



Expirience report

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Fakultät für Politikwissenschaft

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Preparing

When I was deciding which University to choose for my exchange semester I didn't hesitate a lot and chose Leibniz Universität Hannover (LHU). Frankly speaking, I already had some experience as I took part in Sommerakademie 2015 organized by LUH and was learning German for a month there. Besides, a chance to get a DAAD scholarship seemed appealing. So, I started gathering my papers for an exchange semester in February and in May I had my invitation. As I was awarded a scholarship, the process of receiving a Visa was super easy and I got it in week.

Arrival

Nevertheless, right after arriving most international students face the necessity of filling hundreds of papers: *Meldebestätigung*, health insurance papers, learning agreement, transcript of records, *Bescheinigung über die Teilnahme an einer Lehrveranstaltung* and so on and so forth. I must say that Orientation Days organized by International Office were very helpful and everything was explained pretty clear there. Although a semester officially starts in the beginning of October, the most lectures and seminars began in the last week of October.

Studying

Educational system in Germany is a bit different from the one we have in Russia. In Russia it is possible to get only 3-4 ECTS Credits for one seminar, it means that students spend more time in the university and have more courses in order to achieve 30 Credits, whereas in Germany it is enough to choose 5 seminars (6 ECTS Credits for each one) to get 30 Credits in the end. But it doesn't necessarily mean that studying here is not as hard as in Russia. On the contrary, I spent hours reading and preparing for each seminar, cause study requirements are pretty high. I would say that German system is more focused on self-education. So, while German students

struggling to find a free seat in the library, libraries in Russia would be most likely empty, as students spend the whole day attending courses.

What is more, there are also some differences in the way of teaching, at least in my field. In Russia courses in politics, sociology and other social studies are more focused on the theory and history. Here we discussed and debated a lot. I can't say which system is better; I would say they are just different. But I think that having experience in both ones makes my education more completed and many-sided.

Language courses

As for language courses, I've never seen such a diversity elsewhere! Learning German with the help of rap or theatre techniques – it's all possible here. This semester helped me to overcome my language barrier totally and in the end of my studying here I passed DSH Prüfung (German language exam) which is required for entering German universities.

Fun

There were lots of events organized by university. I bet in a very few universities you can see your professor organizing a Carnival Party. Parties, workshops, small trips to German cities – it was impossible not to be involved in the social life.

Conclusion: Unfortunately, for many Russian students an exchange semester remains a challenge, as almost all the universities have an obligatory educational program and don't recognize course certificates, which were got in other universities. That basically means that I have to pass all the exams that I missed while being here. As far as I know, it's the most common factor, which stops Russian student from making an exchange semester. But if you ask me, I would strongly advise to do it, if you have such an opportunity. In my opinion, these extra exams totally worth this unforgettable experience I got here.