

Can you introduce yourself please?

My name is Theo, and I am from Greece. In my bachelor's degree I studied translation studies for English, German and Greek at the Ionian University in Corfu. During my studies in Greece, I spent my semester abroad in Hildesheim in 2019. I was fascinated by the University of Hildesheim, and that's why I decided that I really wanted to do my master's here in Germany.

Now I am studying media translation as a full-time student at the University of Hildesheim. I am almost done with my degree and am currently working on my master's thesis. It was a great coincidence that I returned to Hildesheim for my master's degree. I was very happy because I already knew a lot of nice people from my semester abroad and had fond memories.

How was your application for the master's course?

I did a lot of research beforehand. At the time as an Erasmus student, I registered at the International Office and the Career Service. They advised me on how to *apply* for the master's degree. I had to collect some documents and have them translated. In addition, I had to submit a language certificate for the German C1 level, which is why I attended a language course at the HAWK before my master's program. I found the language course at *HAWK* very good, but I enjoyed the exchange with the international course participants even more. I met many people from different cultures.

I passed my language test and then had to decide which university I wanted to apply to. As a translator, I should specialize in one subject. I was interested in audiovisual translation. This degree in media translation is only offered by the University of Hildesheim in Germany, which is why I decided to study here.

Did you suffer a culture shock here in Germany?

I did not know that bike lanes exist in Germany, as this is not the case in Greece. I thought that the entire sidewalk was for pedestrians :) that's why I was almost hit by a cyclist twice.

The business hours were new to me too. Shops in Greece are open until 9 p.m. Here the shops usually close earlier, and I often wondered why the shops were closed already.

How is it for you to study in Germany?

The first semester was very difficult for me. All of my courses were held in German, and that was a great challenge for me. At the beginning of my studies, I could not speak German very well. But it was not a problem for me because I made the decision to study in Germany to improve my language skills.

The second challenge was the German university system, as I was not very familiar with it. I did not know how to register for courses, etc. I felt a bit lost, but I was lucky because at that time, the semester was normal, not online. That helped me keep in touch with other students. I was able to simply ask questions to my fellow students and get a lot of support from them.

How do you like the online semester?

Fortunately, the online course only started towards the end of my studies. I think there is no personal contact when studying online. At the beginning, I was a bit overwhelmed because we had to submit more assignments than in the days of normal classes. It is normal, that we have to be given more tasks in the online course, since participation in face-to-face situations is not given. I also miss the facilities at the university: lecture hall, library and the university in general.

What do you do besides your studies and have you been involved in voluntary work?

I have been working as a WiN tutor at the International Office since the first semester. As a WiN tutor, I organize creative and useful events such as LSF events, university quiz, the Easter workshop or the international dinner. I cooked a Greek dish at the International Dinner: chicken pieces are baked with a special kind of rice, called Kritharaki. You can also find it in larger supermarkets in Germany.

I really enjoy my work because I do similar activities in my free time. For example, I like to read fantasy novels and classic books, do handicrafts, paint, draw, dance, cook and bake. As a WiN tutor, I also offer office hours for international students who have questions or problems. And I do the translations from German into English for the homepage of the International Office.

I also do volunteer work, I have been a buddy several times and took part in a project in which I created translations for the theater for the hearing impaired. The project was called 'inclusive theater'.

How did you find your job?

In the beginning, I did not have much of an idea about studying or working in Germany. During this time, Ms. Pulm and Ms. Dannenberg from the International Office and the career service helped me a lot. The career service team advised me on my résumé and job opportunities at the university. This is how I found my job as a WiN tutor and thanks to the career service, I also found my compulsory internship for my studies at Kern AG in Hanover.

That made me very happy because it is not easy to find a job as an international student. It was also difficult for me to find an internship. I was looking for an internship for months. When it finally worked out after countless applications, I was very relieved. As an international student, you have to prove yourself and show that you have a good knowledge of German and that you are suitable for the position. My advice to all international students is: never give up. There are many vacancies that you can apply for. I did not give up either, and it worked out in the end.

Did your studies in Germany change you?

For me, a lot of things have definitely changed. First, I was able to improve my German skills a lot. That happened quite unconsciously over time. I can speak faster without thinking twice, and my vocabulary is much larger than before my studies. I have made many friends from every corner of the world and have improved my intercultural skills. I have developed myself. I came to Germany all by myself, and I made it all by myself,

which made me even more self-confident. For me this is a success. I also met my friend from India in Hildesheim and got to know the Indian culture.

What do you miss from your home country?

I am from Crete, an island in southern Greece. I miss the sea so much, just lying at the beach and hearing the sound of the sea. I also miss the traditional food and sweets from Greece and of course, my family and my mother tongue.

What I also miss is the scolding. In Germany it is considered rude, but in Greece it is more of a sign of a casual friendship. For example, the word "maláka" means "stupid" in English. It is often used among friends in Greece, e.g. "Hey malàka, how are you?" It is quite normal to hear "maláka" 10 or 20 times a day. : D

How would you describe your character?

I am creative, motivated and not easily bored. I try to deliver everything on time, and I am a perfectionist. I am helpful, so I try to support students as much as possible at the International Office, because I know that it is difficult to study in another country. Still, I can recommend it to everyone.