



# Resource Guide for Student Parents at Rhine-Waal University

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This is a guide to available resources for current and future parents at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve and Kamp-Lintfort. You'll find a wealth of useful information on advising and guidance services, accommodation, financial assistance, childcare services, recreation and contact persons both on and off campus, all of which can help you find a healthy and sustainable work-life-family balance.

Unfortunately, many links are only available in German. As an added service, this translated guide indicates the languages available at linked websites. For information on available English-language services, please speak with the linked contact persons and/or organisations directly.

# 1. Support and Guidance

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## **Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf**

The social services office of the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf can inform you about available support services, individual counselling services and is a helpful contact point for student problems and concerns in general. All advising talks are strictly confidential.

These services cover a range of topics, including common issues facing student parents, childcare, support services for students with chronic illness or disabilities, emergency psychological support services, advising services relating to your rights under German social laws and general advising services for international students (e.g. about available insurance policies, delayed study progress due to family-related care issues).

### **Contact:**

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[www.stw-d.de/en/](http://www.stw-d.de/en/)

**Ms Kwiatkowski also has office hours at the Rhine-Waal-University (also in English): On the first and third Wednesday of the month in Kleve, on the second Thursday of the month in Kamp Lintfort.**

For more information, please see: [www.stw-d.de/beratung/](http://www.stw-d.de/beratung/) (in German).

## **1.1 Kleve**

**[Caritasverband Kleve e.V.](#)** (in German)

Caritas is a charity organisation offering a range of advising and support services for parents and guardians on topics such as:

- taking responsibility for a child's upbringing,
- development of children and young adults,

- conflict resolution for families,
- emotional counselling after a break-up or divorce,
- dealing with complex problems / situations, and
- general questions and advice.

These services are available for children, young adults and young parents alike, and are free for local residents. All advising sessions are strictly confidential.

### **Marital, Familial and Life-Coaching Services Kleve** (in German)

Marital, Familial and Life-Coaching Services Kleve (German: *Ehe-, Familien- und Lebensberatung Kleve*) provides advising and support for:

- relationship or marital conflicts,
- family crises,
- break-ups and divorce,
- difficult living situations, and
- other personal problems or crises.

### **Impuls – Women's Advising Centre Kleve** (in German)

*Impuls* (English: Impulse) offers advising services to women for the following topics:

- family or relationship conflict,
- break-ups or divorce,
- domestic violence,
- physical and spiritual health (managing stress and burdening situations),
- establishing and securing independent livelihoods, and
- career or job changes and vocational opportunities.

### **AWO, Kleve County Chapter** (German and English)

The AWO (English: Workers' Welfare Office) provides the following counselling and support services:

- family education,
- child-parent groups,
- prenatal advising,
- family planning

- partnership
- contraception
- woman's shelter,
- child education, and
- all-day primary school.

Starting in winter semester 18/19 the AWO will provide a consultation hour at the university (contact: Nicole Saat: [Beratung@awo-kreiskleve.de](mailto:Beratung@awo-kreiskleve.de), 02821 – 97 68 377).

### **DONUM VITAE e.V.** (in German)

Pregnancy is a life-altering experience for women filled with moments of great joy, but also fear and uncertainty.

In one-on-one or couples counselling you can analyse your current situation from different angles and develop together with your counsellor new outlooks and solutions. Counselling services are available to all women regardless of origin or religious confession.

Psychosocial counselling and support services are available for:

- unplanned pregnancies,
- relationship conflicts,
- pre-abortion counselling (a "Beratungsschein" is issued afterwards – this is required by law before abortions can be performed), and
- post-abortion, after miscarriage or stillbirth.

### **Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen e. V.** (in German)

The *Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen e.V.* (English: Social Services of Catholic Women) Kleve provides social outreach for women, families, children and young adults in crisis situations. Counselling services are provided on a range of topics, including adoption/fostering children, pregnancies or assisted living for women, and are available to all local residents regardless of origin or religious confession.

### **Emergency hotline for pregnant women** (in English)

Call 0800-40-40-020 to speak with counsellors anonymously, securely and discreetly. This hotline is available 24 hours a day and in up to 18 different languages.

### **Family Education Centre** (in German)

The Family Education Centre in Kleve (*fbs Kleve*), offers support and advising

services for families for the following topics:

- family and children counselling,
- language development,
- social integration for children and adults,
- exercise and nutrition.

Additional services and workshops include “Kidix” playgroups, the play-based exercise course “Toben, turnen, tollen” for children and parents, and many more.

### **Advising Services of the Kleve city government** (in German)

Advisors of the city of Kleve also offer useful support services for children, young adults, parents and legal guardians at no additional charge. Support is available for:

- parental responsibilities and conflict resolution, particularly with regard to the upbringing and development of children and young adults,
- relationship issues, break-ups, divorce, and
- custody and access rights.

### **Brochure: “Eltern werden – Eltern sein”** (in German)

This brochure is designed to help prepare parents-to-be and offers a range of tips, addresses and information about support offers in and around Kleve.

## **1.2 Kamp-Lintfort**

### **Family and Youth Counselling** (German)

- Advising and support in family conflict situations
- Individual advising on employment, alimony and custody
- Conflict resolution for parenting problems or relationship issues
- Support groups (for single parents, for example)

### **AWO Family Centre**

- Advising and support offers for children and families
- Offers promoting family cohesion and healthy parenting partnerships
- Locating and taking advantage of daycare options

- Improving work-life balance
- Prenatal support

### **Protestant Advising Office Duisburg/Moers**

Psychological counselling is provided by trained specialists at the Protestant Advising Office, who are specialized in difficult parental and familial situations. They also provide pregnancy conflict consultation and psychological counselling for those struggling with relationship issues or existential concerns.

Feeling depressed? An outside perspective and a trained eye are essential to breaking the vicious cycle of depression. Together with counsellors you can illuminate the chaotic darkness of feelings and negative influences, find meaningful solutions and reclaim your grounding.

### **Caritas Moers-Xanten e.V.**

- General advising on available support offers (e.g. financial support during pregnancy)
- Custody-related issues, paternity questions and information about alimony
- Parents living in separation
- "Haus der Familie" outreach and welcome centre
- Parent simulation courses for young adults
- Cooking courses
- Parent cafés
- Advising on family-related issues
- Advising for new parents, midwife office hours

### **Emergency hotline for pregnant women**

Call 0800-40-40-020 to speak with counsellors anonymously, securely and discreetly. This hotline is available 24 hours a day and in up to 18 different languages.

### **Kamp-Lintfort Kinderneest – a nest for every child** (in German)

Having a baby is a wonderful and life-changing experience. But after the baby arrives and the initial euphoria passes, parents soon realise that a new baby brings a whole slew of challenges big and small.

The Kamp-Lintfort Kinderneest is here to help with a range of services offered at no

charge or binding commitment to parents:

- Information about services available to parents in Kamp-Lintfort,
- Support with applications or forms,
- Budgeting advice,
- General advising for stress or conflict situations,
- Referrals to midwives or pediatric nurses,
- Help locating childcare services for your child.

### **Child Counselling Office Kamp-Lintfort**

Services for parents, legal guardians and families:

- Individual consultations,
- Family consultations, family therapy
- General advising
- Crisis intervention
- Break-ups or divorce
- Open consultation hours
- Contact groups for children in socially precarious situations
- Tutoring

## 2. Childcare

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### 2.1 Advising

#### **BUK Family Services**

BUK is a personnel management company that offers a comprehensive range of quality support services to inform, advise and help student parents arrange childcare (also in English).

BUK's range of services include:

- advising and referring parents to available nanny and au pair services,
- advising on emergency and short-term childcare options, e.g. during school holidays,
- advising on available childcare options in private or public sector organisations/schools.

These services are offered to students at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences at no additional charge. You can find more information about the BUK on the [HSRW homepage](#) or the information below.

BUK also offers a website for registered accounts with news, downloads and useful clips on topics such as:

- What to do if you can't find daycare for your child
- How German minimum wage laws can affect childcare availability for parents
- Overview of parental leave options, both paid and unpaid

Please speak with the Central Equal Opportunities Representative or the Equal Opportunities Office to request your login information.

BUK Family Services also regularly offers interactive webinars on childcare topics as well. The Equal Opportunities Team will send informations about the date and registration-process on time.

For more information, please contact BUK Family Services at:

Service number: 0 800 2000 850

[beratung-kinder@buk-fs.de](mailto:beratung-kinder@buk-fs.de)

[www.buk-familienservice.de](http://www.buk-familienservice.de) (German only)

## Equal Opportunities Office and Equal Opportunities representative at HSRW

The [Rhine-Waal University Equal Opportunities Office](#) and [Equal Opportunities Representative](#) are both a partner and point of contact for all students with questions about available social support services and other offers aimed at improving students' work-life-study balance and equal opportunities.

The Equal Opportunities Office can be found in Kleve in room 09 01 007 or contacted at [gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de). The Equal Opportunities Representative can be contacted at [gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de).

## Other advising services at HSRW

For more information about other available advising services at Rhine-Waal University, please see the [helpful overview](#) on our website.

## 2.2 Childcare options in Kleve und Kamp-Lintfort

### Daycare (*Kitas*)

From their first birthday to the first grade, children in Germany have a legal entitlement to a spot in a daycare facility or home daycare services. Children younger than one year are entitled to daycare when their parents or legal guardians resume working or are currently enrolled students (see Volume VIII, German Social Code, Section 24 for more information).

Both Kleve and Kamp-Lintfort offer a number of daycare facilities run by different organisations. Policies for opening hours and distribution of spots vary, so please contact specific Kitas for more information:

[Kitas in Kleve](#) (in German)

[Kitas in Kamp-Lintfort](#) (in German)

Kita fees (*Elternbeiträge*) are calculated according to parents' combined income. These fees are generally payable to the city's youth welfare office (*Jugendamt*). For more information, please visit the following official websites:

[Jugendamt Kleve](#) (in German)

[Amt für Schule, Jugend und Sport](#) (Responsible for Kamp-Lintfort; in German)

## Home daycare services

Home daycare services, for example with licensed child minders (*Tagesmutter* or *Tagesvater*), are also available in Germany for children up to three years of age. Home daycare services come in the following arrangements (subject to local availability):

- childcare at home,
- childcare with a child minder and up to four children, and
- childcare with a team of up to three child minders and up to nine children in suitable external facilities.

Child minders are much more than babysitters, they also promote the individual social and mental development of the children they care for. They plan educational activities, support the parenting process and help parents pursue a healthy work-life-study balance.

The main advantages of child minders over Kitas are:

- small groups,
- family-like environment and structure,
- tailored to parents' specific needs,
- usually close to home and
- flexible scheduling.

Children enrolled in daycare facilities or schools are also eligible for supplementary childcare through a child minder as well.

Fees are also calculated according to parents' income and are thus comparable to those of a Kita.

[Home daycare services in Kleve](#) (in German)

[Home daycare services in Kamp-Lintfort](#) (in German)

## 2.3 Childcare during school holidays (currently unfortunately suspended, current state November 2018)

The Easter and autumn school holidays in North Rhine-Westphalia conflict with the lecture period at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. In response, HSRW and BUK Family Services teamed up in 2014 to offer [Ferienbetreuung](#) for student parents. This childcare service:

- is for children 6 to 12 years of age,
- has 15 available spots,
- is run by trained staff,
- offers all-day childcare,
- promotes individual development through play-based, age-appropriate activities,
- includes meals, and

- includes a free shuttle service from the Kamp-Lintfort Campus.

To register, please contact [BUK Family Services](#) directly. Please note that this service includes costs and fees for parents. If possible, HSRW will provide additional financial assistance through a one-time subsidy.

## 3. Financial Support

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Raising a child while earning your degree is not easy. One of the biggest challenges is finding a way to finance your studies and your family budget. Students often live on tight budgets as it is – and that's before factoring in the cost of childcare.

Fortunately, students in Germany are generally eligible for a number of financial support options, whether separately or in combination, that can ease the financial burdens of raising a child.

In the following section you'll find an overview of the main child benefits available in Germany. The amounts of these benefits generally change over time, so it's important to look into the rates for the current calendar year. Also note that not all students in Germany are eligible to apply.

### **Federal student loans – BAFöG**

Important note: Students with a residence permit for study purposes (Section 16 AufenthG) are ineligible for BAFöG!

Mothers and mothers-to-be who are currently receiving federal student loans (BAFöG) can apply for an additional childcare allowance. This allowance is intended to help parents pay for the costs associated with childcare so that they can return to their studies. Students are eligible for this allowance of 130 euros per month (per child) for as long as they continue to receive BAFöG and, at the same time, share a household with at least one of their (own) children under 10 years of age.

The best part: the childcare allowance doesn't need to be paid back at the end of the loan period! However, if you live in a household with your partner and both of you are currently receiving BAFöG, note that only one of you is eligible to receive the childcare allowance.

Beyond the childcare allowance, student parents receiving BAFöG can generally extend their loan period for a reasonable amount of time to compensate for the delays caused by having and/or raising a child. As a result, additional loan payments due to childcare are treated as a bonus, meaning they do not come with repayment obligations.

For more information about the childcare allowance and other special provisions affecting student mothers and mothers-to-be (interruptions to study progress, examinations etc.), please consult the websites of the [Federal Ministry of Education and Research](#) (in German) and the [Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf](#) (in German).

### **Maternity benefits – *Mutterschaftsgeld***

Many female students work part-time during their studies and as a result the provisions of the Maternity Protection Act (Mutterschutzgesetz) also apply to them before and after birth.

Not all female students are eligible for maternity benefits, as it depends on an existing employment relationship that is interrupted by the statutory prenatal protection period in Germany. In addition, female students must also be enrolled with a public health care insurance provider. The type of health insurance is also an important consideration.

Female students with compulsory or voluntary health insurance through a public health insurance provider will receive maternity benefits directly from their insurance provider. The amount is based on the student's average net salary for the previous three calendar months before the statutory protection period took effect. Applications must be filed directly with the health insurance provider.

Female students with family health insurance or private health insurance are eligible for maternity benefits from the German Federal Insurance Office (Bundesversicherungsamt) if they worked at a company or as a freelancer before the statutory protection period or their employment contract was lawfully terminated by their employer during pregnancy.

For more information, please visit [www.familien-wegweiser.de](http://www.familien-wegweiser.de) (in German).

### **Parental allowance – *Elterngeld***

Parental allowance is a form of income compensation for lost earnings. Parents who take time off from work following the birth of their child are eligible to receive this allowance for up to 14 months (14 months if both parents take parental leave, one parent can take a maximum of 12 months), which amounts generally to between 65% and 67%, in exceptional cases up to 100% of the parent's average monthly (net) salary prior to the birth (up to a maximum of 1,800 euros). Students with little to no income are usually eligible for the minimum amount of 300 euros per month.

Parental allowance can be combined with other social benefits as well. For more information about eligibility, sibling bonuses, the new parental allowance plus programme (*ElterngeldPlus*), deductions and more, please visit [www.familien-wegweiser.de](http://www.familien-wegweiser.de) (in German).

### **Childcare subsidy – *Betreuungsgeld* (not up-to-date)**

Entitlement to this childcare subsidy is firmly anchored in the Federal Parental Benefits and Leave Act ([Bundeselterngeldgesetz](#), in German) and available to parents regardless of previous employment. The eligibility period is capped at 22

months and begins immediately after the 14 month entitlement period for parental benefits.

As a result, the childcare subsidy is usually available from the first day of the 15<sup>th</sup> month after birth until the end of the 36<sup>th</sup> month. The amount is fixed at 150 euros per month, per child.

### **Child benefits – *Kindergeld***

Parents living in Germany and with unrestricted tax liability are entitled to child benefits in the form of a tax break (see Section 62 ff. of the Income Tax Act [Einkommenssteuergesetz]).

In all other cases, child benefits are a non-income-related allowance that is tiered according to the number of children. Current rates are:

- for the first and second child: 192 euros a month,
- for the third child: 198 euros a month,
- for the fourth child and every additional child: 223 euros a month.

Child benefits are adjusted for inflation regularly (in 2018 each tier was raised by two euros).

Parents are eligible to receive child benefits:

- for every child until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday,
- for children in an apprenticeship or vocational training programme: until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday,
- for children unable to find employment: until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

The second eligibility scenario above also applies to children who are unable to start or continue an apprenticeship or vocational training due to a lack of available spots.

If your child has successfully completed a first apprenticeship/vocational training or degree, you are still eligible for child benefits if he or she works an average of 20 hours or less per week.

Child benefits are transferred monthly directly to the child's parent or legal guardian's bank account. Parents raising a child together can decide who should receive the benefit.

Parents who live abroad and have limited tax liability in Germany according to the Income Tax Act can, in some circumstances, also receive the child benefit.

The children for whom child benefits are being paid must reside in Germany or a member state of the European Union.

Orphans or children who have been abandoned by their parents are eligible to apply for the child benefit themselves.

In most cases, child benefits are paid by the Department of Child and Family Services (*Familienkasse*) of the responsible employment agency (*Agentur für Arbeit*).

For more information, please see the [Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth](#) (in English).

### **Child supplement – *Kinderzuschlag***

Both single parents and couples are eligible for a supplementary child benefit for each child living in their household who is unmarried and younger than 25 years of age if:

- child benefits are already being paid for the child,
- the parents' monthly income exceeds the minimum threshold,
- the parents' combined income and assets do not exceed the maximum threshold, and
- the child supplement would elevate the family's income such that they become ineligible for social benefits (*ALG II* or *Sozialgeld*).

The minimum threshold is 900 euros for couples and 600 euros for single parents. Parents are only eligible for the child supplement if their monthly income in money or monetary equivalents (e.g. gross income, *ALG I*, sick pay etc.) exceed the appropriate minimum threshold.

At the same time, net income and assets may not exceed the appropriate maximum threshold. This threshold is calculated by adding the figure for the parents' basic needs (according to *ALG II*) plus a percentage of living costs plus the total potential child supplement to be paid.

An entitlement to the child supplement nullifies an entitlement to *ALG II*/social benefits and vice-versa.

The amount of child supplement per child varies and is calculated according to the income and assets of the parents and, where applicable, children. As of 1 January 2017, child supplement amounts to a maximum of 170 euros per month per child, which is transferred together with the child benefit every month.

To apply for child supplement, please contact the [Bundesagentur für Arbeit](#) which is responsible for all applications and processing. You'll be informed about the decision of your application in writing.

### **Unemployment benefits II – *Arbeitslosengeld II (ALG)***

Students are generally ineligible to receive unemployment benefits (*ALG II*) in

Germany because of *BAföG*, but there are some exceptions. For example, students who live with their parents can, in some cases (which are defined by Section 7 (6) No. 2 of Volume 2 of the German Social Code [*SGB II*]), apply for additional *ALG* assistance on top of their monthly *BAföG* assistance.

If you think this applies to you, please contact the [Studierendenwerke](#) for an individual consultation!

In cases of particular need or hardship, students can also receive additional financial support through the *ALG II* programme – but only in the form of a loan (refer to Section 27 (4) *SGB II*). Students can assert claims for additional assistance if they are raising children and as a result cannot work part-time during their studies. In this case, even students receiving *BAföG* are eligible for supplementary assistance. As always, eligibility decisions ultimately occur on a case-by-case basis.

Students expecting or raising children frequently require additional assistance above and beyond *BAföG*. These additional needs can be covered by additional subsidies (see Section 27 (2) *SGB II*). Mothers-to-be, for example, are potentially eligible for additional subsidies for clothing and essentials.

Students taking a leave of absence for pregnancy or childcare purposes are also eligible for *ALG II*. During this time, students are prohibited from earning credits towards their degree.

Also note that while student parents may be ineligible for *ALG II*, minors under 15 years of age may in some cases be entitled to social benefits according to *SGB II*.

### **Educational and inclusiveness assistance**

Parents and legal guardians receiving the child supplement can also receive additional assistance to enable their children to participate in educational and inclusiveness activities.

In particular, this assistance covers the following:

- all-day or multiple-day excursions at schools or Kitas,
- essential school materials,
- enabling transportation to school,
- appropriate learning support/tutoring,
- school or Kita lunches,
- social or cultural activities in the community.

Please see the [Familien Wegweiser](#) (only in German) for more information.

### **Advances on child support (not up-to-date)**

Single parents usually raise their children under difficult conditions. These conditions can worsen significantly when child support from the other parent is infrequent or non-existent. The German Federal Government strives to improve these otherwise unbearable situations with the Advances on Child Support Act (*Unterhaltsvorschussgesetz*).

Minors under 12 years of age living in a single-parent household and not receiving support from the other parent, whether at all or on an irregular basis, are eligible for [advances on child support](#) (in German). Advances can amount to a maximum of 72 months of child support. There are no minimum or maximum income thresholds for the single parent to consider, nor is a court ruling on the other parent's child support obligations required. If the other parent is unemployed or otherwise unable to work, the advance will be paid by the German government.

To further improve the living situation of single parents, the German Federal Government and the individual state governments have agreed to expand single parents' eligibility for child support advances. This reform agreement introduces two significant changes:

- Children between 12 and 18 years of age will also be eligible for child support advances. However, this only applies to children who are not currently receiving social benefits according to SGB II and single parents earning at least 600 euros a month.
- The 72-month cap on child support advances will be annulled. As a result, single parents are eligible for an alimony advance equal to the number of months remaining until their child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The reform is scheduled to enter into force on 1 July 2017.

The amount per month used to calculate an advance on child support varies based on the age of the child. As of 1 January 2017, rates are:

- 150 euros/month for children from 0 to 5 years
- 201 euros/month for children from 6 to 11 years
- 268 euros/month for children from 12 to 17 years.

## Student loans from the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf

The Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf offers three student loan possibilities: the *Daka* loan, the *Bildungskredit* and the *KfW-Studienkredit*.

*Daka*, an abbreviation from the German "[Darlehenskasse der Studierendenwerke e.V.](#)" (in German), is a loan office of the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf that aims to offer students a way to finance their studies without juggling a full or part-time job at the same time.

*Daka* loans are available up to a limit of 12,000 euros, are interest free and can be repayed at variable monthly rates of up to 1,000 euros. Students are eligible to apply regardless of their current phase of study, and loan periods are set according to each student's individual needs.

The [KfW-Studienkredit](#) (in German) is another way for students to finance their studies. Students between the age of 18 and 44 (at the time of beginning their current degree) who are pursuing a first or second undergraduate degree, a graduate degree or a doctoral degree are eligible to apply. Note that eligible students must be enrolled as full or part-time students at a public university located in Germany.

The German Federal Government also offers both students and young people in later phases of an apprenticeship or vocational training the possibility of a low-interest loan, the so-called [Bildungskredit](#) (in German), according to the guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

The goal here is to provide an additional low-risk financing opportunity to students and apprentices so that they can focus on completing their education or training, thus shortening the total time needed and avoiding financial bottlenecks which might otherwise jeopardise their success. The *Bildungskredit* is granted independently of the current income or assets of both the student and his\*her parents, and limited to 7,200 euros for the current degree or apprenticeship/vocational training phase.

## Scholarships

Scholarships in Germany are often awarded by foundations that are affiliated with political parties, religious or secular organisations. These scholarships are awarded according to specific criteria, usually personal (sex; ethnic or social background) or academic (performance, extracurricular engagement) in nature. Some foundations offer special scholarships exclusively to female students or single parents. To search for available scholarships for students in Germany, please visit [www.stipendienlotse.de](http://www.stipendienlotse.de) (in German).

### **Federal Foundation - Mother and Child – *Bundesstiftung Mutter und Kind***

The [Federal Foundation - Mother and Child](#) (in German) provides emergency financial support to pregnant women, acting as an additional safety net in cases where statutory financial assistance is insufficient or otherwise unavailable. As a result, potential applicants should first apply for all financial support options provided by the German government.

When an application is received, the foundation evaluates the applicant's income situation and decides on a case-by-case basis to grant additional financial support. Other eligibility requirements include a permanent residence in Germany and a compulsory consultation with a family planning organisation. There is no legal entitlement to the foundation's financial support.

This financial support doesn't conflict with other available social benefits such as unemployment benefits (*ALG II*) etc.

### **Information from the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf for international students with children**

The advising services of the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf provide initial information for student parents, particularly with regard to available financial assistance. These advising services are particularly important if you're from a non-EU country, as you can also learn more about your rights in Germany and whether your eligibility for certain forms of assistance is restricted. As a rule: always consult with staff at the local immigration office before filing any applications for financial assistance!

For childcare information, our partner organization BUK can also help with certain applications.

Regardless, the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf is a very informative first point of contact for all questions on financial assistance. When they can't help you directly, they'll refer you to the appropriate person/organisation.

For advising related to your study progress, please contact either the Study Guide of your faculty or, if applicable, your study course manager.

## 4. Degree Progress and Exams

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### Studying full-time as a parent

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences offers bachelor's degrees in seven semesters of full-time study and master's degrees in three. Though difficult, it is definitely possible for parents to manage a full-time student workload.

Lectures, seminars and practicals are generally held between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. All-day childcare (whether through a kindergarten, daycare or other recognised organisation) generally affords parents enough flexibility to attend all courses that are held during the day.

Sometimes courses may take place in the early evening (up to 6 p.m. or later), though, which will naturally require additional childcare arrangements. Our partner BUK GmbH can support your search for supplementary childcare for these kinds of cases (see section 2 above).

What's more, in many cases attendance is not mandatory (excepting certain seminars, projects or practicals). While this affords a certain additional flexibility, you'll have to catch up on any missed content and coursework if you don't want to jeopardise your studies or performance. Fortunately, most professors and lecturers upload course documents, files and learning materials to Moodle for easy access at home. You should also speak with your professors and lecturers in advance so that they understand your absences are related to childcare obligations. An open dialogue can potentially lead to individual solutions that can help you balance your obligations as a both parent and student.

Sometimes it's unavoidable to bring your child to campus, whether for important group work or to use campus resources and facilities in the evening hours. Fortunately, you (and your group) can book the campus parent-child room or temporarily borrow a portable toy chest (see section 5). On Campus Kleve (04 EG 005 Service Point) there are two mobile boxes of toys available free of charge and on Campus Kamp-Lintfort (02 EG 505 Student Service Point) you can borrow one.

Finally, exams are usually offered at family-friendly times during the day. In some cases, however, the sheer length of an exam can mean that it won't finish until 6 p.m. or later, so extra childcare planning may be necessary!

### Studying part-time

If you're currently working at least 20 hours or are self-employed, you're eligible to enroll as a part-time student in certain degree programmes at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. As a part-time student, you have more freedom to plan your studies around your work schedule and can potentially earn a bachelor's degree in as few as 9 semesters. For more information, please contact the [Central](#)

[Student Advisory Service](#) (ZSB).

### **Compulsory exam registration (*not up-to-date*)**

The [General Examination Regulations](#) (RPO) allow individual degree programmes to stipulate that students must register for their *first exam attempt in a course* no later than three semesters after the recommended semester for that course according to the study and examination plan (see Section 15(9) RPO). If a student does not do this himself/herself, then he or she will be registered for the exam automatically and on a compulsory basis.

On request, however, and specifically in the case of parents who are responsible for the care and upbringing of a child according to Section 25(5) of the Federal Education and Trainings Assistant Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*), students can be exempted from this compulsory registration.

The RPO also allow individual degree programmes to stipulate that failed exams must be repeated within two semesters, otherwise compulsory registration will automatically occur here as well.

Exempted from compulsory registration in these cases are students on a recognized leave of absence according to Section 9 of the [Enrolment Regulations](#) or who are currently undertaking an internship or exchange semester (Sections 21 and 22 RPO). However, an exemption for parents raising minors is also possible under Section 25(5) of the Federal Education and Trainings Assistant Act as well. In this case, however, an exemption is limited to three semesters or less.

### **Thesis**

Section 25 of the RPO permits the head of your Examination Board to extend thesis deadlines if justified and requested in writing before the end of the original deadline. Justified reasons for an extension include, for example, periods of time in which you cared for an ill child. Requests usually need appropriate proof (i.e. a doctor's note) and are always decided on a case-by-case basis.

### **Sick on exam day**

According to Section 13(2) of the RPO, students who miss an examination because of illness can submit a doctor's note (in some cases from a doctor of your Examination Board's choosing). If the Examination Board excuses the absence, the examination attempt is automatically nullified.

The Examination Board can also recognise absences which were caused by an ill child and lack of alternative childcare arrangements. However, as with deadline

extensions, students must submit verifiable proof (i.e. doctor's note) and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. As always, it's important to notify your instructor as well as the Examination Service and your Examination Board as soon as possible after an absence!

### **Semester of leave (*not up-to-date*)**

Students at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences are entitled to semesters of leave for important reasons (see Section 9 of the [HSRW Enrolment Regulations](#)). This is often important in order to avoid extending the number of semesters you've studied, which can have a (potentially negative) impact on benefits, financial aid etc. "Important reasons" include, but are not limited to, pregnancy, the care and upbringing of a child or providing care to spouses or immediate family. Note that a semester of leave will interrupt your BAföG assistance, if applicable.

While students are generally prohibited from earning credits during a semester of leave, by law this restriction doesn't apply to those providing care to a child or immediate family members.

### **Maternity Protection Act – *Mutterschutzgesetz (MuSchuG)***

On 30 March 2017, the German Bundestag voted to expand the Maternity Protection Act. Under the new law, which takes effect on 1 January 2018, the same legal rights and protections of pregnant women in the workforce were finally extended to female students as well. These protections aim to ensure good health and well-being for both mother and child during pregnancy and postpartum.

These protections strengthen female students' rights and positions by a great deal. Pregnant students are now required to report their pregnancy to authorities through their university, which allows the government to ensure they have access to all relevant protections and legal provisions, and universities are required to assess their degree programmes, facilities and labs for possible hazards for mothers-to-be.

Some courses may contain activities that are potentially hazardous to mothers or their unborn babies (technical or biological lab experiments, physical work with children in early childhood education, just to name two examples). Rhine-Waal University is obligated to not only catalogue these potential hazards (Section 10 *MuSchuG*), but also provide alternative arrangements to mothers-to-be.

To help navigate through the jungle of information, Rhine-Waal University also offers individual consultations to mothers-to-be. These discussions will inform you about applicable laws and available support services, and serve as an opportunity to work together to lay out the next steps leading up to your protection period.

As stated above, students must report their pregnancies to the University in order to take advantage of these new legal protections. Pregnancies can be reported to your

faculty's Study Guide ([contact information](#)). You'll also find more information about the Maternity Protection Act at this link.

For general questions related to the Maternity Protection Act and the legal rights and obligations it bestows, please contact Dr Rebecca Müller, Study Guide Coordinator, at [rebecca.mueller@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:rebecca.mueller@hochschule-rhein-waal.de).

### **Maternity Protection Act – Protected pregnancy period and compensatory measures**

The Maternity Protection Act includes provisions for a protected period of time for mothers ranging from six weeks before birth to eight weeks after, as well as the right to compensatory measures for any examinations scheduled during this time. This legal protection is also enshrined in the RPO (Section 6(4)) and thus all examination procedures at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences (this also applies to periods of absence due to caring for a child or immediate family pursuant to Section 5(5) Sentence 5 *HG NRW*). New mothers wishing to adjust examination arrangements due to a conflict with their protected pregnancy period must submit a request to the Examination Board in advance.

You should always contact your examiner and/or Examination Board in advance to discuss your situation and work out possible solutions or alternative arrangements. However, strictly speaking you do not have a legal entitlement to receive alternative testing arrangements for a individual exams. Nevertheless, an open dialogue between you, the Examination Board and your examiner is simply the best way to arrive at an amicable solution that works for all parties involved.

The Maternity Protection Act also stipulates (in Section 27) that the University must report any pregnancies and provide information about the mother to the responsible supervisory authority (in this case the district government in Düsseldorf).

The new Maternity Protection Act is available online (in German) [here](#).

For a full and comprehensive overview (in German) as well as many helpful tips and information, please see the “Leitfaden zum Mutterschutz” published by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, available for download at:

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/94398/3b87a5363865637dd3bf2dd6e8ec87e0/mutterschutzgesetz-data.pdf>

## 5. Family-Friendly Infrastructure at HSRW

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### Parent-Child Rooms

Each campus has a designated parent-child room, which can be used at no charge by all members of the Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. In Kleve, the parent-child room is located in 09 01 008, in Kamp-Lintfort in 04 01 325. Both rooms contain a PC workspace, a child-sized bed, a sofa and a play corner. In order to use the parent-child room, the room must be booked on the desired date. An access is possible via a transponder.

### *Possibilities of booking and transponder access for students*

Students may contact the central opportunities representative, the equal opportunities office or decentralized equal opportunities representatives for a reservation of the room.

After booking, a transponder for the room can be borrowed on the day of the booked appointment at the locations mentioned below.

in Kleve

- at the campus supervision (building 04, ground floor)
- at the equal opportunities office (09 01 007)
- at the Dean's Office faculty Life Sciences (12 01 006)
- at the Dean's Office faculty Society and Economics (02 01 008)

and in Kamp-Lintfort

- in the library (building 01, top floor)
- at the Student Service Point (02, ground floor, 505).

After using the room the transponder must be returned personally.

### *Contact information for booking via central or decentral equal opportunities representatives*

Central equal opportunities representative and office:

[gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de)

[gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de)

Faculty Technology & Bionics:

[gleichstellung-fk1@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellung-fk1@hochschule-rhein-waal.de)

Faculty Life Sciences:

[gleichstellung-fk2@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellung-fk2@hochschule-rhein-waal.de)

Faculty Society & Economics:

[gleichstellung-fk3@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellung-fk3@hochschule-rhein-waal.de)

Faculty Communication & Environment:  
[gleichstellung-fk4@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellung-fk4@hochschule-rhein-waal.de)

### **Guests**

Guests of the Rhine-Waal-University also have the possibility to use the parent-child room after special agreement with the equal opportunities office.

Please find the general terms and conditions of use outlined in the parent-child room rules (downloads).

For more information, please see [Equal Opportunities](#).

### **Canteens**

The [campus canteens](#) in Kleve and Kamp-Lintfort provide high chairs at no extra charge.

Room 16 EG 011, located in the canteen building in Kleve, also contains a changing station for parents.

### **Campus Libraries**

Both [campus libraries](#) include individual work rooms (carrels) which can be booked by student parents and outfitted with an additional child-sized desk and chair upon request. Carrels must be booked at least 24 hours in advance.

### **Student Advisory Service (ZSB)**

The Student Advisory Service has a play area for kids so that mom or dad can speak with a study advisor or fill out important forms.

### **Changing Stations**

Changing stations can be found at the following campus locations:

Kleve:

- 01 EG 021 (Audimax)
- 03 EG 015 (gender toilet, handicapped accessible toilet)
- 16 EG 011 (Canteen)
- 18 EG 012 (Library building)

Kamp-Lintfort:

- 01 01 026 (Main Lecture Hall)

- 02 EG 036 (Faculty Building).

### **Portable toy chest**

Sometimes there's no avoiding it: you have to bring your child to campus, whether to work with fellow group members, to use the library or because your usual childcare arrangement has fallen ill or is on holiday.

As a special service to parents, the Equal Opportunities Office offers a portable toy chest that can be borrowed on for up to a full day. The portable toy chest helps parents entertain their kids while they get some important work done. It's suitable for both toddlers and children and contains games, colouring books and crayons, books and puzzles.

On Campus Kleve (04 EG 005 Service Point) there are two mobile boxes of toys available free of charge and on Campus Kamp-Lintfort (02 EG 505 Student Service Point) you can borrow one.

For more information, please contact Equal Opportunities staff at [gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de) or [gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de](mailto:gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de).

Have your children outgrown any toys? Please consider donating them to our portable toy chests!

## 6. Accommodation

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### Halls of residence run by the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf

The Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf offers affordable housing solutions in both Kleve and Kamp-Lintfort. Many of the flats in these halls of residence accept parents with children as well.

All students at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences are eligible to apply for housing from the Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf. These rooms are in high demand, however, so you may land on a waiting list first. If you're interested signing up for a room, register online with the [Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf](#) (in German) as soon as possible!

### Housing allowance (*Wohngeld*)

Parents searching for a place to stay need to consider not only their proximity to campus, but also whether there are any nearby *Kitas*, schools or child minders.

Before housing is found, parents should also investigate whether they qualify for a housing allowance through the German government. If so, there are additional important housing criteria to consider (e.g. maximum allowable size of the flat). An initial consultation with the housing allowance office [*Wohngeldstelle*] is strongly advisable.

The housing allowance is additional financial support available for both renters (whether in flats or single rooms) or for parents who own the house or flat they're living in. General eligibility for housing assistance, as well as the amount you're entitled to, depends on three main factors:

- the number of people in the household,
- parents' total combined income,
- the eligible amount of rent/mortgage payments.

Parents' monthly combined income may not be fall below or exceed certain threshold amounts.

House allowance can be approved for up to 12 months and payments begin in the the month of filing. Each extension beyond this initial period requires a new application before a certain deadline. For a non-binding eligibility check, please visit [the housing allowance calculator](#) (in German) maintained by the state of NRW.

Generally, if you're currently receiving social assistance on the basis of *SGB II*, *SGB XII* and *SGB VIII* (such as *ALG II*, social or income support), other supplementary income assistance, financial assistance via the *Bundesversorgungsgesetz* or *BAföG*,

then you are ineligible for housing allowance. Note that this ineligibility only applies if your current financial support already includes some form of housing assistance.

For more information (in German), please visit:

[Wohngeld Kleve](#)

[Wohngeld Kamp-Lintfort](#)

Private ads for flats in Kleve and Kamp-Lintfort can be frequently found on the campus bulletin boards next to the Audimax, canteens and the ZSB. There are also a number of free and popular online portals available in Germany. Some landlords also post available rooms and flats directly through the HSRW website: [Finding a Flat](#).

### **State-subsidised housing (*Wohnberechtigungsschein*)**

State-subsidised housing is available in Germany, but requires a special permit granted by the responsible municipal office. Eligibility depends primarily on income, and permission is granted in the form of an entitlement letter that is valid for up to twelve months. This letter includes the number of people in your household and the maximum allowable size of the flat. Student parents are eligible to request a social housing entitlement letter in urgent cases, provided their annual gross income does not exceed a certain maximum threshold.

## 7. Family Fun and Recreation

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### 7.1 Kleve

#### [Tiergarten Kleve e.V.](#) (in German)

The beautiful animal park in Kleve offers families the chance to see and experience both native and exotic animals up close. Pull-along wagons can be rented for a small fee at the gates and free parking is available out front.

#### [Outdoor pool Sternbusch – Indoor pool Königsgarten](#) (in German)

Kleve currently maintains an indoor swimming pool (Königsgarten) for parents and children located not far from campus. A brand-new outdoor swimming complex (Sternbusch) is currently under construction a short distance from Kleve and is scheduled to open in 2018.

#### [Kleoland](#) (in German)

For rainy days, birthdays or play groups, Kleoland is a good option for families. The 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> play complex lets kids climb, jump, run and have fun. For younger children, Kleoland also offers a changing station and ball pit.

### 7.2 Kamp-Lintfort

#### [Haus der Familie](#) (in German)

Haus der Familie (Family House) in Kamp-Lintfort is a Catholic education forum offering a variety of courses and other educational offers for both children and parents. Ranging from athletic activities to cooking courses, Haus der Familie caters to nearly all age groups.

#### [Spiel-Dschungel](#) (in German)

Spiel-Dschungel (play jungle) is an indoor playground open all year for families with children under 12. It's also a good venue for hosting birthday parties in any type of weather or season.

### **Panoramabad Pappelsee** (in German)

*Panoramabad Pappelsee* is a swimming complex in Kamp-Lintfort with indoor and outdoor pools as well as many other fun attractions. Swim courses are offered all year, for example baby aquatics. During open swim hours the complex is a great place for families to spend the day.

### **Halde Norddeutschland** (in German)

Not far from Kamp-Lintfort, in the town of Neukirchen-Vluyn, you'll find the *Halde Norddeutschland*, a 102 m artificial rise built on a massive slag heap from the now-decommissioned Niederberg coal mine. Here you'll find a slew of nature trails, viewing points and a full day of hiking possibilities for the whole family.

### **Oermter Berg** (in German)

Also near Kamp-Lintfort, in the town of Rheurdt (address: Niederend 113) you'll find the *Oermter Berg* public park. This large, forested park features a museum, a large playground, barbeque huts and a small animal park. Scenic nature trails with creeks and waterways offer an inviting backdrop for relaxing family strolls.

## **7.3 Between Kleve and Kamp-Lintfort**

### **Irrland**

*Irrland* is a farm-adventure oasis located at Scheidweg 1, 47624 Kevelaer-Twisteden. Full of fun attractions like play barns (for both older and younger children), an indoor climbing world and the largest conservatory on the Lower Rhine, this "all-weather oasis" is sure to entertain kids and parents alike. Families can also bring their own food and barbeque on one of the many grills with adjacent seating areas. Reservations aren't required, but are highly recommended in the popular summer months!

### **Kernie's Familienpark Kalkar** (in German)

*Kernie's Familienpark* in Kalkar is a family fun park with rides, a ferris wheel, trampoline and other attractions for different age groups. French fries, soft drinks and ice cream are included in all ticket prices. The park also offers ample parking at no charge.

### **LVR Archeological Park Xanten & Roman Museum**

This gorgeous archeological park with Roman Museum in Xanten is like stepping back in time to the Roman colony of Ulpia Traiana, founded on the frontiers of the

Roman Empire by decree of Emperor Trajan. But the park isn't just for history buffs: it also offers adventurous playgrounds and picnic areas for families. Entry is free for children under 18 years of age.

Within walking distance of the park you'll also find Italian restaurant Plaza del Mar, a boat rental area and a minigolf course.

## 8. Equal Opportunities Office

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Student parents can turn to the Equal Opportunities Office of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences for all questions and issues.

Unfortunately, for organisational reasons we aren't able to offer regular office hours. To schedule an individual appointment instead, please contact us using the information below:

### Equal Opportunities Office

Contact	Dr Sarah Vader Campus Kleve, 09 01 007 Tel.: 02821-80673-9704 <a href="mailto:sarah.vader@hochschule-rhein-waal.de">sarah.vader@hochschule-rhein-waal.de</a>
	Stefanie Aunkofer, M.A. Campus Kleve, 09 01 007 Tel.: 02821-80673-9866 <a href="mailto:stefanie.aunkofer@hochschule-rhein-waal.de">stefanie.aunkofer@hochschule-rhein-waal.de</a> <a href="mailto:gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de">gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de</a>

### Central Equal Opportunities Officer and Deputy Officers

Central Equal Opportunities Officer	Linda van Dijk Kleve Campus, 09 02 017 Tel.: 02821 80673 193
Deputy Officer, Kleve Campus	n/a
Deputy Office, Kamp-Lintfort Campus	Professor Dr Nele Wild-Wall Ka-Li Campus, 02 02 405 Tel.: 02821 80673 277 <a href="mailto:gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de">gleichstellungsbeauftragte@hochschule-rhein-waal.de</a> <a href="mailto:gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de">gleichstellung@hochschule-rhein-waal.de</a>

## Equal Opportunities Officers and Deputy Officers of the Faculties

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**Additional information**

The family services office of the Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf has developed its own comprehensive guide for students with children, which also contains information applicable to students at HSRW. This guide is available in German at: [Studieren mit Kind an der Heinrich-Heine-Universität](#)

Please also refer to the guide for student parents developed by the Studierendenwerk Berlin, also available in German at: [Studieren mit Kind in Berlin](#)

## 9. Imprint

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Publisher and responsible for content:

Equal Opportunities Team of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, represented by the Central Equal Opportunities Officer

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This guide is intended to serve as an informative overview only and, as such, does not provide recommendations or requests to use or patron any of the external offers or services contained herein.

Furthermore, due to the general informative nature of this guide, not all benefits offers or services contained herein will be applicable to every student with child. International students in particular are ineligible for many of the financial assistance offers contained herein. International students' eligibility for financial assistance depends largely on residency status. For this reason, we strongly advise international students to schedule a personal consultation with the appropriate government agencies and/or providers of appropriate advising services.

Published: November 2018

Equal Opportunities Team of the Rhine-Waal-University of Applied Sciences