



TU München

Architecture

Before departure

I chose Munich since it was close to the mountains, and I really enjoy skiing and hiking. Munich's location in Europe is also really nice with many countries and cities to visit just a train ride away. I didn't know much about Munich before I applied to the school, however I really liked that the Architecture department was in the city centre in the Museum district.

Note! KTH offers german courses at various levels, and I can really recommend taking one or two before going!

Upon arrival

The semester in Germany begins much later than in Sweden, which one needs to be aware of and take into account before going. The summer semester (which would be the equivalence of our spring semester) normally starts its lecture period after Easter. This year it was around the 25 of April, but it varies and can start a bit earlier as well. I arrived in the beginning of April which gave me much time before the classes started. The period before the lecture starts one has to apply for a studio and courses, this can all be done online. Once in Germany I had to register in Munich, this had to be done within two weeks after arrival. However as an EU citizen one can stay in Germany up to 6 months, so I am not sure if there were other reasons why one should do it. It can also be good to get a German bank card, some places don't accept foreign cards. Germany is however still a cash society.

About two weeks before the lecture period there are also a lot of activities for exchange students organised by TUMi, some are free and others have a fee. So if you want to meet people before the courses start its worth coming to Munich a bit earlier. These activities also continue throughout the semester. Note! The activities like concerts tend to get booked super fast, so one needs to be quick!

It was also nice so have some time to enjoy and get to know the city a bit before the courses started.

Financials

Since Germany is a part of the EU, one is granted the Erasmus scholarship, for Germany it is about 390€ a month. One gets 70% , of the total amount for the entire exchange, right before the exchange. One can also apply for the "merkostnadslån" (= extra cost loan) from CSN.

Compared to other cities in Germany, Munich is very expensive. However coming from Stockholm the cost of living is quite similar (alcohol and eating out is however cheaper).

TUM also has a mandatory fee of around 200€ to pay before the semester starts. In this fee public transport is included (weekends and during the week between 18.00-06.00), to have a complete public transport card one has to buy an additional ticket which costs about 150€ for the entire semester. During the summer months jun-aug the 9€ ticket was valid. Hopefully they will continue with it.

Tip! Get a bike, and save the cost of the public transport ticket! Munich is a very flat city and not that big, and perfect to get around by foot or bike.

Tip! Eat veggie at the Mensa! If you are on a tight budget the Mensa (cantina) is a cheap place to get lunch, especially the veggie options are really cheap. You can easily get a meal for 3-5 €. During lunch

hours the line can however get super long, so watch out if you have a lecture to catch right after! There are also numerous of falafel and döner places where you can grab a cheap lunch as well. Check out Kartoffel König close to the uni, for 4.90 you get a baked potato with yummy toppings!

Accommodation

Accommodation is expensive. TUM offers some exchange students student housing, which one applies to during the application process, however they don't have many spots and can't guarantee one either. When looking for flats, WG-gesucht is a good platform and where I found my apartment, however beware of scammers.

University and studies

TUM is very different from KTH (at least for an architecture student). The studios are separate from each other and there aren't any common kitchen areas as we have at KTH. This means that you don't really see or hear what other studios are working on, which is a shame. However the location is super nice with many museums, bars, cafes and restaurants. By the Alte Pinakothek there is also a nice grass field to enjoy during the summer, right next to the uni.

The studio project here is only 15 credits, which means one spends less time in the studio during the week compared to KTH where we have 2x12 credits. You also only have meetings with the professor/assistants once a week. Note! The professor is usually not there for the meetings, most of the time it is the assistants that hold them, so don't get too excited about having a specific professor, since you won't get a lot of time with them.

Since the project is only 15 credits this means you have 15 more credits to choose other courses from. Yay! Some of the smaller courses (usually 3 or 6 credits) are lecture based with an end assignment, seminar based with continuous assignments, or project based and vary in time and effort demand.

TUM also offers language courses. These are usually 6 credits per semester, so make sure to check if its ok to take it as normally the max amount of credits allowed for language courses/(or courses that aren't within your study field) is 5 credits per semester.

A 3 credit course usually has 1,5 scheduled hours a week and a 6 credit course 3 hours.

Courses

As an architecture student it is quite easy to pick and choose courses, just make sure they are master level courses and from the architecture department. You also have to do one master studio project during your exchange. Each semester you can choose 5 credits freely.

- 15 credits MA project
- 15 credits other courses (of which 5 can be a language course or a course from outside your field of study)

Note! At TUM each course/studio is offered by a different chair or professorship, perhaps most interesting when choosing your studio as this will give you an idea of what field the studio is focused on. (I did not realise this when choosing my studio, so I was a bit surprised when I found out I was going to do an urban project.)

The courses I took were:

- Studio Project, 15 ects: Open studio X (Associate Professorship of Urban Design)

- Seminar Course, 6 ects : Gender Studies (Chair of Theory and History of Architecture, Art and Design)

Note! This course is held by a different artist each year, and is also open for students studying political science, so its a mix of students which is really nice. This course was my absolute favourite.

- Seminar Course, 3 ects: Project Workshop Exhibition Design - Accrediting Authorship in Architecture. (Chair of History of Architecture and Curatorial Practice)
- Language Course, 6 ects: German B1.2

Note! Since the semester in Germany and Sweden overlap each other, make sure to choose courses that have or seems to have their exam dates set earlier, in general most exams are in the end of July/ beginning of August (for architecture).

Note! If you are planning on doing your thesis when coming back from the exchange it can be good to take one or two extra seminars courses at KTH before leaving. To be able to start your thesis you have to have all credits registered from your previous semesters. This means that if you don't have extra credits at home, and fail one of your courses at TUM you won't be allowed to begin your thesis when you come back.

Note! Most studio projects are done in groups of 2-3 people.

Note! Courses/Projects are offered in German, English and mix German/English. (I would say one can easily join the mix German/English courses even without sufficient knowledge in German).

City and country

Munich is a nice city, coming from Stockholm one might miss the abundance of water, however the river Isar that runs though Munich is so nice to swim in and the water clear and clean! You can also enjoy a ride with the currents which is really fun! In Englischer Garten you have the smaller rivers which also are super nice to bathe in. If you enjoy surfing, you can do this here as well, in the Eisbachwelle, and if you don't its fun just watching others do it!

Tip! Many museums have a 1€ entrance fee on Sundays.

Note! It is also really easy to be vegan in Munich.

I would also say that Munich is at its prime during spring and summer, and this is also what I've been told by several people here, so perhaps opt for the spring/summer exchange!

Sustainability

Erasmus offers a great green travel scholarship, when traveling by train (at least 50% of the distance) one can get back up to 200€ for the expenses. Train to Munich takes a while, however I really enjoyed it. The route I took was Sthlm-Copenhagen-Hamburg-Munich.

For the language course one can easily borrow the book from the library, no need to buy a new one!

Other recommendations and observations

Make sure to go hiking and/or skiing in the mountains!

Or perhaps visit one of the close by lakes in summer!