Exchange Report

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany

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Ryan

BEEDIE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
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INTRODUCTION

LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN, GERMANY

Personal

Currently, I am a 3rd year business student with intended concentration of accounting and MIS. I take great pride in successfully completing my exchange—it was my 1st time living by myself and 1st time to set my foot in Europe. In Spring 2016, I started my exchange term at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. My main intent was to experience something other than what I am used to everyday. Waking up, eating breakfast, taking the 135 bus to SFU campus, sitting through two lectures, coming back home, and repeating. Until this day, I absolutely have no regrets with my decision. In order to prepare for my study in a country where English is not spoken as the official language, I took a semester of introductory German course at SFU. Differing from my initial expectation, studying abroad was much more than studying in a different country; this will be elaborated on the ‘Lessons’ section.

Why LMU?

Exceptional location, prestige, and history. As for location, Munich was an ideal place for me to pursue my adventure to other European countries. It is within close proximity to many attractive European countries such as Italy, France, and Czech Republic. Also, LMU is recognized as one of the most historically rich (>543 years) university, and is ranked 6th in Europe. SFU and LMU are new exchange partners, and initially I had my doubts in studying in a university where no one from SFU went before. However, I soon realized that LMU is an internationally renowned university with many inflow of international and exchange students.

LMU is not one of the preferred business partners. Nonetheless, there was a great selection of courses that were taught in English. I took a course equivalent to BUS 381 and two upper-level business courses.

About Munich

Lovely place with great beer, nature, and history. It is true that stores that open after 8PM and good affordable seafood restaurants are scarce. However, Munich has one of the best beer and Biergartens that easily makes up for its mediocrities. In the morning, you can spot people peacefully jogging at the parks. In the afternoon, you can spot lively students chatting around the university. In the evening, you can spot social gatherings at Biergarten, perhaps a Schweinshaxe with a glass of beer. For me Munich was not a stunningly beautiful city, but a city where I wanted to stay.
Transportation

In Munich, public transit is very well established—bus and train is the norm of transportation. There are two types of trains: U-Bahns and S-Bahns. U-Bahns travels within inner city locations, and S-Bahns travels to suburb locations. However, when arriving with big luggage, taking a Taxi is recommended—plus you get to ride in Mercedes!

Recommendations

I strongly recommend signing up for the IUCM’s Study Preparation Program, Excursion Program, and the student housing. These events provide amazing opportunities to bond with other exchange students; I cannot stress enough how important it is.

Prior to leaving, it is recommended to exchange small amount of cash into Euros (around 100 Euros), and confirm whether your credit card works well abroad. Inform your bank before leaving that you will be using your cards abroad, which will prevent payment errors.

Accommodation

When completing the online application on LMU portal, make sure to apply for the student housing. If you plan to take the German language course (Study Preparation Program), indicate in the application that you would like to start the housing contract starting March 1st. In my case, I paid 336.70 Euros/month for the student housing, which is much cheaper than private housings. All bunglows and apartments were equipped with kitchens and bathrooms.

I absolutely loved my time in Olydorf—great location and very lively!

Financial Details

Cash is used in most situations. However, debit cards can be also used for grocery purchases. However, unlike in Vancouver, it was rare to spot locals paying with cards at restaurants. It is recommended to carry enough cash with you. As for the cost of living, it felt similar to Vancouver or a little bit more expensive.

Opening a German bank account is necessary for payment of insurance and housing. Anmeldung (residence registration) must be completed before opening a bank account. I did not have to pay any fees for opening a bank account.
Funding

There were many opportunities for funding either from SFU or externals.

Some of which I applied for:

- BIMA/IMA Mobility Award: $1,000, must apply!
- SFU Foreign Exchange Bursary: depends, must apply!
- DAAD: depends, check the deadline now! I missed the deadline.
- HSBC International Business award: $10,000, business students.

Also, ask the LMU's coordinator whether there are financial funding from Erasmus+

Packing

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1AthYWJqkdA9rGdUogn1WVx6VXwPVLehaF_XD-IueNdo/edit?usp=sharing

Packing list is essential; this is a packing list that I made.

Dinner at Olympiapark with the crew
ARRIVAL

LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN, GERMANY

Academics

Depending on the course, registration may be required—please check LMU LSF. For many business courses, large lectures, registration is not required. You will receive grades for those courses only if you sign up for the exams. For some seminar courses you have to email the professor to sign up. As for exams, registration is usually mandatory.

6 ECTS business courses I took were large lectures, complemented by tutorial classes. Participation was encouraged in both lecture and tutorial classes. As for the learning materials, lecture slides, research papers, and tutorial questions were the essentials. In my classes, there were strong emphasis in reading research papers—every week during classes, there were discussions about the mandatory readings and I was encouraged to provide my own opinions.

Grades for many courses were solely based on the final exams; therefore, it is extremely important to prepare well ahead (>3 weeks). Exams for many business courses contained many open-ended questions. In order to pass, you must do better than 4 (1 being the highest score, and 5 being the lowest score); however, I have seen handful of people fail, and it may not be as easy as you think it is.

Social

There were many events for exchange students organized by MESA, SMD, and Studentenwerk. Also, at ZHS, in Olympiapark, you can buy the semester ticket and enjoy various sports and dancing classes with your friends.

Travelling

Within Munich:

- Fasaneriesee: Cute, small lake
- Englischer Garten: Large public park near the university
- Olympiapark: 1972 Olympics place

Within Bavaria/Germany:

- Berlin: Modern
- Mittenwald: Bavarian Alps
- Erding: Beer brewery tour
- Füssen: Neuschwanstein Castle
Within Europe:

- Austria: Salzburg and Vienna
- Croatia: Rovinj and Plitvice Lakes National Park
- France: Paris
- Italy: Cinque Terre, Florence, Rome, and Napoli
- Turkey: Istanbul
- Czech Republic: Prague
- Hungary: Budapest

**Documents**

**Anmeldung (residence registration)**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jS4yDoqatOY_LarYXwJD1jy7AE5fxwcHj7qe9u3Sg8A/edit?usp=sharing

**Bank**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e71NQL2Cgik-8KCckTu-0GYqDmkXqutkeY4JE1o0Ew/edit?usp=sharing

**Visa (residence permit)**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vKpvdcusdfhp7cz3PKIMFoLeUcVDvJVpOEk7U2Az8/edit?usp=sharing
Lessons

My mother once told me, “Successful people succeed in life not because they are geniuses, but because they take the extra step in life.”

I am that type of person who usually thinks until the opportunities are gone. However, this time, remembering what my mother told me, I just applied for the Formal Exchange Program without much in-depth analysis.

I was nominated, got a scholarship from Erasmus+, studied in Germany, made tons of new friends, and had a spectacular summer going to places that I never thought I would be able to step my foot in before I got married (yes, I screenshoted those places on Instagram!). At the airport, on the way back home, I had a sudden realization that sprinkled glimpse of happiness into my solemn eyes: take the chance before you think thrice; see your potential before it flies away.

The Formal Exchange Program introduced me to some amazing people. Some of them truly inspiring that you think twice about how you lived your life in oblivion. However, there were also lessons learned by myself. Through living independently, cooking, and adapting to a completely new environment, I learned. I guarantee you that there will be some hard obstacles waiting for you on the road, but in the end, it will be worth to stretch your legs to take the extra step. I strongly believe that these are something that you cannot learn from lectures or even with money. Why wait to get these invaluable real-life experiences?

I am sure that you will make the right decision. It was my pleasure.
PHOTOS

LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN, GERMANY

Hallway in LMU
Santorini, Greece

1st day out exploring at the Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia
Pula, Croatia

Sunset at Fasaneriesee
Schloss Sanssouci, Potsdam

Fast & Furious in Budapest, Hungary