

Exchange Report

University of Mannheim, Germany

Fall 2016

LEUNG, Hung Yin Finance Year 4



Ehrenhof, Mannheim

Introduction

Monthly Activity Log

September:

There are lots of things you need to do before the semester starts such as opening a local bank account and applying for insurance, registration in the local government. I arrived in Mannheim on 22 Aug to get the things done and then went to travel to Austria and Prague before the semester the orientation days. They have summer German intensive class starts from 01 Aug, I have not joined the class, but I do recommend you to join if you would like to learn German. An international student society VISUM organised many activities such as welcome party and international party. I have participated some of them and quite enjoy their events. I also travelled to London and Paris in September.

October:

The main point of October is Oktoberfest, this is a famous beer festival. People will go to Munich and Stuttgart. It is super difficult to find a hostel to stay in those cities in the festival period. If you would like to engage the joy, remember to reserve everything in advance. I have just participated the festival by going to a day trip in Stuttgart since I cannot book this hostel and I was not willing to sleep in the station. In Stuttgart, Germans wore traditional clothes and sang together inside the big tents. The experience is valuable and unforgettable. I have enrolled some intensive classes, and need to submit the papers after the classes, so after the Oktoberfest I was so busy to handle the paper and midterm.

November:

I travelled to Greece, Italy and Swiss in November. Greece is a perfect place for relaxation, but it was a bit cold in November. I should have travelled to Greece earlier in order to enjoy the sunlight in Santorini. In this trip, I also learned the history of Greece and appreciated to the conservation of the historical site. Italy and Swiss are also good places for travel. Apart from travelling, I also enjoyed cooking with other exchange students. We shared Asian food and Western food with a lot of fun together.

December:

I need to face the most horrible things in December, which is finals. The coursework in the university of Mannheim is quite difficult, and more focus on theories. The most difficult subjects are Finance and Economics. I have taken 2 economics courses and 1 finance course, so I studied hard before the exam period. German students are hardworking and all seats are occupied at 10 am in all the libraries. If you want to study in the library, remember to wake up earlier. After 1 days of my last exam, I came back to Hong Kong.

General Information

Visa Procedures:

You should apply for Visa as soon as possible because German Consulate General need to process your application for a period. You need to bring your acceptance letter from the University of Mannheim and balance statement showed you have reserved a certain amount of money in your bank account or your parents' accounts. Normally, you will get the 3 months VISA and need to apply for an extension when you arrived in Germany.

Orientation Activities:

The university of Mannheim will organise some official orientation talks, and exchange students have to attend. It is quite important as you can learn how to register classes and use the student portal in the talks. Also, a student society VISUM will organise orientation parties and activities and you may make new friends during the events.

International Services & Activities

Every semester, there are more than 600 exchange students studying in the University of Mannheim. The international office has the experience to deal with exchange students and provide sufficient support. The school orientation talk could help you get familiar with the course selection and registration process.

Accommodations

The university would provide several choices for exchange students, but it is limited. You need to act fast to reserve a room when the registration period starts. The dorms closed to the university would be fully booked in 5 minutes after the registration starts. If you cannot reserve a dorm, you may need to go for the private market. The living environment of an apartment in private market may be better than a dorm, but it is quite complicated to find.

Courses Registration

Different courses have different methods to register. Most of the courses only required registering the exams. Intensive courses need to register before it starts. Please remember to register the exams before the deadlines, which is different for different subjects.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

There are lectures, assignments and final exams for lots of courses. The teaching style is similar to Hong Kong, but the professors in the University of Mannheim are more focus on theories and the applications. The German students are hardworking, so do not underestimate the workload here.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

The university offers free sports activities such as kickboxing and badminton, basketball. I have joined kickboxing class and it was so good. The trainers speak German, but it is easy to follow even though I don't know German. Also, you can go to the Gym, but it is not free but not expensive.

Cost/Expenses

Flight	\$6848
Insurance	\$150
Accommodation	\$15000
Food and Drinks	\$15000
Traveling	\$25000
Miscellaneous	\$5000
Total	\$66998 HKD

Health & Safety

You may buy a health insurance recommended by the university. The insurance fee is about 80 euro per month. For me, I just use the insurance purchased by HKUST.

Food

There are 2 canteens in the campus: EO cafeteria and Mensa. EO cafeteria charged relatively higher price but with better food quality. Mensa offers inexpensive lunch to students, but the food quality is quite low. The food in Mensa is too salty. There are restaurants providing Western food and Asian food with price started from 8 Euro. In order to save money, I always cook with my friends.

Transportation

There is a semester ticket costs 160Euro, which can be used for all transportation inside Mannheim city and some slow trains to nearby cities.

Climate

It is quite hot in the August and September, which have 25 -30 °C. It starts to get cold in October, which is under 20°C. In the winter, the weather could be 0 -10°C.

Communication

You can buy the prepaid sim card in the supermarket, or the retail stores of telecommunication providers according to your needs.

Cautionary Measures

Be careful of pickpockets when travelling in Europe. I have friends lost her passports and cash when travelling in Prague. Try to hide your money and stay alerted.

Items To Bring

Documents:

Letter of acceptance
Proof of health insurance
Passport
Passport size photo

Clothes:

Sweater
Jacket

Others:

Laptop
Portable charger
Camera
Medicine

PART IV – Useful Links and Contacts

Exchange student portal

<https://myunima.unimannheim.de/incomings/>