

Statement by the Studierendenwerk Kaiserslautern on the increase in the solidarity contribution

Falling income is offset by sharply rising costs. Significantly declining student numbers, declining Mensa meals and cafeteria sales, high energy and food prices, stagnating state subsidies to reduce the cost of student meals are the main reasons for the mandatory increase.

This is why the social contribution will rise by 16 euros from the current 109 euros to 125 euros per semester from summer semester 2025.

What do we offer you in return for the solidarity contribution?

Our Mensas and cafeterias offer a wide variety of tasty meals with regional as well as international, vegetarian and vegan alternatives for both large and small appetites. Our large and small student residences offer affordable accommodation close to the university with maintenance by our own janitorial team and 'all-in' rents with the security of not having to pay any additional costs. We offer childcare for the children of student parents in our daycare centre. In crisis situations, our trained specialists at the Psychological Counselling Centre can help, as can legal advice and counselling in financial emergencies.

How is this financed?

The costs in the student residence department are covered by the rents. For our daycare centre, we receive support from the state and the municipality.

The state of Rheinland-Pfalz grants us a mensa subsidy, which we use to co-finance student meals in the mensas.

However, the Mensa subsidy is nowhere near enough to offset our personnel and material costs in the food service department, particularly because the Mensa subsidy is not increasing in line with the sharp rise in costs (for food, energy, personnel), but is stagnating at the 2019 level.

In addition, the services of our counselling staff, for which no separate fees are charged to those seeking advice, must be financed.

The solidarity contribution, which must be paid each semester, is used to further cover these outstanding costs. Revenue from sales in the department of gastronomy (lunch, desserts, sandwiches, snacks, drinks, etc.) is also used to cover these costs. Due to the sharp decline in student numbers at the universities, online teaching and the home office policy, there is unfortunately still a gap in funding despite a significant reduction in staff, the closure of food counters, the decommissioning of cafeterias, the restructuring of our meal services and price adjustments.

In order to be able to maintain our services at least to a reduced extent at affordable prices (or free of charge in the counselling area), the only alternative is to increase the solidarity contribution. The Studierendenwerk Supervisory Board - consisting of students, professors, public figures and the Personnel Council - has therefore decided that the solidarity contribution will increase by 16 euros to 125 euros per semester from the summer semester 2025 and thus to the same level as for RPTU students in Landau.

This means that all students at RPTU Kaiserslautern and Kaiserslautern University of Applied Sciences will have to pay 125 euros per semester starting in the summer semester of 2025 instead of the previous 109 euros in order to be enrolled.

We are aware that this is an additional burden for students in view of the already generally expensive cost of living. We therefore very much hope that the state of Rheinland-Pfalz will take the cost development into account when determining the subsidy for the ongoing operation of the university for next year.

Kaiserslautern, 12.12.2024

Your Studierendenwerk Kaiserslautern