

**University of  
Mannheim  
Exchange Report  
(Fall 2015)**

**August:**

The summer academy started in early August, that's why I arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. From what I remember, it was a Sunday, and Sundays are the worst in Europe. With most of the restaurants and shops closed, I checked in at a hotel near Ulmenweg, a student dormitory where I lived. It got a lot better on Monday, where I checked in at Ulmenweg. I got to meet a lot of international students the following days through mostly self-organized events. The German language was great, but waking up at 9am every weekday for German class was fantastic. However, a cup of quality coffee and a bunch of good friends would be what you needed to start the morning. Throughout the month, there were endless excursions and parties.

**September:**

After weeks soaking in alcohol, it was finally time to prepare for school... or not. Stammtisch gatherings at the L3 bar were on Mondays, Schneckenhof parties on Thursdays, and VISUM parties on weekends. What about the rest of the days in the week? Getting prepared for these parties. To be honest, these kinds of social events would be the next best chances to meet new people and form your group of close friends after the summer academy. Even if you do not drink much, I would still recommend showing up and talking to people in these events, you will be amazed by the immense amount of things you learn.

**October:**

October was the best time to travel, after August, September and November. And December. And January. Doing 21 credits including German language class, I managed to travel at least once a week. For short trips, I travelled with 5-6 people. But for long distance trips, I usually travel with 1-2 friends or alone. The best and most economical way to get around would be to take shuttle buses or train (be sure you get the BahnCard if you are a frequent traveller).

**November:**

Some of the intensive courses ended in around late October – November, which meant you had more time to travel. It was getting a little bit cold in Mannheim, and no one wanted to stay in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ugliest city in Germany under this kind of weather. Christmas markets were open all around Europe, and it was always great to hold a cup of warm Gluhwein with your freezing palms.

**December:**

Exam month meant cutting alcohol consumption... by 5%. However, getting a hangover did not help with my studies. As most of the courses had final exam accounting for 100% of the course grade, I had to study. I decided to go the library at the Schloss, and it actually felt great to study in the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest baroque palace in Europe. After exams, there were farewell gatherings, more parties and more travelling.

### 1) Visa Procedures:

The most annoying part for getting a student visa to Germany would be getting proof that you/ your family could financially support your studies. The best way to do it would be getting bank statements of the last 3 months that pass the requirement. A simple print out of your bank balance would not work.

### 2) Orientation Activities:

The summer academy would be the best occasion to meet new friends and form your own grouping. Otherwise, welcoming parties and Stammtisch gatherings were also great chances.

### 3) International Services & Activities:

The office at L9,7 provides help to international students. Activities like excursions and parties were mostly held by VISUM.

### 4) Accommodations

I lived in Ulmenweg, which was 15 minutes from school if you take a bus. To be honest, it was not the most convenient place to live. Students housings that are closer to campus would be B7/Hafenstrasse .

### 5) Courses Registration:

There were no need to register for the course in most of the cases, however, you have to register for the exam in around 2 months before exam period.

### 6) Teaching & Assessment Methods

Most of the courses had final exam accounted for 80 - 100% of the course grade, so be prepared.

### 7) Sports & Recreation Facilities:

There is a student gym in the quadrate at D2. You could get monthly pass on the school website. There are small courts for football and basketball near the campus, too.

### 8) Cost/Expenses

Accommodation: €1800

Traveling: €2000

Food: €2500

Flight to and from Mannheim: €1200

Others: €1500

### 9) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

See 2).

### 10) Health & Safety

Germany is a very safe country in general. Stay out of dark streets when you walk alone at night, especially in the Jungbusch area. There were reported cases of robbery.

#### 11) Food:

It is 3-4 times cheaper to cook than to eat out. Eating out at night costs you on average €15.

#### 12) Transportation

There are trams in the quadrante that cover most of the area. There are also buses that go to student dormitories.

#### 13) Climate

It was surprisingly hot in August, which could go up to 35 degrees Celsius. It got cooler in September and was not really cold until November. Get a down jacket if you plan to travel to colder countries.

#### 14) Communication

There are student discounts/offers in most of the mobile network shops e.g. O2, T-Mobile. However, you can get the cheapest SIM cards (with internet) in a supermarket called ALDI.

#### 15) Cautionary measures

See 10)

Item list:

- Letter of Acceptance
- Proof of health insurance
- Proper clothes
- Passport
- Adaptor
- Passport size photo
- Laptop
- Portable charger