

2012-2013

University Attended: University of Mannheim

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

Everyone who wanted, got a buddy (a local student), which helped us with any matters that we had. It was very helpful for me as I arrived earlier than everyone else, before the induction week started. The university sent us emails, explaining what we are supposed to do, and we had an introduction lecture explaining how the university procedures work. It was useful.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The style of teaching is very different from what we are used to in UK. Courses are mainly lecture based, however some of the courses have exercises and tutorials as well, where we solve some questions and repeating the most important things from the lecture. There were not too many courses to choose from in English, but it was possible to collect the needed amount of credits. My buddy helped me to select the courses and other German students gave an advice about which courses to choose, so I had no problems with that.

Mainly, lecturers said that it is enough to learn the lecture slides by heart and that would be sufficient. There was only information from the lecture slides in the exam, no additional readings necessary for the exam. Mostly, the final mark is determined 100% by the exam, only seldom there might be a presentation or a written work included in the mark. However, that depends on the course you choose.

Teachers were always friendly, and had office hours every week, so students can go and ask questions and support to clarify things that were not understood during the lecture.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

International team was always approachable, and replied to emails promptly. They were friendly and helpful at all times. I think all the needed information was provided.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

I feel that all the necessary information was covered in the meetings.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

The International office was always useful, however I found out most of the necessary info from my buddy, so I would advise all exchange students to apply for a buddy program.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

I did not have to purchase any insurance cause I am a EU citizen and the EU health insurance covers everything.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

I only had to pay the administration fees, which were about 64 euro per semester.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

It is useful to use the webpage: <http://www.wg-gesucht.de/> - there students can find a room in a shared apartment. If students want to stay at the university accommodation they should apply really early on the MyuniMa portal. It is cheaper to live outside the Quadrat, but I would not recommend to live in Jungbusch for a girl. Neckarstad Ost is a nice place to stay, as well as Neckarstad West, and it is cheaper, than Quadrat. If you don't want to use any public transport and live close to university, than look for a flat in the Quadrat. Living in the biggest student accommodation – Ulmenweg, is not very convenient, as it is far away from the city and there are only buses going there, no trams, so the connection with the city at night is limited and might cause some inconvenience.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

It is possible to get a free public transport pass if you stay for 1 year in Mannheim. I bought a semester ticket on my own for the second semester, because I live outside the city centre and need to use the tram or a bus to get to university. Mannheim is in a very good location, in the middle of Europe so it is convenient to travel all around Europe. It is cheap to travel in a group across Germany with a group train tickets.

There are many societies that students can join, most of them are German, but you can join AIESEC, they speak English during group meetings if there are people who do not speak English. There are many parties going on every day, besides the Visum society organizes many parties, meetings and trips for exchange students, I would strongly recommend everyone to attend them, as that was where I met most of my friends. Local students were friendly and helpful, at least the ones I've met through Visum.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

Best year of my life that I have spent in a baroque castle

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

I got to Mannheim one month before the academic year started because I took part in the Summer Academy. The academy is a combination of German language courses and other activities that include: Sightseeing, Pub crawls, discos, Boat trips, wine tasting, barbecues and many more. IT was definitely the best part of this whole experience, and it is not just me, but the opinion of all the people I've asked that took part in it. It is just great, after the 4 hours a day of German, there is something planned for you every night. Most of the people I still hang around with are people I've met during the Summer Academy. I would advise anyone who wants to come for their exchange to Germany to choose this academy, even if it is a bit pricey for one month (around 500E). As I was here from the 1st of August I did not require any induction or orientation programme, but the university offers a couple of them, so even if you do not attend the academy, you will be fine, and you will be presented in detail all there is to know about the university and the surroundings.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

This is the part where my expectations were higher for the German system. The style of teaching is basically the same as in the UK and all the lectures are uploaded online and also past papers so you will have no problems in that regard. The part that I dislike is the fact that most of the courses are only 100% exam based, which I find a poor way of assessing the students, basically you need to ace that exam and your contribution throughout the year doesn't count. Another aspect that I dislike is the fact that here in Germany they put a lot of emphasis on learning by heart, slides after slides, with very little practical applicability. Basically I found that it is enough to study hard for one exam a week and you will have no problems passing it.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

Throughout the first two years we were always kept up to date regarding our year abroad and always informed about our options and what steps we need to take in order to get there. I am really content with the work the MBS international team is doing, and I also appreciate the punctuality of their responses when contacted via email. It is really reassuring that there is someone back in Manchester that can give you an advice and be there for you when you need it, as these types of exchanges are not always easy

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided.

I believe the meetings that we had were enough to offer a broad introduction of all the potential destinations. The only thing that I would consider is creating some sort of a database with websites and documents from every place and provided it to students so they can get better acquainted with the places. For example, here in Mannheim: Good restaurants, nearby visiting places, festivals, concerts, etc.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

The international office is really good here and you can go to them for whatever problem you may have. They are very friendly and would do anything possible to help you. If you decide to go to the summer academy, I would advise anyone to get all their student ID's and bank accounts during the first days of their exchange as the international office gets really crowded at the beginning of September.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

If you are European and have the European Health card, you will have no problems in Germany and you won't need any additional health insurance.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

There is cost of around 60E per semester for the semester contribution, but I don't find this being a problem. Except that, the costs of living in Mannheim are really low, and adding the Erasmus funding on top of that will ensure you have a great year.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

Right now I am living in Carl-Zuckmayer Str. I am paying 273E a month, which compared to Manchester is really low, but don't expect it to be as good. The room is big and spacious, but unfortunately there is no such thing as weekly cleaners or any stuff like that, you will need to take care of your flat and buy everything from toilet paper to bin bags. A good thing about this place is that it is in a quiet area and that there are two trams that stop really close, one of which is the only tram in Mannheim that works at night, which is great for going out. If you are a party freak, do not choose Ulmenweg unless you want to pay for taxi rides every night. Probably if I were to search again for accommodation I would try to get some private place in the quadrate or at least a student room. It is just really convenient to live within the quadrate.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

A great thing about Mannheim is that for the first semester, the university pays for your "Semester ticket". With this you can go freely on every public transportation and also on the regional trains within the Baden-Wurttemberg area. Mannheim is a great place if you enjoy travelling. From the main station there are trains that go all around Europe, and if you prefer travelling by plane, Frankfurt airport is just 30 minutes away. In terms of social life and activities, going out and drinking beer is really big in Germany as you would expect. There are a lot of outdoor festivals in the region. You can choose from a diversity of wine festivals, sausage festivals, beer festivals and of course the Oktober Fest is a must. You just need to look for these opportunities and if you enjoy these kind of things, Germany is the place for you.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

In Mannheim I've met people that will forever be part of my life.