

## 2017 Fall Semester Exchange

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### About Universität Mannheim

- Universität Mannheim (UniMa) is a public research university situated in Mannheim, Baden-Württemberg, Germany
- All faculties, research institutes and facilities are placed in very short distances to one another and are reachable by foot
- The present campus covers over 74 acres (0.79 km<sup>2</sup>) in Mannheim's downtown district; the older heart of the campus and core building comprises the Mannheim Palace
- With a total length of more than 400 meters it is the largest baroque palace in Germany
- In World War II, the palace was heavily bombed and partly destroyed
- However, the palace has been renovated extensively thanks to private donations and government funding totaling more than 54 million Euros
- Universität Mannheim is continuously ranked as Germany's #1 Business school
- Some of their rankings include:
  - **Best German MBA program** in the global MBA rankings of Financial Times and The Economist
  - **#1 worldwide** in the international Bloomberg BusinessWeek MBA ranking (2016) **in the category 'job placement'**
  - **Top 5 worldwide** in the Financial Times Global MBA ranking (2017) in the categories 'aims achieved' and 'international mobility'
  - **#8 in the International (Non U.S.) MBA Ranking** (September 2017) as the only German business school in the rank by Forbes
- In 2008, Mannheim Business School became the first institution in the German-speaking region to attain the 'Triple Crown' – a rare honor in the field.
- Fewer than 1% of the about 10,000 business schools worldwide have accreditations from AACSB International, EQUIS and AMBA, the three leading international business school accreditation associations.
- Each of these three organizations has different focal points in their assessment procedures, but they all have one thing in common: Any school that successfully emerges from their stringent and comprehensive accreditation process can assert with the utmost confidence that it is among the very best institutions for management education in the world.
- It is good to note that Mannheim and Telfer both have triple accreditations, so you can trust that you will receive an excellent education abroad!

## About German Culture

Germans and Germany have many stereotypes—some true, and some urban myths. The language is seen as sounding ‘angry’, however it is just a language that is enunciated clearly and confidently. Many Germans are extremely kind and helpful! Mannheim is a city filled with people who speak English. As a student who did not know a lick of German, I was able to get by and communicate just in English with everyone I met. Most students spoke English fluently as they study in English, however some older generations were not as fluent- but could still understand English. However, I recommend taking an introductory German course offered by the University. Registration for these courses happened earlier than the normal course registration period. Unfortunately, I was not able to register for one of these courses as spaces went fast!

Some signature German cuisine are dishes like Currywurst- a dish made with Bratwurst sausage, ketchup, and curry powder. This is a favourite street-food that is a big hit at festivals and fairs. A stereotype that is true is a German’s love for Wurst (sausages) and beer! One thing that surprised me was the normalcy of people drinking beers in the streets, buying alcohol from grocery stores, and the selection of beers! Plus, the beers are extremely cheap which is a great thing since Germans sure love to have a good time. Oktoberfest, or as a local would call it, the Wiesn, is the world’s most famous beer festival. The main Wiesn is held in Munich, although there are tons of cities near Mannheim that hold their own Wiesn, though not as big, it is equally as enjoyable. Women wear dirndls, men wear lederhosen, and they drink litre beers in tents, play games at the fair, and go on the rides. It is a very joyous national event and this year it lasted 16 days. People from all over the world come to join in on the festivities.

Some differences I observed are that businesses, restaurants, and grocery stores are CLOSED on Sundays. This is something to be aware of when planning out your grocery shopping because you will not find anything open. This is quite different from living in Ottawa as most things are open 24/7. The only shops open are döner shops—which is another German treasure. Döners are the equivalent of Ottawa’s Shawarmas.



Currywurst

**A) Your program of study (courses, assignments, course format). Add the exact number of class hours per course.**

At the Telfer School of Management, I am in my first semester of third year in the International Management program.

At the Universität Mannheim I am in the Faculty of Business Administration as an External Degree exchange student.

Course Code	Course	ECTS	Frequency
MAN 301	Strategic and International Management	6	Weekly lecture (1.5 hours), exercise (45 mins), tutorial (45 mins) -100% final exam in December
FIN 401	Corporate Finance and Risk Management	6	-weekly lectures (1.5 hours), tutorials (1.5 hours) -midterm in October, final in December
TAX 352	Taxation of Multinational Firms	3	-4 lectures a week in October (6 hours/week) -final exam in November
MAN/FIN 364	Environmental Finance	6	-intensive seminar, 2 days (8:30-4:30, total of 16 hours)
MKT 351	Marketing Management Decisions	6	-intensive seminar (2 days, 16 hours)
MAN 355	Business Model Innovation and Transformation	3	-intensive seminar (2 days, 16 hours)

The course structure is quite similar to Telfer's as there are lectures set up in the same way—large lecture halls with up to 200 students for core courses. Some business elective courses are smaller (around 30 students in the class). There are exercise and tutorial sessions in addition to lectures as well. Something unique at UniMa is the opportunity to take Intensive Seminars. Intensive seminars condense material you would normally learn over the course of the semester within a few days of 8-hour lecture sessions. These culminate in 100% final exams or 100% final papers. These are only offered to exchange students to help meet the ECTS requirements and allow for a lighter exam season as these final assessments occur prior to the exam period. The registration process is quite different as it is a lottery system. For the first week in registration, most classes don't actually require registration. The only registration you need to do are for courses that explicitly require registration (to count if there are enough seats available) or just

registering for the exam/final assessment. Most final exams/assessments occur in the last 2 weeks in December. It is very popular for courses to not have any coursework/assignments and then culminate in a 100% exam which for some may be seen as beneficial if you want to travel during the semester. However, many people find that there is more pressure to do well at the end of the semester as your grade is dependent solely on a final exam. It is recommended that you still stay on top of your coursework throughout the semester and not to slack.

**B) The timetable (academic calendar, registration dates, orientation, beginning and end of classes, exams, holidays, number of semesters, etc.) Please submit the precise dates so students will know when to book their flights next year.**

## Dates for the Fall Semester 2017

Semester start and end dates	August 1, 2017 – January 31, 2018
Re-registration	May 1, 2017 – June 15, 2017
Lecture period	September 4, 2017 – December 8, 2017
Examination period	December 9, 2017 – December 22, 2017
Alternate examination dates	February 3, 2018 – February 10, 2018

- Holidays (no classes, businesses are closed):
  - German Unity Day – October 3
  - Reformation Day – October 31
  - All Saints Day – November 1

**C) Procedures to follow upon arrival. List and description of services offered by the international exchange office of the host institution. Registration and course selection. Social activities.**

- Prepare Schengen Visa requirements by consulting the German Embassy through their website
  - I chose to get my Visa while still in Canada which was the best idea in hindsight as many of my friends who got their residence permits in Mannheim had to jump through hoops and had a difficult time with the City in obtaining their residence permits
  - Ex. Visa application required documents such as bank statements proving you had sufficient funds for the duration of your stay (approx. 750 Euros/month)
  - Allow 8-12 weeks to receive your visa before leaving for Germany
    - Book your appointment with the German Consulate ASAP!

**NOTE: YOU MUST BRING ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS (ex. Passport, proof of travel health insurance, etc.) WHEN COMPLETING THESE STEPS.**

- If you're signing up for a dorm room, do this in a timely manner as rooms go quick
  - I signed up on 10 May 2017 through the UniMa portal (instructions will be sent to you in advance about this)
  - Once I arrived in Mannheim, I first moved into my dorm room
  - There are specific instructions you will receive when moving in and you need to inform them about your expected arrival as you will pick up your dorm keys from your hall manager and they are only there during specific hours
- Then, I registered at L1, the International Exchange Office
  - There are many little things you have to do after registering such as:
    - 1) meeting with a travel insurance representative who approves your health care plan
    - 2) signing up for a German bank account
    - 3) registering yourself at K7 (the Municipal government office)
    - 4) picking up your student eCUM card
    - 5) loading your student card with money
- I purchased a Semesterticket (165 Euros at a terminal inside the Exchange Office)
  - This is a regional train, tram, and bus pass.
  - This allows you to travel within a 30km(ish) radius from Mannheim for free for 6 months
  - I used it often as I lived in a residence which was a 20-minute tram ride away
  - I also used it to travel to great cities such as Schwetzingen, Worms, Bad Durkheim, Herxheim am Berg, Speyer, etc. without additional costs! (Totally recommend getting this as you **will** use the transportation system)
- You must attend mandatory orientation sessions during Welcome Week for:
  - The Studierenwerk (the housing organization)
  - The Business faculty orientation
  - Course and Exam registration

## **D) Budget outlining the cost of studying abroad**

- Airplane ticket: \$950 CAD
  - Toronto → Frankfurt
    - Trips after exams are finished
      - Frankfurt → London
      - London → Paris
      - Paris → Brussels
      - Brussels → Toronto
- Semesterticket: 165 Euros
  - Ask international exchange office s to where to purchase this!
- Pay as you go phone plan (15 Euros/month)

- 10 Euro (one time cost) for a SIM card from Telekom (the German T-mobile)
- 100 minutes of calling in Germany
- 1 GB of data
- I topped my phone off with 1.5 GBs of data every month. I didn't really text anyone as everyone uses WhatsApp or Facebook and I just FaceTimed my family and friends back at home.
- **Housing:** 304 Euros/month with a 550 Euro deposit (will be returned after semester is finished and your room is in acceptable condition)
- **Textbooks: \$0!!** (there's a library that allows you to borrow the necessary textbooks)
- **Groceries:** 20-30 Euros/week
  - Not a lot of similar brands to Canada, but the staples are there (pasta, rice, fruit, bread, etc.)
  - I eat a lot of rice, chicken, vegetables, sandwiches, and German bread.
  - Germany has amazing freshly baked bread for very cheap.
  - Groceries are actually cheaper in Mannheim than back in Ottawa (ex. Eggs 1.10 Euros, Bread 1 Euro, Chicken breasts 2 Euros)
- Bus ticket Mannheim to Brussels 27 euros
  - Bus ticket Brussels to Bruges is 14 Euros
- Bus ticket Bruges to Mannheim 27 Euros
- Bus Ticket to Strasbourg Roundtrip 31 Euros
- Bus ticket to Paris Roundtrip 90 Euros
- Hostel in Brussels 30 Euros/night
- Train Ticket Frankfurt to Mannheim 25 Euros
- Schengen Visa \$95 CAD
- \*\*\*Need to prove sufficient funds to German Consulate 750 Euros/night
- Going out: 30 Euros/month

## **E) Application procedures before your arrival (visa deadlines, documents required for visa, course registration housing deposit)**

I travelled to Toronto for an appointment with the German Consulate. In order to get the Visa, you needed to appear in person to hand over all of your documents with the application. Since my study term was one semester and over 90 days, you must apply for a Schengen Student Visa and Residence Permit. The processing time is about 4-8 weeks. I was able to get a visa for the entire duration of my stay without having to apply separately for the residence permit once I was in Mannheim. It cost \$95 CAD for the visa. In order to obtain the Visa you needed:

- A Valid Passport
- 2 Completed and signed application forms
- 2 passport sized photos
- 2 copies of passport's data page
- 2 copies of your Canadian residence permit (if applicable)
- 2 copies of letter of acceptance from German university
- Proof of qualification to be accepted at a German University
  - Letter of motivation on course of action in finding a place to live for duration of your stay **OR**

- 2 copies of proof of housing in Germany with full address
- proof of sufficient funds 750 Euros/night
- Prepaid XpressPost envelope so they can mail your passport back to you
- Visa fee \$95 CAD

To be provided after the approval of the visa:

- Copy of flight reservation to Germany
- Proof of travel health insurance (Canadian or German) with minimum coverage of \$50,000 CAD

**F) Address and description of housing cost of housing**

Studierenwerk Mannheim  
Ulmenweg 55  
Haus 1, Room 21 - EG House 1  
68167 Mannheim

August, 1st 2017 - December, 31st 2017

A Single dorm in a 5 bedroom apartment – 304 Euros/ month and 550 Euros as a housing deposit that is returned to you if the apartment is left in an acceptable state

- The bedroom has a single bed, a desk, a wardrobe, sink, bookshelf, and an office chair.
- There is a large kitchen, kitchen table, 4 chairs, couches, a stove top, oven, fridge& refrigerator, a shower room, and 2 bathrooms.
- NOTE: not all dorm rooms come with a router, I had to purchase mine. Most tech stores sell them expensively. I purchased mine for 10 Euros from a student after posting a ‘Looking for’ ad in the VISUM international exchange students group on Facebook.

**G) Work term (if applicable)**

Not applicable.

**H) Other comments or recommendations**

If you plan to travel during your exchange, it is important to only bring necessities and a minimalistic wardrobe that you can wear to class, travel in, and go out in. I lived in jeans, t-shirts, a few nice tops, and a few pairs of shoes. There are the typical shops like H&M, Zara, and even a Primark downtown if you ever do need to do some shopping.

Another tip: don’t underestimate the cold in Germany. I didn’t bring as many sweaters or thicker jackets as I should have. It does get cold pretty quickly. It isn’t exactly winter jacket and boots wearing weather, but it does get to around 0 degrees in the winter which requires a thicker fall jacket.

I will have visited Bad Durkheim, Schwetzingen, Herxheim am Berg, Worms, Speyer, Brussels, Bruges, Strasbourg, and Paris all in my first two months while on exchange at Mannheim. I recommend trying to plan trips as far in advance and organizing your class schedule so you have Fridays off to travel the weekend. Many

professors don't schedule their classes on Friday since they know most students don't want to come to class on Fridays. I recommend taking the overnight Flix buses to your

destinations (to save money on accommodations), checking airlines like Ryanair (be careful—steep costs to change the dates of your flights and no refunds/cancellations on tickets!), and travelling with others to split Airbnb costs.

The University is famous for holding weekly parties in the courtyard at the palace called the Schneckenhof. There are different themes every week and the largest party is the “Raise your Flag” Schneckenhof where everyone represents their country. I recommend bringing some Canada paraphernalia/gear as it is a very popular event and you get to meet other people from different countries and even a few from Canada. Many people brought flags and wore the colours of their country. These social events are run by Visum, the international exchange group. They also hold city trips to Oktoberfest, Munich, Frankfurt, and Strasbourg which are worth going to!

### **Places to Eat in Mannheim**

- Café EO in the Ehrenhof at the palace
- Café Sammo
- Mensa (School cafeteria with delicious meals for very cheap! Approx. 2.50 Euros for a main course, salad, and soup)
- Pizzeria Da Salvo (Italian restaurant beside House 1 in Ulmenweg → very cheap and delicious Italian food)

### **Groceries**

- Lidl (4 minute walk from Ulmenweg)
- Netto (1 minute walk form Ulmenweg)

### **Things to Do in Mannheim**

- See the Wasserturm
- Sign up for Mannheim's Free Walking Tour
- Visit the Jesuitenkirche (a beautiful church)
- Visit the Schloss Museum at the Palace
- Grab a beer and hang out with friends along the Rhine River!

### **There are tons of places to shop in Mannheim in the Quadrate near campus:**

- H&M
- Zara
- Berksha
- Primark
- Galeria Kaufhof

### **I) Add a description of about five to seven sentences summarising your experience**

In two short months, I have travelled to places I've always dreamed about. Participating in an international exchange to a school like Universität Mannheim is such an

unforgettable, enriching, and once in a lifetime experience. The education is phenomenal with professors having studied at Stanford under Nobel Prize winning economists, or having world renowned marketing experts teaching courses. As an International Management student, this exchange forces you to experience studying and networking with people from different countries. This exchange has given me perspective on how business works around the world.

Mannheim is a smaller city in comparison to cities like Frankfurt, however it is a very safe and central city. Day trips to many places like Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Strasbourg, and Mainz are doable from the Mannheim Hauptbahnhof (main station). Also, it is very easy to travel across Europe as Mannheim is only about 30 minutes from the Frankfurt Main airport and many trains and buses from Mannheim reach all around Europe. I would recommend Mannheim and Mannheim Business School to all business students. I am having an amazing time so far and it is a world renowned school for business!

**Important things to pack/take note of:**

- Travel adapters (at LEAST two, one for your phone, one for your laptop (you can use the second one for hair straightener, hair curler, hair dryer etc.)
- Water bottle – or buy one upon your arrival (this will save you a lot of money on bottled water)
- Small suitcase or travelling backpack for weekend trips
- Travel size bottles for shampoo, conditioner, face wash etc. for weekend trips
- Towels/sheets
- Camera!! (Document your travels!)
- Makeup (there aren't any Sephoras in Germany and the makeup stores have limited brands!)
- UMBRELLA! It rains a lot in Mannheim!
- Portable chargers for your phone when you travel