

SCHOOL PLACEMENT SCHEME – BRIEFING

The Department's *School Placement Scheme* offers students of English an opportunity to spend five weeks in an English secondary school working as a German language assistant. It's a "win-win" arrangement: you acquire valuable experience for your future career by working in a school and helping with foreign-language teaching, get the chance to live with an English family, and to be part of a community (the school) which will welcome you in; the school profits from having an enthusiastic, young native speaker to help out in the classroom and bring the language to life for learners of German. It is this mutual benefit that has made the scheme so successful over the last decade or so.

RECOGNITION

The Placement is recognised and recommended as a way of meeting course requirements. Depending on the regulations you are studying under, it may be recognised for the *Stay Abroad* (2003 regulations, Modellversuch BAMA Lehramt 2005, or a part of the LABG 2009 12-week stay) required for certain modules. The Placement may also be recognised by the *Praktikumsbüro* as teaching practice. If you wish to take part in the Placement instead of doing teaching practice in a German school, you still need to contact the *Praktikumsbüro* and apply in the usual manner. You will have to meet any additional requirements set by the *Praktikumsbüro*. This may mean, for example, getting the appropriate form signed by the school before you return to Dortmund.

YOUR ROLE

Your job is to support the permanent staff in the school's German department. You will work closely with a Supervising Teacher (in most cases someone who is used to working with trainee and newly-qualified teachers) and together you will decide how you can best contribute to the teaching of German in the school. This usually involves oral practice with small groups of learners under the guidance of the teacher. You could be teaching near-beginners – or sixth-formers, whose German (hopefully) will be quite good. You may also be expected to help with the preparation of teaching materials. It is important that you should be flexible and show willing.

The school will expect you to "teach" 12-15 lessons a week; you may also be able to observe (or even help out with) lessons in your other subject (e.g. music, sport). Try to make contact as early as possible with teachers in the relevant department and see what possibilities exist. In most cases you will have one day free from teaching (usually Fridays). Much of your responsibility will involve teamwork and collaboration. Therefore, you need to adjust to your teacher's personal style and methodology, as well as to books and materials. Some teachers have very structured lesson plans.

You will be a temporary member of staff. Teachers and students will depend on you to fulfil your role as best you can – and enthusiastically!

EXPECT (or TRY) to	
Work as a team with your supervising teacher	Stay at school all or most of the day
Willingly accept assigned duties	Dress and conduct yourself like other teachers
Take initiative in planning lessons	Get to know other teachers and staff
Help with activities outside the classroom	Be active in the school's social and cultural life
Be accountable for assigned work	
DO NOT EXPECT to	
Be in charge of classes	Have special privileges
Have full teaching responsibility	Be paid

- If teachers request help with language material (e.g. making worksheets), set time aside for this.
- Never correct a colleague in the presence of students or colleagues. If you undermine the students' respect for the teacher, your relationship with the teacher will be adversely affected.
- Even though your English may be better than your students' German, try to speak in German at their level of knowledge, rather than resorting to English. Diplomatically address inaccuracies and stereotypes.
- If people seem ignorant about Germany and its culture, remember that is why you are there!

ACCOMMODATION

The school arranges accommodation for you, usually with a teacher. As soon as you make contact with the school, you should ask about accommodation and then contact your host family as soon as possible. Find out how much you will be expected to pay for accommodation (the cost varies from school to school, reflecting differences in the cost of living in various parts of the country; it should, however, fall within an agreed band). Accommodation includes meals; in most cases your host will be able to drive you to and from school. Offer to pay for accommodation in advance (at least for the first week) and make sure you do not leave any debts behind at the end of your stay!

EXPECT (or TRY) to	
Be a part of the family (if this is what your host expects)	Follow house rules
Help with chores	Participate in family activities
Take care of your belongings	Prepare a typical dish on occasion
DO NOT EXPECT to	
Live like a hotel guest	Come and go as you please
Rely on your family for all transport	Have friends stay with you

- Take responsibility for phone calls. Pay for all the calls you make on your host's phone, or buy a phone card.
- Your host family will expect basic courtesies from you: being communicative, discussing issues, showing appreciation, informing them of your plans in advance, and helping with tasks. Keeping to yourself and avoiding the family is not a form of courtesy!
- Show interest in their lives; join some of their activities if invited.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Arranging travel to and from England is your responsibility. Your Supervisor at the school will be able to give advice, as will students who have taken part in the scheme in previous years. These days, most students fly to England; for the schools in the south-east, Gatwick Airport is very convenient. Discuss travel arrangements and your arrival with your Supervisor or host. Normally someone will meet you at the airport. Before you set off, it's worth looking at the following website, which will give you street maps and even aerial photographs of where you are going to: www.multimap.com.

PREPARATION

Your school is not expecting a fully qualified German teacher, but someone who can authentically represent German language and culture to learners. Start collecting useful material that you think would be of interest to young learners of German in England: posters, music, magazines, material on BVB. Don't leave this to the last minute. A small present for your host family is also a good idea (Tip: try *Tchibo*). Start collecting useful material now!

CHANGING MONEY

The United Kingdom is not in the euro zone. EC cards and Eurocheques are accepted and it should be no trouble getting cash from banks and machines. I find the most convenient (and reasonable) way of getting English money is to use a *Postbank* savings account. The card can be used at any cash dispenser with the PLUS sign on it. You can transfer money to this account before you go (or even online from your current account while you're in England). Any money you don't need will even be earning interest!

HEALTH INSURANCE

In the event of you being ill or having an accident in the UK, treatment is available through the National Health Service. There are reciprocal agreements within the EU, which means you will not have to pay at the point of treatment. However, you should check with your health-insurance provider before you go to the UK to find out what documents you might need to have with you (e.g. the E 111 form).

VISAS

If you are a national of an EU member state, you do not need a visa to enter the UK. If this does not apply to you, then you must find out in advance whether you need to apply for a visa and, if so, take the appropriate action.

FEEDBACK

Once you have made contact with your Supervisor and host family, please keep us informed about anything you think we need to know about. We appreciate even the briefest of e-mails to let us know you have arrived and settled in. We would certainly expect to hear from you if you encounter any serious problems, especially anything affecting the scheme itself. Make sure you have our contact details with you in England. **Also we would like you to report back to us personally at the beginning of term.**

AND FINALLY ...

It is vital that you assure both us and your school that you consider yourself to be a suitable person to take part in this scheme. This means both that you will be a good "ambassador" for the Department (preparation, aptitude, sense of responsibility), and also that you do not represent a danger to children (e.g. illness, criminal record, behavioural disorder). When you fill in the Expression of Interest form, you will have to sign the following declaration:

DECLARATION OF SUITABILITY

I hereby certify that in taking on the position of a Foreign Language Assistant I understand that I will be working with young children, at times on a one-to-one basis, and I declare that I am a fit person to undertake such work.