

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name**

Minye Zhang

Year and term for exchange

2019-2020, Winter

Exchange university

Technische Universität München

Degree programme

Master

A Fulfilling and Fantastic Exchange Semester

Before departure

I was excited when I received the nomination for exchange studies at TUM for a semester. During my first year of my master, one of my friends told me so many interesting things and good points of his home university, and Germany. What's more, I also took some courses in German during my bachelor, so TUM was my first choice for exchange studies. I hoped I could get a fulfilling and interesting exchange semester, know more people and enjoy the culture of Germany. Actually, I did.

I have to say the most difficult and impressing thing was finding accommodation in Munich. Very few of the exchange students receives a dormitory at campus. Only one of my friends got a room in a dormitory this semester. Normally students need to be in the queue for about one and a half years or two years to get a dormitory, so most of us exchange students needed to find a flat or a shared apartment on our own. It's well acknowledged that finding accommodation is more difficult than finding a job in Munich. So try to find an accommodation as early as you can or you will postpone your start date because you cannot find accommodation during the peak season for renting.

Upon arrival

I arrived in Munich one week before the start of registration and actually, it is two weeks before the start of my studies. Because there is a week to welcome the new students and introduce the election of the courses. There are many activities for new comers including the introduction of the university, many parties, visiting churches and so on.

Finance

I got the Erasmus scholarship from KTH for my studies. The general expenditure in Munich is almost the same as in Stockholm. The cost of rent is a little bit higher than Stockholm, but the other aspects are a little bit cheaper. Therefore, in general it is almost the same as in Stockholm. The transportation fee is mandatory, because it is included in the student card. That means you have to pay it before registration and then you will get your student card. Actually, I do not know any useful tip to save money as a student unless you can get a dormitory in Munich. In fact, except from the cost of accommodation, the other expenditures are acceptable.

Accommodation

It is very difficult for everyone in Munich to find an accommodation especially during the summer vacation. I almost used two months to find my accommodation. From the end of June to the end of August, I contacted my friends, sent emails to TUM to get help, and wrote some posts on Facebook and all kinds of social media just for finding an accommodation. However, since I was not in Germany at that time, I could not look around the shared apartment by myself. Therefore, it was a little bit disappointing when I arrived there. It took me at least one hour to get to school every day. Moreover, because I needed to take the tram first and then change the underground, it was inconvenient for me

especially at night. The cost of my shared apartment was 600 euro each month. It is a little bit expensive, but I could not find any other accommodation during the summer vacation.

University and studies

The main campus of TUM is not as big as I imagined. In the main campus, they offer seven departments; Architecture, Civil, Geo and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering and the TUM School of Management, The TUM School of Education, as well as the new TUM School of Governance and the Bavarian School of Public Policy (HfP). There is another big campus in Garching, which contains another five departments. They are Physics, Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering, Mathematics und Informatics.

For me, all my courses are in the main campus, so I have not been to Garching campus yet. However, I heard that Garching campus is much bigger than the main campus and there is a very long and popular slide in the campus (like the picture below).



At the main campus, all of the buildings are interconnected which means you can walk around every building in the main campus without going outside. The buildings were only connected with each other at the first floor. It is annoying on weekends, because there are only several doors are open to the outside. If we want to go to our studio or workshop to study, we always need to go up one floor and walk along the buildings for a long way and then go down three floors.

The courses in TUM are almost all in German or in English. Because my German level is just A2, I can only choose the English courses. Certainly, TUM also offers so many different levels of German courses for the large number of the international students. However, these courses are always the most popular, so there are only few lucky people can get the chance.

Courses

There are hundreds of courses to choose from at TUM. It is no exaggeration to say that in the courses election system, there are more than 20 pages courses for us to choose. Even when I filter the English

courses, there are still more than five pages can be chosen. For me, the most important course was the project, which consisted of 15 credits, so I chose my project at first. Even the project, we have 15 choices, and all the professors and assistants spent a whole day to explain their topics and projects and then we did our choices at once. We could have seven preferences and almost everyone got their dream choice. Certainly, there are some professors and topics are so popular, therefore some students got their second or third choices. In addition, when I finished the choice of my project and got the election result, the other courses would be much easier to choose. Because the schedule conflicts can help me filter some courses. In addition, the professors of my project offered some lectures and seminars for us to choose, which are helpful to our project.

The credits transfer was very convenient for me, because the credit systems in TUM and KTH are almost the same.

City and country

Munich is really a pleasant city and I like it very much. However, the food here is not as good as I imagined. Although, I had done some mental preparation before I arrived in Munich, I was still a little bit disappointed with the food in school's cafeteria. Therefore, I often had some Thailand food, Korean food, Chinese food, Vietnamese food and Italian food with my German friends. Nevertheless, except for the food, all things here are nice for me.

Leisure and social activities

To be frankly, I chose a busy studio this semester, so I did not have much spare time. However, when I got some time, I usually travelled somewhere to relax myself. During this semester, I went to Milan, Madrid and Neuschwanstein. I took some photos there.





Moreover, if the spare time is not enough for travelling, I usually had a meal with my friends in Munich. We are all foodies and really like to find different countries' food in Munich.



I also joined in a German corner. Although, my German is still not good, I got some friends from America, Japan, Brazil, Algeria, and Germany and so on.



Other recommendations and observations

The exchange experience is really fantastic and impressive for me. If you get the chance, please catch it and experience it by yourself. Do not always stay in the comfort zone, jump out and you will find the different culture, different people, different food and different world.