

STUBE Hessen-Workshop

“How to find an internship – for international students“

7th July 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 109 and a number of 48 students participated in this English speaking event (31 women, 17 men). Out of 48 participants, 42 participants attended a STUBE event for the first time. All in all, the number of represented countries was 29. Divided by regions, 5 students came from 4 African countries, 18 students from 12 Asian countries, 6 students from 5 states in the MENA-region, 8 students from 4 Latin-American countries, and 4 participants from 4 European countries participated in the seminar. From 7 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.

Wednesday, 7th July 2021

The seminar started with a welcome speech for the participating students by the facilitator Julia Kislak. The program started at 9 am. She presented the agenda and the offers of 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 speaker of the first workshop **‘How to apply – The Job Market and the Application Process in Germany’** Iris Heilgendorf from the Employment Agency Gießen. Firstly, Ms Heilgendorf introduced a chart with data about the greatest demand for academic professions, before she explained 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 Raja Ram Mehta presented his experiences in finding an internship in the field of the Agriculture. He studied International Sustainable Agriculture at Kassel University as well as Göttingen University. After he completed his study, he did an internship and later started to look for a job. Currently he is working as a Wheat Breeder in the field of agriculture at a seed production company. Mr Mehta recommended the students to use every opportunity they have to improve their language

skills during their studies, especially German and English language, as they play a vital role in the job sector in Germany. There are many language-courses free of charge for students at their universities.

From Mr Mehta's perspective, sending the application is the most important step, even there might be mistakes at the beginning of the process. It might take courage but without making mistakes no one can learn something new. It is also important to read the job description to find out what exactly the company is looking for. In this regard, Mr Mehta highly recommended to describe on the cover letter what the company wants, not what the candidates have. Keeping the cover letter brief, relevant and precise also plays a significant role, as a good first impression is quite important for the candidate. If the candidate's educational background and skills matched with the job description, the candidates have a better chance to get the job. Mr Mehta also recommended mentioning the strengths and weaknesses, only if it is possible to overcome the weaknesses within a short period. Finally, he reminded the students to stay courageous, as he also faced several rejections during his job search and the students should not be disappointed and never give up their job hunt.

The second alumna Ms Liliya Nankova studied at TU Darmstadt. She did her masters in Anglistics and Economics. Currently she is working at the Bank of America. She did a short internship at good growth Institute during her study. She also worked at Sanofi both as part-time and full-time working student. Besides, she taught Maths and English at a school while she was a student at the university. From her perspective, her experience from Sanofi was more helpful for her to get the current job rather than her internship. Ms Nankova advised to advertise their skills and strength on the cover letter, but it should be relevant to the job description. Adding extra-curriculum and social activities as well as interest and hobbies in the CV is another important point, which most of the international students tend to underrate. Ms Nankova gave some tips for a job interview, such as: to read the job description and research about the acronym as well as about the company, dress up well to impress the interviewer, but not overdressed. While working on a company, it is important to show passion, willingness to learn, cooperativeness and try the best to make a good impression to the employer. To Ms Nankova, language is indeed a barrier, but it is possible to overcome and improve the language skill. She mentioned two important questions from the perspective of an employer:

- Does the candidate have the right skillset and experience? If not, are they willing to learn?
- Is the candidate going to be a good fit in the team?

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. At the end of the event, students were asked to evaluate the workshop and give their feedback.

Impressions from the evaluation:

- Useful tips in applying for internship
- Great tips about how to write in the cover letter and the CV, and how to address them
- Very helpful seminar for foreigners in Germany
- All questions asked were answered
- It was very well organized and I acquired relevant information on how to improve my CV and search for internships
- Everything I needed
- I really like the report from students that went through the process of applying for internships
- It was very helpful and I got a lot of useful information
- Guest speaker from specific field and organization I liked most and had a wrong idea about writing a CV & cover letter but this seminar helped me to clear about it.
- The introduction section of Berufsvorbereitende Praktika- und Studienaufenthalte (BPSA) was interesting
- On the whole, it was very well organized and my expectations were met
- I was missing some more concrete suggestions where to apply for the internship, maybe some guests from the employer side could be a good idea, maybe you could do such events more study direction specific
- Some speakers had really interesting stories/experiences which would have been explained further with a longer time slot
- I was not interested in agriculture but anyway it was helpful to listen to one experience

10.08.2021

Eileen Paßlack

STUBE Hessen-Referentin