Erfahrungsbericht Auslandsstudium

„Experience Report Semester Abroad in Amman, Jordan”

Preparation:
Before I started to study my master program in March, I already decided to spend a semester abroad at the partner University in Jordan. The preparation phase was accompanied by the International Office of the Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften Würzburg-Schweinfurt (FHWS) and the German-Jordanian University (GJU). It was a lot of paperwork and since the first semester of my masters in Würzburg was very demanding and time intense, it was challenging to prepare everything. Especially the documents for Auslands-BAföG are very comprehensive and in case students want to apply for it, I advise to start the process as early as possible. Even though, it was not always clear who is responsible for what at the receiving University, it was worth the effort and worked out in the end.

Accommodation:
Two of my colleagues and me were looking for a flat in Amman as we were already in Jordan. It is easy to find a flat. You can find signs at the street. Nevertheless, it is helpful to ask locals or other students which location might be practical since there is almost no public transportation and going by taxi every day costs a lot of money. It is advisable to find an accommodation in walking distance from university. Moreover, it is definitely possible to spend only around 200 JOD or 250 JOD per person and per month. Some landlords see that one is an expat and try to charge more than usual. Negotiation is a good cue in any life situation. Thus, it is possible to bargain the rent. And it can be a lot of fun as long you do it with respect.

Study at Receiving University:
The environment and the lecturing system were very different in terms of equipment of rooms, the quality of lecturing and contact to the professors. They teach differently and are called by their title plus the first name which is unfamiliar in the beginning, but we got used to it easily. For me, the quality of lectures and the evaluation and grades that we received in the end seemed not proportionate to me. So, it’s all about the attitude. A semester abroad should not be about grades or the quality of lectures. You should accept everything as cultural experience and try to make the most of it.

Daily Life and Leisure Time:
Since the program was very intense and there was mandatory attendance of the lectures, projects and the internship, my daily life was highly shaped by university. The lectures were from 5 pm to 8 pm. Unfortunately, many events were in this specific time frame and we couldn’t participate, because we had to be in class. Amman is a beautiful city and you have a great view from almost everywhere. Moreover, it has a nice café culture. Jordan in general is a fascinating country with impressive landscapes. It’s mostly very dry, but when you go more North you will find forests and when you go South you will find the Red Sea with a wonderful underwater world to discover by snorkelling or diving. The desert Wadi Rum is a magical place and worth visiting overnight. The people are very friendly and helpful and
show a great interest. They will be very happy about each small Arabic word a foreigner can say and help you developing further with cultural sensitivity. I never felt unsafe, despite there were some very slight forms of sexual harassment, such as calling and whistling out of the car. The weekly so-called Friday market invites to very cheap second-hand shopping. Also very close is the border to Israel and Palestine and Jerusalem is a very interesting city to visit!

**Conclusion:**
Jordan is an amazing and peaceful country and a nice location for collecting experiences in the Middle East! Being and living abroad is not always easy and it can be challenging if your stay doesn’t meet your expectations in terms of meeting people or professional development. But it is definitely worth it to dare to come and give this experience a try! How much I developed and how my stay shaped me, I will fully know, when I’m back in Germany. I’m curious to find out!