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Cologne: Media Mecca and carnival capital

It may be a bustling metropolis and a media Mecca, but Cologne is also the place to be for students. Both on and off campus, the carnival capital is an open-minded place that's full of possibilities – just ask its 85,000 students.

- [Overview of the universities](#)
- [What Cologne is like](#)
- [Did you know?](#)
- [Things to check out](#)
- [Useful links](#)



Cologne may not be the exact geographical center of the European Union, but it sure feels like it when you're one of the one million inhabitants living in the Rhine-metropolis. While the locals may talk about the importance of living on one side of the river or the other, it actually doesn't matter – whether you're trying to

get around Cologne or planning a trip out of town, everything you need is within easy reach of the city center: subways, autobahns, the main train station and the international airport (great for cheap fares).

Cologne is always on the go: it's host to 40 international trade fairs every year; it's also a center for automobile production, insurance, the retail trade and, above all, publishing and media. Two of the largest TV stations, RTL and WDR, are based here as well as the award-winning Campus Radio (<http://www.koelncampus.com/>).

Overview of the universities

University of Cologne

<http://www.uni-koeln.de/index.e.html>

This traditional campus institution is located on the fringes of the city among the lawns of the green belt. It boasts a student body of 44,000 and has its share of well-known faculty members, too.



Axel Ockenfels is only 38 years old, yet he's hailed as one of the most innovative economic scientists in the world. As a professor at the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences, his work on fairness and self-interest and his research on the design of modern

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markets such as eBay has turned him into a celebrity.

At the Laboratory for Economic Research – one of the largest laboratories in Germany – students can put their knowledge to the test. During the soccer World Cup the laboratory hosted the Torlabor and established trading markets for the games, investigating the influence of information on market price.

Knowledge transfer is a key feature of the university, with interdisciplinary education and research at the center of it. It's also one of the few to combine all natural sciences in a single faculty, while the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science offers rich potential for cross-disciplinary research.

In the Excellence Initiative (<http://www.bmbf.de>), a joint project of the German Research Foundation and the Wissenschaftsrat, Cologne has successfully made it into the second round with its proposal for a graduate school in management, economics and social sciences as well as one in biosciences. Additionally, the University of Cologne – together with the University of Bonn – forms part of a graduate school in physics and astronomy. The university also has close ties to industry – both regional and international. A career center helps students get started and the OFW congress, a professional symposium, attracts luminaries such as Bill Gates.

University of Applied Sciences, Köln

(<http://www.rfh-koeln.de/de/>)

Four and a half thousand students attend this university and enjoy small class sizes and very good employment opportunities. About 85% of the graduates receive a job offer prior to graduating. The courses are offered as either full time or to fit in with the student's employment.

The Cologne University for Music

(<http://www.mhs-koeln.de/Hochschule.html>)

Europe's largest university for music is divided into three departments: Cologne, Aachen and Wuppertal. In total, 1,500 students enjoy a classical musical education as well as the university's openness towards contemporary music, jazz and dance.

German Sport University Cologne

(http://www.dshs-koeln.de/navi_window/index_03.htm)

Twenty-one faculties operate under the umbrella of German Sport University Cologne. It's Germany's one and only university for sports, offering diplomas and lectureship programs. Over 4,000 students are enrolled in this outstanding institution.

Kunsthochschule für Medien

<http://www.khm.de/>

Cologne is Germany's media capital and an institution like the arts academy further underscores this fact. It was the country's first arts university for audiovisual media and was featured in Fokus [Magazine's](#) listings of the top five film schools. The KHM is as elite as it is small: 250 students have the privilege of studying there.

Internationale Filmschule Köln

(www.filmschule.de)

The Internationale Filmschule is the result of a partnership between the State Government and the Filmstiftung North Rhine-Westphalia and produces top-notch professionals for the film and television industry. Placing second in Fokus [Magazine's](#) film school rankings, it offers Bachelor of Arts degrees and boasts famous teachers such as actor Klaus Maria Brandauer and director Tom Schlesinger.

What Cologne is like

Sonja Giljova is a fourth-semester economics student from Estland. She chose Cologne for the rich cultural life, the broad range of courses in economics, and the reputation of the teaching staff. Although she speaks German almost perfectly now, she appreciates her faculty's efforts to help

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foreign students. "The service you get there is incredible," says Sonja, praising the International Relations Center (ZIB). "For students with language problems, they even offer complementary courses." Sonja also loves Cologne's cultural diversity and the bustling nightlife. "In the beginning, I even enjoyed it a little bit too much," admits the 20-year-old. "Cologne offers a lot more than just good conditions for studying."

Did you know?

The Cologne region is one of the mildest areas in Germany, the inner city even beating Freiburg as the warmest place in Germany. The University of Cologne educates more teachers than any other institution in Europe – 10,000 every year.



Cologne Cathedral, one of the best-known architectural monuments in Europe, took over 600 years to complete. Building started in 1248 with the finishing touches coming as late as 1880. My favorite spot Sonja's favorite place is the Aachener Weiher, a pond located in the green belt close to the university – a great

place for students to relax. "It's lovely," she says, adding that "you sit there with friends and enjoy your barbecue and the nice atmosphere."

Things to check out

Since the eighties, Cologne has been hosting the largest recruitment event in the country – the Absolventenkongress. For students, graduates and young professionals with up to five years of work experience, the fair is a perfect meeting point.

Cologne is also a city of museums. There are numerous internationally renowned art collections as well as superb history museums that show the impressive past of this 2,000-year-old city.

Cologne Cathedral is the heart of the city. It's been a place of worship since the city was founded, and climbing the 509 steps to the observation platform is a must for visitors.

Beer is part of Cologne's culture. Don't forget to order a glass of the delicate, refreshing Kölsch (unless you're trying to offend the locals). There are numerous Brauhäuser in Cologne, each making their very own Kölsch.



What's happening?

With a vibrant mix of different people, Cologne's nightlife is bustling. There are many bars, pubs and discos in the different quarters of the city, one of the most popular student spots being the area around Zülpicher Street, close to the university.

It all starts on November 11 at 11:11 am. Carnival time! Although the real event comes months later, the kick-off in November gives an idea as to just how carnival crazy Cologne really is. By February, almost everybody is dressed up for the occasion and the streets and taverns are packed.

Just like everywhere else in Germany, soccer rules. Although Cologne's first club, 1. FC Köln, has lost its place in the first division, the fans never lose hope. As long as the cathedral stands, they'll flock to the

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RheinEnergieStadion in their thousands.

Useful links

The University Ranking of the DAAD

The [DAAD](#) gives you detailed up-to-date rankings of Cologne's main universities. Koelner.de <http://www.koelner.de/website/index.php> is an online entertainment guide that gives you an overview of what's happening in Cologne: parties, exhibitions, museums, literature and more.

Studenten-WG <http://www.studenten-wg.de/wohnungsmarkt.html> is a network that helps you find and rent cheap rooms and shared apartments.

Studentenwerk <http://www.koelner-studentenwerk.de/> is the university's official organization for renting rooms and apartments to students. There's a real housing shortage in Cologne, so be sure to contact them or another agency before leaving for Germany. Koeln.de

<http://www.koeln.de/en/index.html> is the city's homepage with information in eight languages about what's going on in the Rhine capital. Museenkoeln <http://www.museenkoeln.de/english/homepage/> gives an overview of the various museums in the city.



Cologne is a feeling.

Cologne is a feeling. www.koelntourismus.de

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[TOP]