

ERFAHRUNGSBERICHT

Studienaufenthalt im Rahmen des Masterstudiengangs 2011–2013

Herkunftsland: Bulgarien
Studienort: Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf in Freising
Studienfach: International Master of Landscape Architecture (IMLA)

I would advise all new BAYHOST scholarship holders to prepare their arrival in Bavaria at least a couple of months before hand. Since my university is located in Freising near the Munich airport, I had absolutely no problem using the public transport connections and finding my **dormitory**. Finding a place in a dormitory is a different story though. It was very useful for me to get in touch with the university's International Office, where the administrators helped me a lot with information on how and where to apply for a dormitory in Freising. Here I should warn you that since a big part of the TU Munich is located here, there is a struggle and waiting for a dormitory room, because there are too many students and not enough facilities.

I strongly advise you to have at least a basic **knowledge of German** before your arrival. The University of Applied Sciences (HSWT) in Freising has a very small administration department where no one spoke English and I was really happy that from the very beginning I could make myself understood with a bit of German. There are a lot of documents that you will need from the university to prove as a foreigner that you are studying in Germany and knowing the language, even if not perfectly, will make your life a lot easier.

Once you **arrive** and sign your rent contract, from the dormitory or privately, you'll need to bring it to the local city authority (Bürgerbüro) within 3 days of your arrival and get an address registration. If you end up in the dormitory, the local students union will provide you with a map and other information like where you can shop or find banks, etc. Moving in the dorms is usually during the first days of the month and prepare yourself to wait a while to be placed if you decide to do it on the 1st of October, when the academic years begins. Here as well you'll need some German to understand from your landlord/lady where the facilities are, how things work in the dorm, etc. – it will make your orientation better and if you really can't manage with the language, a phrasal book could help a lot, too.

After you are set up, you'll need to open a **bank account**, in order to pay your university fees and rent. In the beginning of the academic year there are a lot of international students coming to Freising, so you can spare some waiting time by simply making an appointment in advance. In my experience, everyone in the town was always helpful and friendly, that's why - don't hesitate to ask when you don't know how things work.

The main **mean of transport** in Freising is the bike. You can always chose to pay for a student's ticket, but depending on where you live – public transport might not be the best option, as during the weekend bus connections are rare and the night lines circle only in some areas. If you don't have your own, you can wait for the monthly flea market and buy one 2nd hand cheaply. There are also some groups of students from Freising in facebook, and people constantly post ads to re-sell. Another great option is the board at the university's cafeteria – you can literally find anything sold there.

At the university during the first week of your classes there is usually an **orientation day** and I strongly advise that you don't miss it. There you will receive all important information regarding student life. The HSWT in Freising has a few PC labs where PC stations can be used day and night, but during the day they are overly crowded with people and finding a free computer might be tricky. That's why I think is best to have a personal computer/ laptop – and there is internet connection both at the dorm (LAN) and the

university areas (wi-fi). In the labs a student can use his/hers student.card to print and copy documents much cheaper than in the local copy-shops.

Living costs in Freising can be high if you don't pay attention to your monthly budget. I would say for me the bare minimum is at 550 Euros a month – that could be much more, depending on the study program and what books and materials a person would need. As a landscape architect I wasn't spending a lot for project materials as they were covered by the university, but with other programs it's different.

The student union has an excellent **sports** base in Freising and offers a lot of sports activities like volleyball, football, yoga, badminton, etc. – all for about 8 Euros per semester. As far as I know, there is also a climbing hall in town and an indoor swimming pool. They give you an excellent opportunity to meet new people outside your class. I am personally very grateful that I met most of the **friends** I made in Bavaria during the BAYHOST seminars – even if we didn't study the same disciplines or at the same place, we kept in touch and I hope that we'll continue in the future.

When I arrived in Freising, I was surprised to find out how much **diversity** there is in this little town! A person could find there everything from specialized Chinese and Japanese supermarkets, stores importing products from South America and Asia, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese restaurants, many cafes, of course breweries and beer pubs, and to my greatest surprise – a Buddhist monastery! All in all, you can experience so many different cultures here and I definitely had a great time during my studies there. During summer, the Isar River and nearby lakes create great leisure opportunities for picnics or barbecues, or just swimming and enjoying, and here I must say, the very short summer, so I spent every sunny day, there was during the holidays, outside in the open.

I can say that my experience at the IMLA was really enriching and changed me both professionally and personally. During my **studies** I had the opportunity to work on 2 international projects, meet with professionals world-wide through the online seminars and build important connections for my future career. The master's program was very intense, but I enjoyed it never the less. Due to the diversity of seminars we had, now I feel much more prepared for the work environment and I have a better understanding of project management in the practice.

I think it was a useful experience to work with my German colleagues and I certainly learned a lot about work in an international environment. It was always easy to collaborate, especially with my supervisor, with whom I had long and interesting discussions and helped me quite a lot with my thesis.

I can't express enough, how much I am grateful for the opportunity BAYHOST offered me, how lucky I feel that it was possible to work on my topic of interest for my thesis and that I hold finally a Master of Engineering in Landscape Architecture Diploma.

Here I would like to point out, that is a privilege to have a Master's Degree from a German University, as I think knowing German is a great asset to me as a professional and I will keep on learning it. I believe languages are a key to finding better **work opportunities** and help broaden one's horizons. The projects that I worked on during the study period are important proof of my professional knowledge and are needed for my work portfolio, which is necessary for every landscape architect on the job market. Through the seminars I connected with people throughout Europe which I am sure will be crucial for my future work development and will provide more contacts to collaborate with on projects.

As of October this year, I relocated to Vienna, Austria, where I am hoping to continue my professional career. I hope also that my German Degree will create better opportunities for me as a Landscape Architect here and will help me with the integration process.

Und zum Schluss, möchte ich gerne dem ganzen BAYHOST-Team herzlich danken, für all die Hilfe und wunderbaren Seminare während meines Studiums in Bayern. Ich wünsche Ihnen viel Erfolg für die Zukunft!