

## **Dual Degree Report**

**University of Mannheim**

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Germany locates in the center of Europe. It has sophisticated industries; people are punctual and do things scientifically and precisely. Here is full of tasty sausages and beer; there is a top-ranking business school sited in a beautiful baroque palace – this was my initial impression of Germany before I landed on this continent and the reasons why I had chosen Mannheim as the home for the past couple of years. It is amazing how quickly the time flies, as the completion of the dual-degree program and my internship life come to the end. Looking back at the years, it was a precious experience for me through preparation, accommodations, activities, study, and work.

### **Preparation**

Upon acceptance of the offer to participate in the dual degree program, students are encouraged to start and organize the preparation process as early as possible, i.e., at least three months before the day of your flight departure. If you are a local Taiwanese, you must take the letter of enrollment, issued by the double-degree program manager of the University of Mannheim to apply for a student visa at German Institute Taipei. As the visa application process may take longer than expected, it is recommended to do this with your fellow team Germany classmates and start as soon as you get the letter. The next things to do are to open a ‘blocked account’ at Deutsche Bank Taipei Branch and to be insured under one of the certified insurance providers listed on the official website of German Institute Taipei. Keep in mind that you may be asked to re-do the whole process if there are any mistakes in your application, so do check all of your documents carefully before submission. If you are a citizen or hold a passport of any of the following nations: countries of the European Union and EFTA states, Andorra, Australia, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, San Marino, South Korea, or the USA, you can do the above process after arriving in the city of Mannheim, meaning that you would not need an entry visa prior to your arrival to Germany, but must apply for a residence permit at the local Foreign Registration Office (i.e., “Auslaenderbehörde” in German), register your

healthcare insurance with German public or private insurance companies (e.g., TK, AOK, or CareConcept), and open a German bank account (e.g., Deutsche Bank, Commerzbank, or Sparkasse).

### **Accommodation**

As for accommodation during your stay in Mannheim, the International Office of the university and the Studierendenwerk Mannheim both offer a very limited number of dormitory rooms and single apartments. It is strongly recommended to apply for a room on the website designated for exchange or double-degrees students as soon as the application period opens. If you miss out, you can still find accommodation on the private market in the city; the International Office offers support in this. The websites, [wg-gesucht.de](http://wg-gesucht.de) or [immobilienscout24](http://immobilienscout24), would be your best bet if you are the unlucky ones. However, if you are not around in the city at the time and/or are not familiar with the German language, you might encounter difficulties in finding a home. Often, landlords in Germany would require a phone, online or face-to-face interview, as well as a letter from people interested in renting their properties to introduce themselves to him/her and the future flat-mates. In the private market, rent in Mannheim is expected to range from 350 to 450 euros a month and could be higher, depending on the space, location, facilities, etc. Therefore, it is super important to book yourself a spot through the school accommodation portal within 5 minutes after the registration opens. Overall, I believe that the university guesthouse, B7, 14-15, which I stayed, is one of the best student accommodations. The residential hall locates in a quiet neighborhood on the bottom left of the 'Quadrat' Mannheim, which is a 10-to-15-minute walk away from the Mannheim main station, campus, libraries, pubs, restaurants, main shopping streets, etc. The perfect location, friendly neighbors and students, relatively clean environment, and fun weekly dormitory events not only generate the magnificent atmosphere that makes tenants like staying at home but also make the life pursuing a dual degree in Germany more brilliant and remarkable.

### **Activities**

There is no doubt that students would stay active and out of boredom during semesters; there are a bunch of student's activities like parties, excursions, special events, and sports programs. The student organizations are well-organized and create a fantastic environment for meeting new friends and communication. The Speyer bike tour, Frankfurt Stock Exchange Market inspiration, and European Space Operation center trips are memorable. The ballroom dance, jazz, skating, and soccer classes are interesting. Also, new international students are encouraged to attend preparatory intensive language

courses as part of the International Summer Academy before regular school starts in September. The academies have much more to offer than just language courses. In addition to the intensive language course that takes place in the morning, you will have the opportunity to attend a wide range of seminars. For example, you can learn about German language and culture or deepen your knowledge in practice-oriented courses. Moreover, the program comprises courses on German cuisine, pop, culture, or the history of the European Union. Diverse accompanying activities, e.g., joint excursions, day trips, movies, etc. are organized, and participants of the International Summer Academies may also use all of the university's facilities, such as Media Center for individual learning or for taking part in sports courses offered by the Institute of Sports. It is hard to select which is going to attend from the dizzying options. Because of Mannheim's geographical location and efficient German railway system, staying in Mannheim is perfect for traveling around and for seeing something different. Getting around the region and traveling to other cities in Europe from Mannheim is simple and convenient. Most long-distance trains and Flixbus coaches stop at Mannheim Hauptbahnhof, and Frankfurt International Airport is just 25-minute from the city away by high-speed trains. Also, there are regular bus services and tram lines in the city of Mannheim that connect to the neighboring cities in the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, such as Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg, and Kaiserslautern. Students get unlimited rides during semesters if they hold semester tickets, which can be free of charge for international students for their first semester in Mannheim. You are encouraged to take advantage of this offer in the first semester and buy extra ones afterward if needed.

## **Study**

Students enrolled in the program can design their studies individually and flexibly according to their desire and ideas. They can choose from a wide range of courses on offer in the following areas: Accounting and Taxation, Banking, Finance and Insurance, Information Systems, Management, Marketing and Sales, as well as Operations Management. Double-degree students from NCCU (as of class of 2018) are required to take mandatory subjects, including Decision Analysis, Business Economics II, Corporate Strategy: Managing Business Groups, and Global Strategic Management. The remaining courses to be taken in order to complete the program would depend on the business subject or 'chair' that you are interested in writing both of your research seminar thesis and master's thesis for. For most courses, students are evaluated either by a written final exam that takes 60 or 90 minutes or by a combination of group projects (25% of final grade) and a written final exam (75% of final grade). Students, who are interested in coming to the University of Mannheim to pursue a dual degree, should

always bear in mind that exams are simple as long as you do not expect silly multiple-choice or true-false questions. To be able to write your master's thesis at your desired chair, you must fulfill the chair's prerequisites and application process. Each chair in his or her own specializations has different requirements and policies. Hence, it is suggested to consult with the double-degree manager of the university or check relevant information on the chair's official websites. For instance, in order to write a master's thesis at the Chair of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, students must meet the following requirements: completion of at least one of the six-hundred-level modules in the Area Operations Management and a research seminar thesis in the relevant topic. The topics for both research seminar thesis and master's thesis need to be applied by students in certain time slots, so do check and plan well ahead of time.

### **Work**

If you plan to seek an internship or a job in Germany, it is recommended to not only get a glimpse of the mentality of the country but also understand the German language. Before coming to Germany, learning a little bit of German will make your life easy during your early stage of living there and will help you to continue learning the language when you are inclined to take language courses either at the university or at private language institutions. I would recommend to take one language course during the semester (just because you would be busy with school life) and as much intensive language courses as you can during winter or summer vacations. It says that the more you practice, the more you become fluent and that the language fluency decides the number of your opportunities in filling the vacancies. Moreover, German employers have their preference for the format of job applications, including cover letters, resumes, etc. the university organizations offer students training on formulating their job applications and interview skills. Career fairs on campus are held regularly in April for on-the-spot interviews and recruitment. Also, maintaining profiles consistently on LinkedIn and Xing will help increase the chance of finding and getting job opportunities.

Overall, the experience of living, studying and working in Germany for the past two and a half years is fabulous as it provided me with the opportunities to interact with not only German students, professors, and co-workers, but also people from around the world. This part of my life is absolutely unforgettable and will be one of the biggest treasures in my life.