

Erasmus Broadening Horizons

Jessica Su-Hui Tan, a student from Leeds University, talks about her Erasmus Experience of working in Bamberg, Germany and encourages everyone, from all backgrounds to give it a try.



I feel that coming from a rather underprivileged area of North Liverpool, where further education isn't the 'norm', proves that really anyone can do an Erasmus year abroad if they want it enough.

I took part in Erasmus, as I couldn't resist the opportunity to see how another culture works. I wanted to explore the adventures on offer in another country, fully immersing myself into a completely new environment, while testing my language skills to the maximum. There really is no better way to explore and understand a country, other than to live and work alongside the local people. The classroom and text books teach you nothing in comparison to this experience.

Looks can be deceiving

My father comes from Singapore and my mother is half English, half Chinese, so travelling has always been encouraged in my family. However, I had never before felt so aware of how I looked and how other people perceived me. The Germans I met out there were rather surprised that I was in fact the English language assistant, despite looking Chinese! They had lots of questions to ask; they were all very polite, just curious. It made me realise how multi-cultural and versatile Britain as a country is and this made me really appreciate my own home much more.

Making Friends in another Language

I loved living and working with 'real' Germans! Despite doing German as my degree, it is a rare occasion when I actually get to converse with Germans of my own age, so to be able to do that every day for nine months was a real pleasure. I enjoyed watching my confidence in my language skills grow, as I improved in getting my personality across to other people, in a language that isn't my mother tongue. Making real German friends was the most exciting aspect of the experience for me.

Overcoming Fears

My biggest fear was probably finding and securing accommodation out there, especially in another language. However, before my departure I did quite a bit of research to make sure I was confident in knowing how the accommodation system works in Germany.

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Chance of a Lifetime

I feel that all students should be aware of the programme, as it really does offer you the adventure of a lifetime. With Erasmus funding, there really isn't a better chance to travel around a country you either love or don't know much about at all and want to explore.

Top Tip

My tip for the year abroad is to really make the most of it – never say no to a new experience, as you may come to regret that when you return to Britain and no longer have the chance to do it! I was lucky enough to attend both of Germany's most famous festivals; Oktoberfest in Munich and Karnival in Cologne...these are memories I'll never forget.



Think Again!

Students who feel that their social class or background prevent their participation in such a programme need to think again. The opportunity really is there for you, waiting...you just need to work hard and apply!

**“No matter where you come from,
the world really is your oyster and
an Erasmus year abroad might just
be your pearl!”**