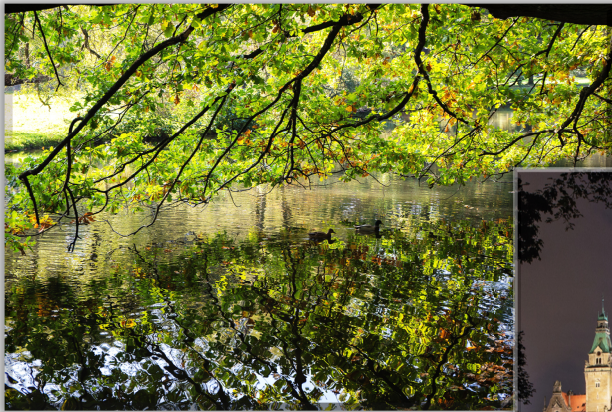




**EXCHANGE SEMESTER AT LEIBNIZ UNIVERSITÄT HANNOVER WS 2014/15
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT
REPORT FROM LIUBOV BELOVA (SAINT-PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY)**



Arrival

It is better to start the preparation at least 6 months before. At your home university you should realize next steps: to find a university with an appropriate program where is possible to study at English (it is very important because not in all faculties you can study in English), to apply for the exchange program doing all required points, to apply for the visa in advance after getting the confirmation from a new university, to find a living place. After arriving at a new place a student has to go through some conditions such as:

1) Living place. There are two possibilities: to live in a dormitory or private apartment. University services can help to find both places. Of course, dorms are cheaper but they have also good conditions: a room for one person, a common kitchen and a common bathroom. Usually dormitories are not far away and a student needs to use only one line of a tram. When you live in a dorm, you can take parts in different events: going to cinema or travel to some towns, dinners and parties. All people who live there are friendly and polite.

2) Banks. You need to open some accounts in advance or after arriving. If you need an account for a visa, you need to send all documents from your home country. After you arrive, you should go to the bank and unblock your account. If you need account for scholarship, you can go in any bank and create a debit account very easy using only the confirmation of the scholarship and student ID. All documents, cards, passwords a student will get in a post box.

3) Registration. It is very important to register during 2 weeks after arrival! Firstly, check the opening time in the Internet, then take the required documents such as passport, visa, student ID, dormitory contract. It would be a long link, so I advice to come earlier.

4) Insurance. It is obligatory for every citizen to have insurance. You can choose two possibilities with different conditions: public or private insurance companies. To have insurance is enough expensive, but if there is some incident, you can visit almost any hospital and you do not need to pay for it (you will have a special insurance policy to show). It is very important to be insured because it is

impossible to pay for a doctor by yourself (very-very expensive!), even if it is just visiting a doctor.

5) Study-buddy program. Most of the universities offer to take the student help for the first days. Thus, you should apply for this program and after you get some student from the same faculty. He or she can help you with the next problems: picking up at train station or airport, finding your accommodation and carrying you there, enrolment at university, being the guide at the university or the town, solving problems with bank accounts and administrative formalities. So a study-buddy will help you with all steps which are written before. Especially, if you do not speak a local language, it is very helpful to have a translator.

Studying at Leibniz Universität Hannover

The university has several buildings for every faculty. I studied at School of Economics and Management and they have own campus which consists of 4 buildings: 2 lecture and seminar builds, a library and Mensa. It is a good possibility that a student can visit first lecturers and decide if he or she likes or needs this subject. If a decision is negative, it is possible to change Learning Agreement in the first month.

Moreover, a student can take some language courses of any language he wants (English, German, Italian, etc). You can improve your language skills in any level from A1 till C1. However, there are limits of place for students and it is not clear in the beginning who are able to go there, because the system chooses random students. Thus, it is not fair if you are a foreign student and you need to study German because you are living there, but you can not as you were not selected. But the best advantage is that teachers are usually native speakers and a student can practice his accent in a good way.

There are different kinds of subjects. For some you should pass an exam at the end, for some you should write a paper project and there are no classes at all. One of the greatest moment of studying is many courses have practical seminars where you can study calculations, cases and other things which you will use in future at job. However, I advice to start the preparation for the exams before one

month because 1) it is a foreign language, 2) you need to know both theory and practice, 3) some subjects include knowledge from other courses which you might have already studied earlier (for some foreigners it can be a real problem).

At the end of your studying every student should get the Transcript of Records with all your courses and grades. There are some difficulties: 1) you need to take all your certificates from language courses and carry them to your own faculty by yourself (there are no connection between faculties), 2) often teachers can bring your results for a long time (a month or more) and you need to remind them that you need a grade as soon as possible for your home university, 3) it is not enough to have only certificate with an attendance, you have to ask your teachers also for a grade, 4) sometimes you need to wait for your Transcript of Records even if you are already at home country. So it is better to begin all process with the results in advance and you should remember about all courses you have, sometimes even explain to teachers that you are an exchange student and need the special conditions with grades/ certificates/ signatures.

Living in Hannover

International office provides a lot of different social events every months and I highly recommend to take part in them. Firstly, you can meet new people and the life in Hannover will be more interesting. Secondly, it is a great possibility to know the local culture and places. For example, there are many programs such as dinners, parties, trips in Low Saxony, Ice-Skating, Christmas week, concerts, workshops, excursions and other events.

What is more, Hannover is enough a multicultural town and there is a huge range of entertainment: shopping, Opera concerts, cinema (some movies in English), bars and clubs of different styles, parks with lakes, museums (on Fridays most of them are free). This town is also famous by having a lot of trees (it is called “green town”) and in spring and autumn there is really beautiful nature.

The student transport ticket is very convenient because you can use it for any transport in Hannover (trams, buses) and for discounts in museums, but it is also free to travel by trains (ME, RE) in Low Saxony. Thus, you have the great

possibility to know more about the lands in Low Saxony: every town has own sign (usually an animal or a bird) and history, some museums, old town with old objects/buildings. Usually train traveling in Germany is pretty expensive so do not miss this opportunity!



Conclusion

I am very thankful that my home university (Saint-Petersburg State University, faculty of economics, the master program “Risk-management and insurance”) provides for students the possibility to study abroad like exchange students. What is more important, try to apply for scholarship because living and studying in Germany is not cheap. It is really excellent that some organizations such as DAAD help students with giving scholarships which cover main costs.

Also, it should be mentioned that international offices of both universities helped me a lot all time with pleasure to regulate or solve any problems, answer any questions about studying or living in Hannover.

To sum up, if you have this opportunity to go to some country for exchange program, do not think so much and agree with it! You will remember this trip all the life such as the best experience you can take during studying at the university (it does not matter which level of education you have – bachelor or master).

In case of any further questions, please, do not hesitate to contact me.

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