracts are usually for a longer period (years), so monthly cancellation options usually only exist for vacation homes
- Does the room look like an actual home or more like pictures from an IKEA catalogue?

What kind of information is requested of me?

- It is normal in Germany to fill out a self-disclosure form - "Selbstauskunft" when viewing a rental property. The legal basis for data protection is always noted on this, e.g. Art. 6 Abs. 1 lit. f DSGVO
- Passport scans should not be required to visit a place or even sign the contract. You may be asked to show it when you visit the place, but a scan should usually not be needed.
- A so-called Schufa letter may be required, that is a real thing, please read up on it just be sure.
- Name, date of birth, current address etc. are usually fine pieces of information to be asked for from landlords to prepare a contract - bank information should never be given before you signed the rental contract (and ideally moved in).

If you are still not sure, you can contact us, we will be happy to support you!

International Office