

The Education System in Germany

by Swati Soni

During my undergraduate studies, I always dreamt of pursuing my higher education in Germany. A joint collaboration of Manipal University and TU Chemnitz made my dream come true. My fellow students and I got this golden opportunity to study at such an esteemed university like TU Chemnitz. I have always wondered 'why' and 'how' the German education system is one of the best in the world and after completing my one year exchange, I can now give a good explanation.

Initially, when I began my education in Germany, I was scared by the disciplines of this education system. But the German education system is very friendly. Classes do not have compulsory attendance and every student is free to enter and leave the class at



any moment. Nevertheless, lecturers expect attendance and students seldom leave before the 90 minute lecture is over. Germans always prefer to be on time and so did I. My class composition was perfectly balanced with Indian, German and other international students. It was a friendly atmosphere: most students gave a helping hand when needed. My fellow German students helped me to adapt to the culture and customs in Germany very easily. We shared our knowledge and ideas and more importantly, I enjoyed myself being in their company.

The course structure at pmTUC is composed of theory and practical courses. Labs are fully equipped with latest technology and students are supervised by highly educated staff members. I have not only worked with latest technology but was also informed about future technology. I have worked on current projects and thereby, have contributed to valuable researches. Theory courses are also based on current technology and pmTUC continuously integrates latest innovations in the world of printing into the seminars. I have also joined various excursions to printing houses in and around Chemnitz. Such excursions have broadened my vision and helped me for my studies.

The university itself is fully equipped with hi-tech class rooms and high speed Wi-Fi internet. The study material is available online with a student login provided by the Chemnitz University. All the lectures can be accessed via laptop during the lectures so that the student can prepare the next lecture in advance by printing out the notes.

Subject related materials can be searched online, this way complicated issues can be clarified quickly. It makes life a lot simpler for a student. The lecturers are very friendly and help to answer all your questions. The students could also meet them outside the lecture according to their office hours and free time. A particular subject may be divided between faculties matching their field of expertise in the particular topic. In my opinion, this system works best as it meets the interests of the students. I especially enjoyed the practical courses because they helped me to better understand the theory. The notes for the practical courses were available online and it helped me to get an idea about the experiments. Under trained supervision, students were allowed to use the equipment at pmTUC. It was fun to learn the functioning of the machines and to gain experience for the experiments by making trials and errors. The students could choose whether they want to work in groups or individually. Finally, the students had to submit the protocols of their experiments. .

It was totally up to you which topic you want to choose for your Master's thesis. This was based on every individual's field of interest and projects offered. The students have a wide range of topics, for instance, printed photovoltaics, inkjet in functional printing, printed sensors and conventional printing. The students were glad to choose their own topic and all the projects were current research project, thus, the research for the Master's thesis has contributed to their scientific work. It is a great help to be part of a research project as it helps to get first insights into "real" scientific work. I was constantly supervised by my project guide and he has helped me with problems and difficulties during my work.