

## ERASMUS experience report

### *Preparation prior to my stay*

I am a last year master student studying Mechanical Engineering, and I spent one semester (Winter 2018/2019) studying at Leibniz University of Hanover. I started collecting documents 8 months before (February) coming to Hanover. The application procedure at my home university (Peter the great st.petersburg polytechnic university) wasn't complicated, and it is clearly written on the website what kind of documents are needed. Firstly, I collected all necessary documents and brought them to the international office of my home university. The deadline for it was the middle of February. Then I had to wait about 1 month to be invited to the interview which was held in March, and after that I was just waiting for decision of my home university whether they will nominate me or not. Finally, in April I received a message that my documents were sent to Hanover. There were 3 students from my university who were also chosen as Erasmus students in Hanover. After that I had to fill in some application forms and just wait for further instructions. When all of the documents were collected, I had to apply for a student visa as my country is not a EU. The queue for a visa application was 3 weeks long, however, after applying it took only 1 day of waiting to get the visa, which was a big surprise for me. Before coming to Hanover I had to pay a student body union fee, find a place to live, get a health insurance and choose courses that I am going to study. There was a problem with choosing courses, because there was only information about courses from previous years and not about upcoming courses. However, it was said that more or less nothing will be changed. After coming to Hanover I had to make a final list of courses that I'm going to study, and I made some changes as not all the courses that I had chosen before were available. It wasn't a big problem for me, because there were new interesting courses that weren't shown in previous years.

### *Housing*

I applied for an accommodation in June, and in August I got a confirmation that I have a place in the dormitory, which is located at Dorotheenstraße 7. I had only one criterion choosing a dorm, and it was a price. The dormitory that I got was one of the cheapest and well-located (approximately 10 minutes from university and 15 minutes from the center by tram). I had a study buddy, and she helped me a lot when I arrived. I didn't know the city at all, and I didn't have Internet connection, but my study buddy met me and showed the way to the dormitory and made a small excursion around the city. I think every new student definitely should apply for a

study buddy program, as it is very useful. The procedure of checking in was very fast. I got the Internet after 2 days of arrival, which was fine. Dormitory conditions were very good, rooms, kitchens and bathrooms were clean and neighbours were quite friendly. Overall, I was satisfied with my accommodation.

After arriving in Hanover I had to make a city registration. The procedure of it wasn't difficult, because at one of the first meetings for international students I was given a termin with a fixed time, and I just had to go there and wait in the queue about 15 minutes, and that was it. Also I didn't have a German bank account, so I had to create it. It was more difficult than I had expected, as most of the banks in Hanover have contracts in German language. My problem was that I didn't know German at all, and I had to find a person who understands it. I couldn't do it, and that's why I didn't receive my scholarship on time. After 3 weeks I found one online bank, which is called N26, and I could make a registration online in English. 2 days after registration I received my card, and 3 weeks after I finally received my scholarship.

### *Studying at the partner university*

It was my first time studying abroad, so I can only compare it to my home university in Russia. Organisation of courses was good. Most of the courses started in the middle of October, however, there were also courses starting in the middle of November. Professors spoke English well, so I didn't have problem with understanding the material. Exams were held in the middle of February and in the second part of March.

### *Off-campus life and leisure time*

During first week of standing in Hanover there was a welcome week with a lot of events, where I could meet other international students and know the culture of Germany better. There is an organization called ESN, which organized a lot of trips, picnics, parties. I participated in most of them and it was an amazing experience as I made a lot of friendships with people all around the world and we made a lot of parties together.

Also university offered a lot of sport activities which were free for students. I was attending swimming pool and played table tennis a lot.

Hanover has a good transportation system, which made my life easy. They city has a lot to offer for free time and weekends. There are museums, opera, theater, some old monuments, picturesque lake, a lot of parks, cinemas, shopping malls, night-clubs, bars and lot more. There were different local and national festivals like Oktoberfest. The city also has lot of traditional,

continental, Asian and fast food restaurants. The prices are usually less than as compared to other German cities, and that makes the city more attractive for students. There is always something going around which is worth attending.

Moreover, during holidays I could travel to other countries with Erasmus students for a reasonable price. I will really miss all the people that I met here, and I hope we will see each other again.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, I would like to say that this experience was definitely life changing and unique for me. If I have opportunity, I will repeat it again for sure. I highly recommend Leibniz University of Hanover, especially Mechanical Engineering faculty, as one of the best places to go for an exchange program. I am sure that I will come back here, as I am going to apply for another master program at this university.