

TITEL | TITLE

Progress Report Birmingham

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“Such an exchange is an enrichment in many respects.”

M. and T. participated successfully in the International Energy Cooperation Program (IECP) for writing their Master thesis at the University of Birmingham. In an interview with “Research and News”, the two Master students reported on their experiences.

- Red.: Mr. M. and Mr. T., what were your reasons for completing your study visit in Birmingham?
T.: In general, we are both interested in experiences that go beyond normal studies. In our opinion, this includes also longer stays abroad. Only when one experiences the everyday life in a foreign country, one gets to know the nation, its people as well as new perspectives.
- M.: I can only agree with that. Nobody knows, whether we have an opportunity like this once again in our professional career. In addition, if so, our foreign experiences will help us for sure. Moreover, we had already some experiences in this respect. T. was already for an exchange in Brazil during his studies and I went to Chile.
- Red.: Why then Birmingham this time?
T.: The language played an important role in the decision for England, because we wrote our master theses over there.
- M.: Further, we were also oriented toward the university’s reputation. The University of Birmingham is one of the most renowned partner universities in the IECP program of the E.ON ERC. In addition, it was a great help that Professor De Doncker and his colleague Professor Z. know each other well.
- Red.: How do you assess the scientific support in Birmingham?
M.: The support of Professor Z. and his staff was excellent and finally led to success. Only the verbal communication with the scientist from China was not always that easy.
T.: That’s for sure! Especially by dealing with complex problems. However, if there is a good will on either side, you will always find a way to manage these problems. Apart from this, the feedback was consistently encouraging and positive.
- M.: Besides, we were positively surprised by the quality of the workplaces especially in the library. Every desk has a modern desktop computer, which is equipped with all the necessary programs.
T.: Moreover, every student can save their files in the university cloud up to 500MB and they have access to these files from all workplaces at the Campus.
- Red.: How did you like the ambiance in general?
T.: The university campus really is something special for us German students. More, the University of Birmingham belongs to the Red Bricks Universities that means that all building are made of red bricks.
- M.: But we had to get used to the fact that there was no real cafeteria. You have to bring your own food or you must buy an expensive sandwich. Very good alternatives are the Indian and Parkistani restaurants in the city.
- T.: Expensive is a good keyword. Those who want to go to England have to estimate with high rents and high maintenance costs. Because of this, you should always try to get a scholarship for your IECP-Program. Both the “Otto-Juncker-Foundation” and ERASMUS scholarship can be very helpful.
- Red.: What is your personal conclusion?
M.: Very positive! We had very good experiences at a personal and scientific level in Birmingham. Such an exchange is an enrichment in many respects. There are some disadvantages such as often rather bad weather and the needy English cuisine. However, you have to live with that.
T.: While we are on the subject of positive experiences, I would like to say some words about the organization. Thanks to the support by Dr. Sabine Vogel of the E.ON ERC, everything worked out excellently and without any problems. We only had to write some e-mails and create a letter of motivation. In our experience the procedures for other exchange programs are often much more complex.