

Stefan Wesenbergs experiences in India

For me the main reason to move from Berlin to Chemnitz, was the opportunity to go to India, during the master program „Print- and Media Technology“ at the Technische Universität Chemnitz. I ever was fascinated of this big cultural and colorful country and it was always my plan to go there once. To combine the fulfilment of this dream with a meaningful use, brought me to Chemnitz to do that incomparable course and to study my second semester at the Manipal Institute of Technology, at the Manipal University. So my journey began in January 2013 after finishing the first semester of our course in Chemnitz. The semesters starts earlier in India, compared to Germany, so that there is no big break between the first and the second semester, but therefor it also ends earlier and so the whole summer from June to October is off, while many students in Germany have to study for their exams.

At the beginning, everything is well organized for the German students in India. There is a pickup from the airport, where probably most of the Germans will arrive, Mangalore Airport to the university. The trip last approximately one and a half hour and gives a first impression of the area in which you will live in the next five month. After arriving at the big campus, you get immediately to your hostel. Here at first you can relax from that big trip and unpack all your luggage. After that you have to do all the formalities to sign in and to become a real student at the Manipal University. Next to that you also have to get a permission for permanent residence. With all that issues a supervisor will help you with everything, because in the first hours and days in such a different country, you sometimes can get confused. Indians love bureaucracy. For me and my German fellow student, everything worked very well and after a couple of days, every registration was done without any problems and our student live could start. At that moment you probably don´t think at the days when you leave India, and especially not what you have to do when you want to sign out, get back your hostel deposit and what formalities you need to go back to Germany. But that also is very important and has to be done very organized. At least now you know the people, behaviour and the places to go, which makes it a little bit easier to calculate the time you will need. Take your time for doing all that stuff, because if there are any difficulties and you have to leave India, because of your flight date, it will not be easier to organize it from Germany. The fact that your case of studentship at the Manipal University is very different from the local students don´t make it easier as well. For some employees it can be the first of these special cases and then sometimes they also don´t know how to handle it in a right way and they have to ask. And that can cost some time. If you know what to do and where to go, it is not a problem to organize all these things in two or three days. So here will be given a little plan what has to be done. The content is related to our semester in 2013, so it also can be that there are any changes in the next years, but the main tasks will remain.

You will see at the end of the semester after the final exams, how all the students will leave the campus to go back to their home towns or to vacations. Only a few student will stay which are writing their thesis or doing research. So the campus, the food courts and the hostels, which are all during the semester full of students and also full of life, will be left alone within a few days. That for me was a funny feeling, like everything was falling asleep during summer. But don´t worry, all the offices and services are still open during the whole time. When you want to sign out and get back your deposit, nearly 33.000 Rupees, you need some signatures. At first you have to go to the student offices at the so called „Quadrangle“. Something like a green place with a fountain, surrounded by buildings, you will know it, sometimes, during the semester there are some concerts or shows at that place. At this student office at the „Quadrangle“ you will get a sign out form. This form needs three signatures. At first you have to tell the warden of your hostel, at which day you will leave your room. The warden is sitting with some other security guards most of the time at the entrance of your hostel building. He will give you a signature, which everything was okay with your stay and your room. The next signature,

you will get from the office of the main food court, where you probably will have a lot of breakfasts, lunches and dinners. Even if you never had a single meal from that food court you need that signature. It will prove that no bills are left open. The office is in a small side entrance at the left side of the food court building, right next to the entrance for the kitchen. The third signature you will get next to the food court building. You will get it from the hostel library, which is located in the second floor of the gym building next to the basketball court in front of the food court. Here you will get a sign that you don't have books anymore. With that three signatures you have to go to the office of the chief warden, which is in opposite to the cafeteria of the Manipal Institute of Technology. He will sign also, that these three signatures and your status as a leaving foreign student are okay. With that you have to go to the student offices at the Quadrangle again, and they will take your letter with all the signatures. To get back the right amount of your deposit, they have to calculate your energy consumption. For that you have to go to a small old fashioned building, right behind the new builded yellow girl hostel at the other side of the campus. That is the Maintenance building. Here you just have to say that you want to leave, tell your room number and then you will get a letter, where the consumption of energy for your room from the day you moved in is written down. With that letter you have to go back to the student offices again, take care that you always have the same employee, so it is less complicated to explain your situation. You will give them this consumption letter and with that they will calculate the amount you will get back, which will be nearly the same you have once paid for deposit and maintenance costs. You have the option to get the money transferred to your German bank account or get a cheque. So we decided to take the cheque, because we wanted to have the money in our hands, because also here there is the problem, once you have left the country, communication and organization can become more difficult. To calculate the cheque can take some days, so take care that you have time enough before you will leave Manipal. With that cheque and your passport you have to go to the counter of the ICICI Bank next to the Saiba restaurant in the city center, again i have to say, dont worry, you will know it. There they will give you the money in cash. The last but also very important step is to go to the police station in Udupi, where you got your permanent residence and to make clear that you leave and you get the needed documents. They say that you have to go ther one week before you want to leave India. And you also get the document only in Udupi, the place of your residence. So take care that either, you leave India from Mangalore again or you have to make clear that you will leave from another place from India, because of vacation or trips, then you have to go to the police station much earlier. When you got your permission for permanent residence you also got a small letter, which you have to give back to the police for getting the formality to leave the country. The best is, when you put all the documents, and there will be a lot, in a safe envelope so that you have all your stuff always together. This formality, the permission to leave again, after your permanent residence, is needed at the ticket counter of the airline or at the border when you leave India. If you don't have it, that will cause some serious problems, you don't want to have when you want to move back.

These are the main steps you have to do when you want to leave again in an uncomplicated way. Even when it sounds and sometimes feels a little bit confusing, it is nothing else than we have here in Germany. Nevertheless, the decision to study, was one of the best in my life. I just can recommend it to everybody, even when India can be hard sometimes, but it is worth it. You will have great friends, great professors, great weather, great culture and great experiences, you will never forget in your life.