

Dual Degree Report
University of Mannheim, Germany
Fall 2017 – Spring 2019
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The palace, or we call it Schloss in German.

My name is Hao-Yu Wang, and I have participated in National Chengchi University's International MBA program since 2016. I am a dual degree student of NCCU IMBA program in Taiwan with the University of Mannheim in Germany from Fall 2017 to Spring 2019. Before starting the IMBA program, I have acquired professional experience in fields for more than 7 years. To expose myself to a more international environment, I decided to apply for this dual degree program. In this report, I am going to cover the preparation of applying for the program, the preparation of moving to Germany, the study in the University of Mannheim, the life living in Germany, and my experience of studying and living at Mannheim.

- Preparation

When starting the IMBA program at NCCU, we already received a lot of information regarding the dual degree program and the office would organize information session to introduce this program. We were able to talk with people with dual degree experience and had one semester to consider whether we apply for the program. The application process required us to submit relevant documents and make one interview, and the results would be out within one month. Please be reminded that if you are inclined to

apply for HHL you have to provide GMAT additionally. As for the University of Mannheim, you will only need to provide a valid TOEFL or IELTS certificate for proof of language proficiency.

After receiving the positive result from the IMBA office, you can start to organize everything. Firstly, you will get a congratulation letter from the University of Mannheim informing you that you have successfully gotten a spot in the DD program, but you have to write the contact person to require an official confirmation letter. You will need the letter to apply for a student visa at German Institute Taipei and better start the application process as early as possible. Personally, I would recommend making an appointment with the bureaucracy at least three months before the date you plan to arrive in Germany, as the process may take a longer time than you expect. For the required documents for visa application, you are able to get more information on the website of German Institute Taipei as they may change the policy. Cost of a student visa was 60 euros when I applied. One thing that may facilitate the visa application process is applying for the visa as a group of three people. Next, for healthcare insurance, it depends on your age so you are able to register healthcare insurance with German public insurance companies, such as TK and AOK, when you below 30 years old. If your age is older than 30 years old you can only register healthcare insurance with German public insurance companies or certain Taiwanese insurance companies, and you can look for a list of valid insurance companies confirmed by the German government on the website of German Institute Taipei as well. If you plan to finish the DD program within one year, I suggest you register the healthcare insurance with Taiwanese insurance companies as they offer some plans for exchange students for the longest one-year period. If you tend to study in Germany for a longer time you should register your healthcare insurance with the German insurance companies. I would recommend you to register your healthcare insurance with a German insurance company, CareConcept, because it offers cheaper plans to international students and even Mandarin speaking service. Lastly, for flight tickets, you can obtain more information on SAT travel's website or other airlines' websites regarding flight tickets for student offers.

Regarding accommodation, University of Mannheim will help exchange students to get a room at Mannheim city but only with a limited number of rooms. You need to pay attention to emails sent from the school so you will not miss out the application period. If you don't get one through the University of Mannheim you can still look for rooms

on different dormitory organizations at Mannheim city; also, if you plan to share a flat with other people you can check it on wg-gesucht.de. Most of the international and local students look for a room or flat mates on this website and landlords also rent out their rooms through this website. Usually, the average cost of accommodation is about 350 euros per month or a bit less, but it actually depends on different areas. Furthermore, as I do not speak German, I encountered many difficulties in the beginning. I will suggest you learn some German before you come to Germany, which may make your arrival easier. However, if you do not have time to learn German in advance the school will offer some language courses to you for free or at affordable prices. You should take the opportunity to learn German, which improves the quality of your life in Germany.

- **Studying at the University of Mannheim**

The best thing about studying at the University of Mannheim is that the school actually offers various courses in different professional areas, such as marketing, management, and accounting. Even in the specific areas, they have different specialized fields, for example, in the management department, you can concentrate on human resource management, innovation management, and global corporate management. 90% of the courses are taught in English. Regarding the courses offered by the school, I would recommend people with the interests in the dual degree program should apply for the University of Mannheim. However, how the school evaluates students is mainly in a form of written exam and the exams usually take 45 to 60 minutes. Some of the courses will require you do a group project which accounts for 25% of the final scores. Exams are not very difficult but you have to study very hard to get good grades. The semester system and period are similar to Taiwan, and the tuition fees are around 90 euros for each semester. In addition, before you can start to write a master thesis, you must write a seminar paper first. After submitting your seminar paper, you are allowed to apply for a topic of master thesis. You must be noted that each department has its own application form, time slot, and application process, so carefully checking different requirements for each department is important before submitting your application. You are able to apply for more than one topic at one time regarding the seminar paper and also the master thesis.

Meanwhile, many student organizations or clubs of the University of Mannheim organize different events for students to participate in. A lot of them are offered in German but you can still find some held in English. Those events are sometimes related to case studies, field trips, company presentations, etc., which helps you gain more different experience. Additionally, some activities aim at helping international students know more people, do sports, and experience German or European cultures. Thus, you should attend different activities to make new friends.

If you are inclined to get an internship or work as a full-time employee in Germany you can take part in certain events organized by the University of Mannheim. For example, the school arranges assessment centers helping international students formulate CV and cover letters with German format as well as mock interview training. The campus career fair will also take place in April every year so you have opportunities to directly talk with different companies and even to hand in your CV and cover letters on the spot. Two well-known online recruiting websites, Monster and Stepstone, are often used in Germany when people look for jobs. Also, many headhunters look for ideal candidates via LinkedIn as well as Xing which is a German version of LinkedIn, so you can obtain more job opportunities by using them.

- **Everyday life and leisure time**



Summer time at the campus.

In general, the cost of living at Mannheim is not very high compared to living in Taipei and sometimes the cost is even cheaper. If you cook by yourself every day you can save more money. Speaking of food, you may have to get used to German food if you are not familiar with Western food. Usually, German food is cold, so sometimes you just

miss Taiwanese food especially in cold winter. Experiencing different food from other countries will be fun but if you keen to have Asian food, there are some Asian supermarkets and restaurants in Mannheim city. Hence, buying many materials to cook Asian food is easy here and there are even bubble tea shops as well. In addition, I know lots of Taiwanese do not drink but you should at least try German beer. There are so many different types and brands of German beer and they taste good. Meanwhile, drinking beer with German classmates and other international students as well as playing drinking games with them will make you more friends and maybe make you enjoy your student life even more.



Beer Festival in Mannheim.

Next, it is easy to travel around living in Mannheim as the location of Mannheim is very good and convenient. Most of the high-speed rail will pass by Mannheim city so you can always book train tickets and take the train with ease. There is also a Flixbus stop at the main train station, allowing you to travel with lower spending. Therefore, it is cheap and easy to commute to Frankfurt airport and to other countries and cities. Furthermore, in the first semester, you will get a free semester ticket offered by a German government department so you can travel around within a certain area for free. For example, many students go to Heidelberg very often because it is free with a semester ticket. Also, you can even visit some towns in France using the semester ticket. After one semester, you can still buy a semester ticket at 170 euros but the price may fluctuate. However, Mannheim city is not very big, which means that you should think about your needs before you buy a semester ticket.



The area available for semester ticket.

Moreover, one fun thing is that all the streets within Mannheim city center are named with English alphabets. It is very simple to remember for new comings but they may be very surprised and confused in the beginning.



Streets at Mannheim city center.

One matter noted is that even you are just an international student but still have to pay Radio tax. Paying the Radio tax is mandatory to every person living in Germany and you will not get it back. If you do not pay or be overdue then you will get fined. Although most of the people are not willing to pay this tax including me of course, it is actually one of the things I admire German. By doing so, they are able to make sure

that there are good quality and objectivity in German media, which is one thing that I believe the Taiwanese government should be aware of and all Taiwanese should learn from the German.

- **Conclusion**

There are so many memories of living in Germany. Most of them were very good and I would like to visit Mannheim city again if I have time. I truly appreciate having the opportunity to take part in the Dual Degree program studying at the University of Mannheim in Germany. It was a remarkable experience studying in one of the best business school in Germany, meeting students from different cultural backgrounds, and making friends with international students from other top schools. Also, immersing myself in another culture so deep, i.e. German culture, is a wonderful life experience that I will think of in the future. To acquire the experience, all you have to do is to apply for the IMBA program and submit your dual degree application. I believe you will discover more potentials in you and discover more about the world than you expect. Good luck!

Hao-Yu Wang

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