

# Master of Architectural Lighting Design: Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. Architectural Lighting Design: General

- Why do students choose to come to Wismar?

There are many reasons why students choose to study at the Hochschule Wismar. The Hochschule is the only place in Germany where it is possible to study Architectural Lighting Design. It is also the only place in Mecklenburg Vorpommern where students may study Architecture/Design/Lighting Design. The chance to study Lighting Design in English also appeals to many as it is a widely spoken language and the classes allow students from across the world to take part easily. The Hochschule Wismar is equipped with good facilities and offers a pleasant campus to study on. Many of the buildings on the campus are new or have been recently renovated to meet the needs of the different programmes offered to students. Many students also benefit from the opportunity to study Architectural Lighting Design alongside students from Architecture/Interior/Product/Communication Design and the chance to take part in some of these classes in a similar field. Another good reason to study at the Hochschule Wismar is the lack of student study fees at the moment. Students at the Hochschule Wismar are only obliged to pay a 50 Euro semester fee and 13 Euro for student card that allows you to gain access into the Design Studios. The 57 Euro semester fee goes towards the student union, allowing the university to offer cheap meals at the cafeteria and many activities during the year such as on-campus concerts, students bars etc.

## 2. Lighting Design Programme

- What is the course structure?

The programmes consist of 4 semesters study.

The first two semesters of the degree are spent in Wismar where students attend compulsory classes and take part in projects and excursions.

The third semester is spent abroad where students gain an internship in an office and undertake practical training in preparation for their Master Thesis. In the past students have gained internships in places such as America, England, France, Germany, Austria, Australia and many more places throughout the world.

- What kinds of Excursions will I be able to take part in?

Excursions vary each year for the students. In the past many projects have been based in different cities around Germany such as Neuruppin. Annual Lighting Design Forums/conferences are held in Frankfurt for a week. This excursion often provides many of the students with valuable contacts and placement offers for their internship.

- What are the Rules of Study?

Study at the Hochschule Wismar is mainly self-conducted. This means that the emphasis is not placed on class attendance but on exams. The most important aspect to remember when studying in Germany is that you will need to register to sit exams. Two months before the exam period, students must register for the exams they plan to attend – just because you attend a class does not mean that you will attend the exam. If you do not register for each class you will not be able to sit the exam.

- What Possibilities are available for Scholarships?

There are very few possibilities of receiving scholarships to the Hochschule Wismar due to the fact that there is no study fee. In many other universities students have to pay to study. These fees can be 200-500 euro per semester. As the government funds the study in Wismar, there are limited opportunities for International students to receive further support.

- What are the semester dates?

Winter semester dates are 01.09. – 28.02. and summer semester – 01.03.-31.08. Students attend exams within the last 3 weeks of each semester. For detailed information on this please contact the Hochschule Wismar Exam Committee and be sure to look keep a look out at the announcement boards around the university around the time. Messages will be posted with details of where and how to register for your exams.

- How much is the course?

Students at the Hochschule Wismar are only obliged to pay a 50 Euro semester fee and 13 Euros for a student card that allows you to gain access into the Lighting Design Studios. The 57 Euro semester fee goes towards the student union, allowing the university to offer cheap meals at the cafeteria and many activities during the year such as on-campus concerts, students bars etc.

- How much German will I need to know?

Architectural Lighting Design is taught only in English at the Hochschule Wismar so there is no need to understand German, although it is recommended. A compulsory German course is included as part of the Lighting Design Course Structure to help students gain a basic level.

- Are there many international students in Wismar/ Lighting Design?

90% of Architectural Lighting Design at the Hochschule Wismar are not German and come from all over the world. Many international students can also be found around the campus on study exchanges in programmes such as Architecture, Product Design, Engineering and International Business Management where they also study in English.

### 3. Application Process

- Dates of Application

Application deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

- How do I apply for a position in the course?

To apply for the Master Degree course Architectural Lighting Design please send your application documents to following address:

**Hochschule Wismar  
International Office  
PF 1210  
D-23952 Wismar**

The completed application must content following documents:

- Application form for a study place duly filled in and signed
- Photo (passport size)
- Certified copy of **original** Bachelor Degree Certificate in fields of design or architecture or other related fields such as architecture, interior design, design, product design, communication design or lighting design including transcript of records of all semesters together with its certified translation into English or German. The average of mark must be 2,5 or better.
- Certified copy of original high school diploma including the transcript of records together with its certified translation.

- Proof of English knowledge (TOEFL or IELTS certificates)
- Motivation letter
- Portfolio (printed only, not on CD or DVD)

Please take a note that the documents must be sent via post and not via e-mail.

- **What is a motivation letter?**

A motivation letter is simply a written letter to the university stating why you want to study Architectural Lighting at the Hochschule Wismar, your personal motivations and your expectations of the course and what you will get out of it. The format is similar to a cover letter that accompanies you CV when applying for a job.

- **What do I need to show in the portfolio?**

The portfolio should demonstrate the type of work or projects you have done in the past years. These should be set as PDF files or as a PowerPoint presentation. The purpose of the portfolio is to allow the Professors to get an idea of your skills for you to show that you are capable of undertaking this degree programme. Please send to us your portfolio as printed document only. Portfolios sent as online document or on CD or DVD will not be accepted.

- **Which documents are accepted as proof of English language?**

As proof of English knowledge we do accept TOEFL-Certificate or IELTS. .

- **What will I need for the Visa?**

Students have 3 months once they arrive in Germany to receive their Visa. This can be done in Wismar at the Ausländerbehörde. The Ausländerbehörde is found near the intersection of Doktor-Leber Strasse and Rostocker Strasse.

Students wishing to apply for a Visa need to provide:

- **Proof of their student status in Wismar** (admission to a recognised educational institution for the main purpose of gaining a professional/vocational qualification)

Accepted forms of proof of:

The proof of admission to studies is met by presenting the admissions letter. The admissions letter may be substituted by

- letter from the educational institution confirming pre-registration for a study place,
- letter confirming applicant status or
- letter from the university or the pre-study preparatory course (Studienkolleg) stating that the decision on the admissions application requires the personal presence of the foreigner at the university. This letter must confirm that the applicant's admissions application has been checked and that there are reasonable prospects for the applicant being admitted

In some cases this may not be possible to provide until you have paid the student semester fee in Wismar to receive confirmation of your status.

- **Proof of Residence** – by way of a rental contract.
- **A valid Passport and biometrical photographs** of yourself
- **Financial Proof** – the student needs to provide an officially translated report from their parents/guardian stating that they will provide constant financial support for you. This needs to be translated by a German Embassy with the official stamps.

The other way to provide proof of your ability to stay here is to open an account when you arrive in Wismar with a Bank: students usually choose to use Sparkasse or Deutsche Bank, and to deposit a total of 670 Euro for every month you intend to stay here/ length of your Visa. A statement then needs to be printed out from the bank and given as proof to the Ausländerbehörde. (Note that the downfall in this is that international transfers can be costly if coming from a long distance and once deposited some banks can restrict the amount of money you can withdraw pre month, in other cases this can be a successful solution as a Bank account in Wismar will need to be set up to pay rent from).

- **Proof of Health Insurance/ Health Insurance Policy** with the start and end dates of your Insurance period provided.
- It is also recommended that you bring with you a copy of your **birth certificate**.
- **Proof of any academic achievements or qualifications** to date,
- **Proof of any German language skills** which the applicant may have or of any planned participation in an intensive language course in Germany

If you are looking to try and gain work in Wismar you need to acquire a special paper that allows you to undertake 120 full days of work per year. This is also sought at the Ausländerbehörde and requires a written statement from your employer.

- **What living arrangements are there for international students?**

Most students choose to live in the Wohnheims in Wismar. These are three blocks of apartments where students have a private room around 10m<sup>2</sup> or 20m<sup>2</sup>. The rooms are in units of two, with a bathroom shared between two people. Kitchens are located separately and shared between neighbours. These are a great way to get to know people and make friends.

Accommodation in the Wohnheims can be found through Studentenwerk Rostock, under this website (English): <http://www.studentenwerk-rostock.de/index.php?lang=en&mainmenue=6&submenue=78>  
- Follow the links at the bottom of the page which state Wismar.

Private student flats are available in Wismar or shared flats with German students, as the town has many young people living in it. However these can be hard to find unless you have a good understanding of German. In many cases private flats need to be sought once you are in Wismar and they often demand a high deposit (Kaution).

- **What is the average rent?**

Student dorms (10m<sup>2</sup> – 20m<sup>2</sup>): 190.00 – 250.00 Euros per month (incl. water/power/internet/heating)  
Deposit: 250 Euro

Shared Flat (10m<sup>2</sup>-16m<sup>2</sup>): approximately 200-300 Euro per month (usually inclusive of water/electricity/heating/internet)

Private Flat: (20m<sup>2</sup>-60m<sup>2</sup>): approximately 300 – 500 Euro per month (not inclusive of heating/water/internet/electricity)  
Deposits can be between 200-500 Euros depending on size.

- **Are the rooms furnished?**

Rooms in the Wohnheim are furnished with a single bed, a desk, a bedside table, a cupboard (for your clothes) and set of shelves/ small cupboard. Each room has a phone; however this phone can only make calls to rooms within the apartment blocks.  
Students need to provide their own bed linen and kitchen equipment. These can easily be bought cheaply in Wismar.

Generally private flats are not furnished. There are opportunities to take over student's rooms that are going abroad for a semester and use their furniture.

- Will I have access to the Internet?

All rooms in the Wohnheim have internet available. You will need to buy a European internet cable if you are not from Europe. This can be found at any electrical store.

Access to the internet in private flats varies. If you are flatting with other students there will be a system in place in most cases. If you are flatting alone a contract by an internet provider may need to be sought. In most cases the renter will inform you of this.

- Are there supermarkets nearby?

There are many supermarkets around Wismar to choose from. The closest to the Wohnheim is Netto on Bürgermeister Hauptstrasse, Sky on Philipp-Müller Strasse. These are 5-10 minutes walk away. They are open from 8am – 8pm Monday-Saturday. It is important to know that all shops are shut on Sundays. Close to the university and the old town are Rewe on Philipp-Müller Strasse and Netto and Neukauf on Schwerier Strasse. Rewe is the only Supermarket open from 8am - 10pm Monday to Saturday.

- How far is the accommodation from the university?

The Student Wohnheim is a 10/15 minute walk from the university and a 20 minute walk to the old town. Likewise most student flats are within a 5-15 minute radius of the university.

- What are the common types of transport available in Wismar?

You will arrive in Wismar by train to the Hauptbahnhof (Main train station). Trains to and from Wismar can be found at: <http://www.bahn.de/international/view/en/index.shtml>

Buses around the town go from the Train Station and Taxis can be found outside (around 10 Euro to get to the Wohnheim, although there is an additional charge for large bags/ suitcases). The buses to the Wohnheim say "Wonnemar" on them and will drop you at the Netto on Bürgermeister-Haupt-Strasse, where it is only a short walk from there.

Many students choose to buy a bicycle to get around the city on. These can be bought second hand at the university for around 40 Euros. To do this you need to go to see the "bike man" Rocco at the university between 2pm – 5pm weekdays. There is also a bicycle store on Mecklenburger Strasse.

The town is small enough however to walk around easily.

#### Are there washing machines available?

Washing Machines and dryers are available on the ground floor of each of the apartment blocks. Each load costs 2 Euros and the dryer 1 Euro. Washing liquid must be provided by you and can be bought in the nearby supermarket.

If you are living in a flat that has no washing machine, laundries can be found in the old city on Lübsche Strasse. These are often a bit more expensive, one load being around 4/5 Euros and the drying 2/3 Euros.

- What activities are popular for students in Wismar?

Wismar is a quiet town on the harbour. Most of the student life centres on and around the university campus. At lunchtimes most students meet at the Mensa, the student cafeteria, where you can receive large meals for around 2-4 Euro. Mensa is a popular place on the campus for students to meet and is a daily activity for many.

There is a student bar/club on campus called Block 17 open Tuesday and Fridays. There are also many parties held in the design studios and the foyer of Haus 7 (the design facility).

By the Harbour there is a student café called Kai Bar that is popular for students to meet or work in. The American Bar 'New Orleans' is also popular.

Near the Wohnheims there is a club called Mensakeller open Wednesday and Saturday nights and a large swimming complex 'Wonnemar':  
<http://www.wonnemar.de/wismar/index2.php?scrollbalken=0&nav1=&nav2=&content=>. (In German)

A small gym is free for all students and is located in the Sports Hall next to the Wohnheim. Here there are many different sports you can take part in such as Volleyball, Handball, Badminton, Karate and Judo. Nearby there are also Football training grounds for the teams in Wismar that you may join and in the nearby town of Rostock you may play Rugby.

In the summer it is usual for students to visit the nearby parks (BürgerPark/ Tier Park) for BBQs and the island of Insel Poel, or Wendorf to visit the Beach.

Around Wismar there are many small towns such as Rostock, Lübeck, and Schwerin that you can reach within an hour for a day out, each with their own character. Hamburg is around 2 hours away and Berlin 3 hours by train.

A special ticket can be purchased through DB Bahn called the "Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Ticket" that allows a group of up to 5 people to travel within the Bundesland/state for 38 Euro. On weekends there is a special ticket for 5 people for 44 Euro that allows you to travel anywhere in Germany within 24 hours – a student's dream!

Other services such as car sharing can be found on the internet (in German) under this website:  
<http://www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de/>

- Is much English spoken locally?

English is not a language that is spoken a lot in Wismar. Most students and Professors are able to speak fluent English, however around the town it is common that people only understand a little bit.

- What are the normal living costs as an international student?

Food: approximately 40-70 Euro per week

Mensa: lunches 2/4 Euro per meal

Rent: 2000 – 300 Euro per month (as explained under accommodation)

Initial deposit: 2500-500 Euros

Visa: 110 Euro

Student Fee: 50 Euro + 13 Euro

Insurance: 78,00 Euro per month

The standard of living in the Federal Republic of Germany is high and, consequently, so too are the costs and expenses needed to be able to share in that standard. Based on the 2002 index, you should estimate monthly expenses between 540 and 670 Euros. You will find that this will allow you only a very modest lifestyle.

## 5. Important Links for Lighting Designers

[www.pld-a.org](http://www.pld-a.org)

[www.iald.org](http://www.iald.org)