

ERFAHRUNGSBERICHT ÜBER STUDIENERFAHRUNGEN IN BAYERN

[Report on study experiences in Bavaria]

Herkunftsland [county of origin]: Russia

Studium in Bayern [program in Bavaria]: von [from] 2020 bis [until] 2023

Hochschule in Bayern [university in Bavaria]: Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Studienfach [subject of study]: Internationale Beziehungen

Abschluss [degree]: Master

Preparation of the stay

My first advice here would be to plan the stay in Bavaria well in advance. In my case, due to the corona pandemic, I had to constantly check the German Embassy website for an appointment to get one. I only managed to obtain it after a couple of weeks, and it was in a month from then. After this appointment, it took approx. another month to finally get the visa. This means that the whole process beginning from trying to get an appointment until getting my visa took me about 2,5 - 3 months.

Concerning accommodation, I would recommend living in a student dormitory or in a flat share (WG – Wohngemeinschaft). During my stay in Bavaria, I have had positive experience living in a student dormitory: I lived in a single apartment with its own bathroom and small kitchen. The room was quite new and nicely done - a perfect option to live alone. Besides, the rent for the room was affordable for a student and the location of my dormitory was central, which allowed me to reach my university or other places quite fast. My stay in the dorm was organized by my university. Alternatively, it's also possible to live in a shared flat, which, however, should be organized on your own. The website wg-gesucht.de is a good source for finding shared flats in Eichstätt.

Travel and arrival at the place of study

Here I would also recommend booking tickets as soon as possible to get the cheapest options. Non-EU citizens should also consider booking an additional phone tariff to be able to access the internet in Germany for the first couple of weeks until they get a German SIM card. Additionally, it is also useful to download offline maps, for example, [maps.me](https://www.maps.me/), to be able to navigate without the internet connection. In my case, my university organized a transfer from the railway station to my student dormitory which was very practical. I would recommend future scholarship holders to ask the International Office of their university if it's also possible to organize something similar.

Stay at the place of study

Regarding transport, I recommend buying a bike if one lives in a small/medium sized city with a bicycle-friendly infrastructure. The majority of German towns and cities have a well-developed bike infrastruc-

ture, so that it's quite pleasant and safe to get around by bike. Moreover, it is also a great way to explore the surroundings and organize bike tours with other students.

For students who like to do sports, my tip would be to check out what the university sports department (Hochschulsport) has to offer. Usually there is a broad spectrum of sports that one can do at the university, which are either free or cost much cheaper than, for example, in a gym.

To get in touch with students, especially from Germany, I recommend learning or improving German language skills. Of course, many German students also speak English. But I think it's much easier to connect with them if you speak their native language. In my case, I spoke German quite well before starting my master's degree in Bavaria, so despite the corona pandemic, I was able to make friends with some of my German classmates. Even though I was the only foreigner in my academic year, I felt integrated into the group thanks to my ability to speak German. I would also like to point out that German students are generally friendly and welcoming, and I've had nothing but positive experiences with them.

Academic experiences and further qualifications

During my studies at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, I successfully completed the courses in foreign policy analysis, security studies, international law, political economy, UN diplomacy, political theory, comparative politics, constitutional law, and history. Moreover, I have also finished an additional degree (Zusatzstudium) in sustainable development, in which I implemented a project in the city of Eichstätt. Together with two other students and in cooperation with city administration, I promoted the take away system among the local shops, cafes and restaurants called *Einmal ohne, bitte*.

In the framework of the seminar on the UN diplomacy, I also took part in the Bayern Model United Nations 2021. Despite the online format of the event, I gained valuable experience in public speaking as well as defending and lobbying of my position.

Furthermore, in December 2021, I have also participated in an international student conference called the II Youth Normandy Talks in Leipzig. Thanks to this event, I have not only expanded my knowledge about the conflict in Ukraine, but also got to know exciting students and experts from Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France.

Moreover, since the beginning of my studies in Bavaria, I have been active as a human rights volunteer in the working group *Shalom for Justice and Peace*. Specifically, I have been researching projects in the sphere of human rights to be nominated for the Shalom Prize as well as have been helping to organize the annual award ceremony.

Regarding supervisory relationship, I would like to underline that I have been supported by my academic supervisor of my master thesis. I am very grateful my supervisor for his excellent supervision and support. Apart from this, I worked as a student assistant at my university. This experience allowed me to gain valuable knowledge in international relations and to improve my skills in research, editing, translation, and database management.

During my master's degree in Bavaria, I continued to specialize in the areas of human rights and conflict management. Thanks to the seminar in security studies, I have learned a new reporting structure, which is widely used in international organizations to analyze various issues. I have effectively applied this method in my term papers to analyze and elaborate recommendations in the areas of humanitarian crisis in Yemen, internal displacement in Ukraine and poverty in Albania. I also used this structure to write my master's thesis on human trafficking in South Sudan. As a result, I have not only analyzed the causes of

this problem and the measures taken by the government, but also worked out a set of recommendations, risks of their implementation and ways to overcome these risks.

From my point of view, I have achieved great results during my studies in Bavaria. The average grade of my degree is 1,3. I have significantly expanded my knowledge of international relations, refined my practical skills, obtained valuable experience, explored Germany and met wonderful people. This stay was very important and useful for my future career, as it has allowed me to prepare for working in an international organization or NGO, expand my network and grow as a person.

My plans and activities after the BAYHOST-funding

Currently, I am working in Bonn as a project assistant in an international civic education NGO called THE CIVICS Innovation Hub. There I am helping to organize different events with the aim to connect different stakeholders in Europe to strengthen their cooperation in the field of civic education. This opportunity allows me to obtain my first practical experience in the field of project management and working in an international NGO.

I am very grateful to BAYHOST for making it possible for me to study for my master's degree in Eichstätt. BAYHOST has helped me achieve a significant step in my career and start a new life in Germany. I am infinitely thankful for your support and assistance.