

STUBE Hessen-Workshop

“How to find an internship – for international students“

27th January 2021 von 9am – 12pm

Online via Cisco Webex

In cooperation with International Office and Career Centre Plus of Justus-Liebig-University Gießen

Seminar facilitator: Eileen Paßlack (STUBE Hessen) and Julia Kislak (International Office at JLU Gießen)

Target group: Students from Africa, Asia and Latin America studying at hessian universities

Learning goals: information on how to find an internship in Germany, legal regulations and hearing examples and reports from other international alumni

Participants: The number of registrations totalled 104 and a number of 66 students participated in this English speaking event (38 women, 28 men). Out of 66 participants, 48 participants attended a STUBE event for the first time. All in all, the number of represented countries was 21. Divided by regions, 12 students came from 5 African countries, 16 students from 9 Asian countries, 7 student from 5 states in the MENA-region, 1 student from 1 Latin-American country and participated in the seminar. From 29 participants the country of origin is unknown as they applied via the application form of Gießen University, in which the data “country of origin” was not collected.

Process of the event:

The event took place as planned. Due to a technical issue, the order of the testimonials changed and Mr Komla Digoh presented his report of experience before Mr Dr. Moustafa Selim.

Wednesday, 27th January 2021

The seminar started with a welcome speech for the participating students by the facilitator Julia Kislak. The program started at 9 am. The facilitator presented all speakers for today and the International Office and Career Centre Plus of JLU Gießen. Afterwards, the facilitator Eileen Paßlack introduced herself and presented the various offers of STUBE Hessen to the participants. After a short getting to know where everyone is from and what field of study they have, Ms Kislak introduced the first workshop ‘**How to apply – The Job Market and the Application Process in Germany**’ presented by Iris Heilgendorf from the Employment Agency Gießen. Firstly, Ms Heilgendorf introduced a chart with data about the greatest demand for academic professions, before she introduced the participants what aspects to consider during a job search, which included: contacts during your study, personal contacts, (job)fairs in your field, congresses, career days etc., further education/courses, acquisition of relevant contacts, social media, websites of companies/institutions, job search engines, meta-search engines, job offers in magazines/newspapers, also professional journals. Ms Heilgendorf explained the importance of knowing why to apply for an internship and what to consider in preparation for it. She listed the various ways of application processes. She recommended to use the “Jobbörse”, where the students will get a list with several offered jobs. By using “erweiterte Suche” the students can vary their search and the results according to place, kind of job and working time. She recommended to search not by job title but to leave that open because sometimes interesting offers might be missed because the students could not imagine the right title beforehand.

The first alumnus Mr Komla Digoh presented his experiences in finding an internship in the field of social sciences. He studied Democracy and Governance at JLU Gießen and graduated in 2020. Currently he is doing an internship at GIZ, which is thematically connected to his Mastersthesis on reform partnerships with Africa. As a service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, the GIZ has over 50 years of experience in a wide variety of areas,

including economic development and employment promotion, energy and the environment, and peace and security. Their main commissioning party is the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In his internship he works on the G20-initiative “Compact with Africa” (CwA) and the “Marshallplan with Africa” (Germany). The CwA is the central pillar of the G20 Africa Partnership, which was launched under the German Presidency of the G20 in March 2017. It aims to respond to some of the biggest challenges of the African continent, such as its rapid population growth and pervasive un- and underemployment. As of now, eleven countries (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia) have joined the Compact based on which they cooperate with the International Monetary Fund, the WorldBank, the African Development Bank and bilateral G20 partners.

Mr Digoh recommended the students to use every opportunity they have to learn different languages during their studies. There are many language-courses free of charge for students. Also it is important to have a student job that already is connected to the preferred career paths. Building your network with professors and lecturers during your studies is also crucial. They mostly have contacts which they can forward the students and are supportive. Last but not least he reminded the students to stay courageous as he also faced several rejections of internship application.

The second alumnus Mr Dr Moustafa Selim also studied at JLU Gießen. He did his masters in Agrobiotechnology. Now he is a lecturer and researcher on grapevine diseases and insect pests, at Hochschule Geisenheim University of Applied Sciences. He presented his career path from receiving a BSc in horticulture from Ain-Shams University (Cairo/Egypt), over his MSc in Agrobiotechnology from Gießen University to his PhD in Phytopathology from Gießen University (Germany). Mr Selim gave the advice to visit jobfairs, which is also possible virtually. Job fairs often don't just cater to prospective employees, but also to prospective interns. Students can talk directly to recruitment consultants about what they are looking for and make some important contacts. It's also worth keeping an eye on your university's calendar—many universities have open career days or their own career fairs and recruiting events which are attended by companies and their recruitment consultants, which can also be a great source of information.

In the final talk Ms Gabriele Lieser from the Foreigners Authority Giessen presented the legal regulations for doing an internship alongside the studies but also for the job entry after graduation. The temporary residence permit entitles the holder to take up a student job. This does not apply in the first of residence during a stay for the purpose of preparatory measures for a course of study, except during holidays. Foreigners are granted a temporary residence permit for up to 18 months, if they successfully completed a course of study in the federal territory. Ms Lieser also presented the legal regulations for international students for working in Germany alongside their studies. Many students in Germany have jobs in their spare time. Some of them are research assistants (wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft – Hiwi) in universities, research institutes or libraries, for example, whilst others work as waiters or babysitters. Like German students, those who come from EU/EEA countries are allowed to work for up to 20 hours a week during semesters. There is no limit to what they can earn during semester breaks. Anyone from a country outside the EU can work 120 full days or 240 half-days without the consent of the Federal Employment Agency (BA). In case international students are working as academic or student assistants and as long as their studies are not impaired by it, this work can be carried out for an unlimited period of time. The Foreigners Authority must still be informed if the students wish to work as an academic or student assistant.

In case of obligatory internships stipulated in the study and examination regulations as a mandatory component of a course of studies, there are no particularities of residence law to be taken into account, i.e. an obligatory internship will always be permitted to international students. The occupation involved in an obligatory internship will also not be credited to the 120 days of permitted occupation. But voluntary internships in terms of residence law are assessed as normal employment circumstances and are usually possible only in the context of the 120-day rule for work permit-free secondary activities (exceptions are practical examination projects and study-related activities at universities / research institutions). An internship counts as an occupation regardless of whether it is paid or unpaid.

All speakers gave the opportunity to answer every question the participants have.

Impressions from the evaluation:

- A lot of information for searching an internship, e.g how to find an internship, what I have to do to prepare for applying for an internship, got to hear some experiences from students that already got internship.
- The seminar was very informative. The person from the Ausländerbehörde gave important information, even if the rules are too strict. Thanks very much!
- I have gained a lot of knowledge about writing a CV and how to write a cover letter.
- The diversity of the topics and of the speakers.
- First of all: Great management and answering of all the arising questions, Julia Kislat was really on top of the chat, read out the questions for everyone and found certain breakpoints in the talks to have them answered without completely disorganizing the speaker/presentation. This is hard sometimes and that was really well-done! I also liked the alumni perspectives, especially valuable were all aspects regarding biotechnology, also advice regarding a modern CV (what should BE in there and what should NOT). Overall, the workshop was very interactive, which I really liked. I tried lowering the hurdle to ask questions in the beginning just by posting something in the chat as early as possible. Sometimes it helps to write into the chat, that the participants may ask questions via chat anytime to get people started.
- The seminar stayed longer than it was planned.
- I wish there was a break of 15min, just for better convenience.

11.02.2021

Eileen Paßlack

STUBE Hessen-Referentin