

**Could you please introduce yourself?**

My name is Issam and I am from Syria. I am doing my master's in business informatics, and I work as a WiN- Tutor at the International Office.

**Why did you choose Germany and especially Hildesheim?**

I fled to Germany, because of the war in Syria. It is a safe place to live, and I have many relatives here. That means a lot to me. Although, the academic system in Germany is difficult, it is very effective. You learn a lot during your studies, which enables you to quickly find a job after graduating. This is not the case in every country.

I successfully completed my bachelor's degree in economics in Syria in 2015. I wanted to specialize in the subject with a master's degree. That is why I applied to many universities in Germany. I was admitted at the University of Hildesheim's master program in business informatics. I was very happy to accept it because the master's program aroused great interest in me. In addition, I did not want to be far from my relatives, which made Hildesheim suitable for me, because of its proximity to Oldenburg, where my relatives live.

**How is your studying going and how do you feel about studying online?**

I am currently looking for a topic for my master's thesis. I have not yet decided whether to write it in German or in English. However, I suspect it will be German, which won't be easy, because I have not written many scientific texts in German.

I really like studying online. My many courses are recorded, which allows for flexibility. What I also think is important: You can review the videos during the exam phase, which refreshes your knowledge for the exams.

Currently, the exams are either oral or submitted term papers. I was concerned that I would not do well in oral exams. But it was the other way around. I did better in my oral exams than in the written exams. Now I am no longer afraid of oral exams.

What I find not good about online studies is that you can no longer study in the library. I am currently only studying in my room. It is boring and it is easy to get distracted.

**How is your living situation?**

I live with my roommate in Blauer Kamp. We get along very well. He is from Palestine, and we share similar cultures and food tastes. We are happy about that and we like to eat together.

**Do you have other obligations besides your studies?**

I work at the university and as a programmer / tester in a company in Hanover. However, right now I am working from home.

**Have you ever done voluntary work or participated in a project?**

Yes, I did volunteer work at the Bahnhofsmission in Oldenburg and took part in the Buddy program at the University of Hildesheim. You look after an exchange student who comes to the university for a semester and help him to find his way around Hildesheim and give him tips on what to do.

**What are you interested in in your free time?**

I have a lot of free time right now. Unfortunately, I cannot use the time as I would like because everything is closed. I have played basketball for ten years, and I used to enjoy going to the university swimming pool. At the moment I only play Chess.

**What surprised you in Germany when you were new here?**

I always get help here when I need it. I used to think if someone could not help me with a topic, I would just get "no" for an answer. However, that is not the case here; Instead, I get directed to someone else who can help me.

**What plans do you have for the future?**

First, I want to finish my master's degree. I would also like to stay in Germany because I studied here and would like to live close to my relatives. My second goal is to continue working full-time at the company where I am currently working.