Doing a Master’s in International Business in Great Britain: studying abroad under perfect conditions at the University of Stirling

For her Master’s in International Business Tina Berking wanted to go to Great Britain. In an interview with IEC she speaks enthusiastically about her experience.

One third of Tina Berking’s Master’s program at the University of Stirling is already over. The 25 year old focused on HRM and marketing during her Bachelor’s at the University of Applied Sciences in Berlin. With a Master’s abroad she wants to be well prepared for an international career.

Question: Tina, you have been abroad for many times already, but Stirling is by far the smallest city you have ever been to. Was that on purpose?

Tina Berking: Once I made the decision to study here I liked that it seemed like a nice and student-friendly town. I did my Bachelor’s in Berlin and spent one semester in London. I did my internships with Volkswagen in the HR department in Mumbai and in the marketing department in Puebla (Mexico). In this respect Stirling almost seems exotic, but it was the right choice. Finally I have time to read a book at night.

Question: To put it in other words: There is nothing to do in Stirling?

Tina Berking: No, that is not the problem, but in such a small city one place is close to the other. There are two night clubs and quite a lot of pubs. Once a week I go to a Pub Quiz with some friends. And if I really want to go to a bigger city, Glasgow and Edinburgh are very close.

Question: Which criteria were decisive in choosing the University of Stirling?

Tina Berking: That was more like a decision making process. Initially I just wanted to continue my studies in an English-speaking country. Furthermore, university places in Berlin are scarce. One argument for Great Britain was that it is relatively close to Germany and travel costs are low. I have already been to London and the cost of living is just too expensive there. I then found the University of Stirling via IEC. It was also important that a substantial amount of the fees is covered by a student grant, because I am personally funding my studies.

Question: Is the student grant enough to finance the whole year?

Tina Berking: Unfortunately not. That is why I applied for a student loan. I want to concentrate on my studies and not do some casual work at the same time. Then I was lucky
twice over: First I received the offer for a German student loan, but in the end I received an interest-free loan from my family which of course is a lot cheaper.

**Question:** One third of your program is over. Is the investment worth it?

**Tina Berking:** Definitely! The program exceeds my expectations. We are 35 students from 16 countries. This leads to instructive and sometimes challenging situations in group works. My lecturers come from India, Malaysia and Greece. That helps a lot to expand my knowledge which I have acquired throughout my Bachelor’s and my internships. What I really love is the individual support by the lecturers. They know all of us by name and ask us how we are doing. They realise when someone is missing and ask if everything is fine. I have not experienced that in Germany.

**Question:** How is the program designed?

**Tina Berking:** Lectures and seminars are closely tied in together. Each week you take an examination, be it a presentation, a class test or anything else. This way you learn in a continuous way and not only for the final exam at the end of the semester. The learning success is bigger for me. The modules are also closely linked. The content matches perfectly with my experiences from my internships abroad. The second semester of the program will be similar. Next summer, when the bachelor students are on vacation, I will have time for my Master’s thesis. Alternatively I could also do a consultancy project.

**Question:** Where are you staying?

**Tina Berking:** I found a shared flat in a Facebook group for Master’s students. It only took me one hour! My flatmates are two Chinese graduates who are self-employed. They are really nice and helpful. I only pay 230 GBP which is half of what I would pay on campus. The room has a bed, a window and the flat is situated in the city centre. It takes me about 10 to 15 minutes to be on campus.

**Question:** I am sorry – a window?

**Tina Berking** (laughs): Well, in London I shared a room with two other people and it was not normal to have a window in the student accommodation. I am trying to save money whenever possible and it was important to me not to spend so much money on living. I prefer to go on vacation. Last week I have been to Mumbai again. I love the city.

**Question:** Coming back from Mumbai, the Scottish campus must have been a huge contrast...

**Tina Berking:** Indeed, but a really beautiful one. The campus here is so lovely. We have a lake and from the classroom you can see the mountains. I spend all my day on campus. In the morning I go to the gym. There is a canteen, a Starbucks and other cafés, a bank and a supermarket, even a second-hand shop. And all is accessible by foot. The library is a nice
place to study for group works or on your own. I also like the societies. For example, I am a member of the Public Speaking Society. You get to know nice people. That is also different to German universities.

**Question:** Do you already know what you are going to do after your Master’s in Great Britain?

**Tina Berking:** I already have some ideas. My wanderlust is still very much alive. I could imagine doing Work & Travel in Australia. But I also want to go back to India. If I get a job offer in Germany I will only accept it if it is in Berlin or Hamburg.