

It all started when I received a mail from my home university about the International Student exchange programme. From that point of time, the exchange fever caught me. Initially, I was very confused between going to a European school or to a business school in United States. The diverse culture from west to east and more so in every other aspect of life in European countries made my decision very easy. So did I select Europe but then which country to go to?

The knowledge transfer happened from my seniors who said that Germany is the obvious choice because of its history, culture, kind people and the central location in the continent. From my experience, every bit of these things came true to the fullest of my knowledge. Once, it was decided that it is Germany; Mannheim was the next obvious choice because of its world renowned faculty and infrastructure which made it one of the top B-schools in Europe and at par with the US schools.

Then started the rich experience of exchange right from the time I got my acceptance letter from the University of Mannheim. I would say the International Office had the kindest people of all who helped us with all the formalities and also sending us documents on time when in need. I am really grateful to all those people in the office who made it an enthralling experience. I only found more of these when I landed in Mannheim where formalities were kept to the minimum in the University. Also help was provided in meeting the visa and residence permit formalities. Whenever I needed help, I always went to the University people who were always ready to help me.

A series of informal meetings were arranged to provide us help on selection of courses, time table, exam registration and what not. They had such a good system in place so that instead of we approaching them and asking doubts, they were forthcoming and helping us out with

each and every thing. Assigning exchange buddy was the next best thing the university did because they helped us a lot with the other things. From no knowledge to some knowledge in German was due to my exchange buddy. Speaking about the faculty, they are one among the few best professors who have taught me in my life. Finance is my primary interest and this field had genius professors in Mannheim. And the courses offered in this field were totally different from those offered at my home university which made them really worth instead of repeating the subjects. The course content had a right mix of theory and practical knowledge with light thrown on more real stuff often.

The much talked about exchange parties organized every week with different themes enabled the exchange students to mingle well with the host university students and a chance to meet other exchange students. It also gave us a chance to be a part of the organizing team responsible for these parties. From the start to the end of the semester, it was full of joy and enjoyment to complain about very little things. Even when I requested to take up a few exams back at my home university, the international office helped in every possible way they could. Overall, the university had the best that an exchange student would aspire to get on exchange.

Though the people were generally good, the rules at most of the government offices did not make it a very sweet experience. The long and lengthy formalities to obtain a residence permit which took almost two months bears testimony to it. And for people who don't speak German it would not be the best of the experience. I would tell that people at these offices did their best to speak in English though it could have been slightly better. Otherwise people were too sweet and good in general. Right from asking a stranger on the road for directions to the cops, everybody offered help without any kind of reservation.

The only bitter experience and so do I mean it literally is finding an accommodation in Mannheim. I did not get university accommodation because it was full by the time I applied and so I had to hunt for an apartment on my own. Though I tried my best to get one in Mannheim, I couldn't find any and finally got one in Schriesheim. The town spread across a very small land was all beauty and add to it a very kind landlord. But travelling for close to an hour to reach the university is a forgettable experience. Apart from this there was nothing much to worry about and I would strongly recommend Mannheim University for all my juniors if the accommodation part is taken care of. I would always want to get back to Germany to relive the experience and I am very grateful to all those at my home university and those at the host university for this good experience.

I hereby declare that I provide full consent to publish the above report on the website of the Baden-Württemberg-STIPENDIUM.

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