



IT University Travel Report

Dear Student, this is a template – the aim is to inspire other students who may wish to follow in your footsteps. You are free to give your report the shape you want and to go beyond the questions, as long as you cover the information asked for below. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not. Remember that the report will be made available on the intranet.

Host University: *Technical University of Munich*

Study Programme at IT

University :

BSc Software Development

Exchange Agreement or

Study Abroad:

Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad:

Linear Algebra, Data Mining

Seminar, IPraktikum

Exchange Period: *Spring 2022*

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: *magnj@itu.dk*

It has been difficult to sum up my whole exchange period into a couple of pages of text. Because in reality, life is a roller coaster. And since I stepped onto that SAS flight to Munich, my life transitioned from a calm, wooden roller coaster, to a high-speed, inverted steel-coaster with loops. That meant that some days were maybe some of the most exciting and adventures days of my life, and other days were worse and over-whelming.

Firstly, I have summed up some practical facts about TUM and their courses that will be useful if you choose TUM as your exchange university. Other than that, I have summed up some of my personal experiences going to Munich. Hopefully you will find the report somewhat useful if you decide going to TUM, and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions!

Practical things

Facts and differences from ITU:

I have summed up some points where TUM and ITU are different. I can guarantee you that you will have a completely different study experience at TUM.

- *The scale:* TUM Informatics is huge, and it is one of the largest informatics faculties in Germany with over 7500 students. This means that TUM have the capacity to offer a high number of courses within everything you ask for. This makes it quite easy to find compatible courses to the ones offered at ITU. This also naturally means that facilities like the Mensa (the canteen) and library are unfortunately quite crowded.
- *The workload:* Differently from ITU, lecture courses can provide any number of ECTS, and most lecture courses provide either 5 or 4 ECTS. From my experience, the workload of a 5 ECTS lecture course at TUM is roughly equal to a 7.5 ECTS course at ITU. On TUM's webpage it also says that they expect students to work approximately 60 hours per week (vs 40 hours at ITU). Since ITU requires you to take 30 ECTS for each semester, you would most likely be juggling more courses than you would at ITU, as well as spending a bit more time on your studies.
- *Location:* TUM informatics is located at campus Garching, which is roughly 25min away from the city center with U-Bahn. You would most likely spend most of your time in the Informatics building. The building strangely reminds me of the ITU building in away, so this is the place to go if you get home sick! If you are looking for some action and take a break from the coding, you should check out the slides!
- *Semester period:* Unlike the rest of the world, TUM has divided the semester periods into summer and winter semesters. The winter semester usually lasts between end October to the beginning of March, and the summer semesters between the end of April to the end of August. This won't overlap if you choose going in the summer semester and you will have a break between end of January to end of April. The last possible date for an exam is usually around the 20th of August, so you are also likely to have a short break before going back to ITU. Going on exchange in the winter semester would be more difficult since your exam period at TUM and the semester start at ITU would most likely be overlapping.

More on the courses at TUM:

TUM divides their courses into three categories: lecture courses, practical courses, and seminar courses. Lecture courses are like the regular courses at ITU, which usually consists of one or two lectures per week, as well as additional exercise sessions. The evaluation is usually through a 90min written exam at the end of the semester. These courses are usually not restricted by capacity, which means they are open for everyone. If you are unsure of which courses to take, you can sign up to multiple courses at the beginning of the semester and make your choice after you have gotten an essence of what each course is about.

The practical courses are 10 ECTS courses where you work on a project together with other students. In the seminar courses, you are asked to write a scientific paper about a specific topic as well as holding a 20min presentation about the content in your paper. Practical and seminar courses are popular at TUM and are therefore capacity restricted. To get a place in such a course, you would have to take part in the matching process which will be before the semester starts. Your exchange advisor at TUM will inform you more about this.

I STRONGLY recommend filling your schedule with seminar and a practical courses. A schedule only filled with lecture courses results in a very stressful exam period, which can be unpractical, as the exam period in Munich is around semester start at ITU. The practical courses and seminar courses are usually less theoretically demanding, and more interesting. You are also required to collaborate with other students, which allows you to easily meet new people. Additionally, the courses finish before the exam period starts, which makes the exam period less stressful.

Social life

TUM offer a lot of great activities for exchange students, where you can get to know other exchange students. TUMi arranges trips and activities for exchange students throughout the whole semesters. The trips usually go to the alps, or nearby cities like Nuremberg or Regensburg, and are relatively affordable. There is also the Minga Mentoring program which arranges activities for students within the informatics faculty. They usually arrange some fun activities every second week. If you wish, you can also apply for a mentor through this program. The mentor will help you with all your practical questions and can possibly be your first friend in Munich.

The activities arranged by TUMi and Minga make it easy to get to know exchange students. Nevertheless, there are few similar activities where you can meet local students. My best advice to meet local students is through the practical courses, as you will be collaborating on a project.

My experience

Arranging my stay

Before going to Munich, I heard that it was difficult to find an apartment. For this reason, I decided to go to Munich shortly after I finished my exams at ITU in January. For the first two weeks, I stayed at some of the hostels near the central station since they were affordable and not that occupied in the winter. If I did this again, I would stress finding a temporary place to live before I got to Munich. The first week especially can be a bit overwhelming, as there are many practical things you would need to figure out in an environment you don't know. This combined with the strange Hostel environment I lived in, combined with zero privacy made me feel unsafe, and I would have valued being able to go home in the evening a space where you are able to gather your thoughts.

Luckily, I found a temporary place to live for the month of February a bit outside of the city. The apartments in Munich are in high demand, and therefore, you need to be aggressive to find something. What I did, I downloaded an app "WG-gesucht" and one called "immowelt" where people posted available WG-Zimmer (a room in a shared apartment) or single-room apartments. These apps notified me whenever somebody posted something within my search criteria. I had written a pre-manufactured text about myself, which I modified and sent to the landlord every time I found something interesting. By doing this, I was also able to find an apartment in Maxvorstadt, in which I stayed in for the rest of the semester.

The exchange office in Munich also provides rooms in dormitories for exchange students. Sadly, the office is not able to provide apartments for all students, and the office therefore advice students to find an apartment on their own. These rooms are first-come-first-serve, so if the office sends you a offer for a room, the first people to reply will be prioritized.

Expenses

Munich has the highest rent-prices in Germany and from what I have observed, you would have to expect Copenhagen-prices on accommodation. I paid 725 euro per month for my single room apartment. Rent prices in Garching (where the campus is) are the same as in the city center, since there is a high demand of students that want to live here. If you want stay close to the university, I have heard that it is cheaper in the nearby towns like Ismaning, Eching and Neufahrn.

Luckily, everything else are cheaper in Munich! Cheap grocery stores like Lidl and Aldi are a huge part of German pride and culture, and I would say the cost is about 2/3 of what it is in Denmark. By using your TUM student card, you can use all public transportation whenever you want except between 8-18 on Monday-Friday (and yes.. weird hours, since this is when you would need it to go to Uni). I have heard they are working on making it available 24/7, which they hopefully will do by the time you are leaving!

Experience of Munich

It cannot be neglected that Germany and Denmark are similar countries, and hence, Munich might seem like the less exotic option from ITU's exchange agreements. Nevertheless, I never felt that my exchange experience was boring.

Munich has a lot to offer. The city center has a beautiful old town and there are many cool and "hipstery" neighborhoods to check out like Maxvorstadt, Glockenbachviertel and Au-Haidhausen. If you like alcohol, you should checkout one of the "Bier Garten", where everything looks like the German stereotype from American media. As a Scandinavian, I found people in Munich really open, easy-going and approachable.

The central location of the Bavarian capital makes it a hidden gem when it comes to exploring. By one hour train-ride, you reach the beautiful alps with large ski areas and hiking opportunities. You are also close to the most beautiful and well-preserved cities of Germany like Nuremberg, Passau, Regensburg, Landshut as well as the Austrian city of Salzburg. And by a train ride of 4 hours, you can reach Zürich, Verona, Wien, Prague, and Berlin. And if this is not enough for you, one of Europe's largest airports is 40min with train from the city center!

Growth

Going on exchange involved going outside of the comfort zone in multiple aspects. For me, this meant that I had to learn how to live with uncertainties related to university, social-life, and financing. One thing I learned was to keep my head cold in situations when you feel like everything is falling apart.

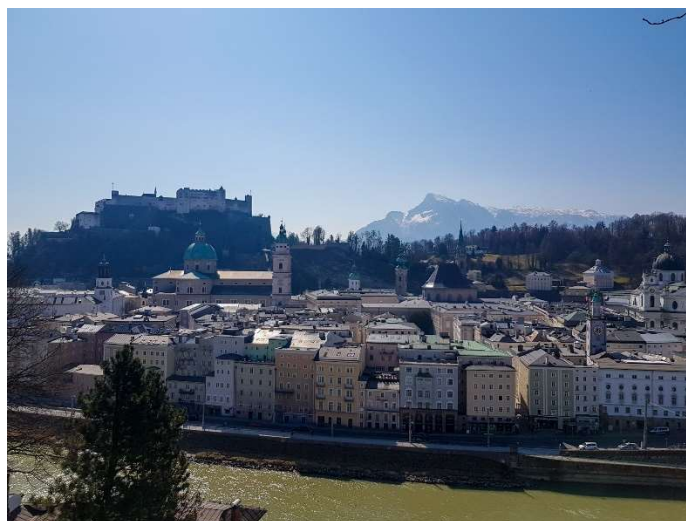
My experience going to Munich turned out quite differently from what I expected. I took the bold move to choose lectures in German, and of course, this meant that I had to learn German. A couple of weeks before leaving I refreshed my broken high school German, and when arriving to Munich, I forced myself to jump into conversations in German at a daily basis. This was of course overwhelming at the start, but as time went on, I got more confident speaking the language. And as of now, I speak German at a daily basis with my friends. I would definitely recommend doing the same if you have the motivation, since a foreign language might be the most valuable skill to learn in an exchange semester.

The most interesting part of my exchange was to compare the German culture with the culture of the Germany. I learned to understand the mindset of the German people, in the sense of their humor, topics that should be avoided in a conversation and their communication patterns. I also started understanding how the German society somehow was built up by the same rules.

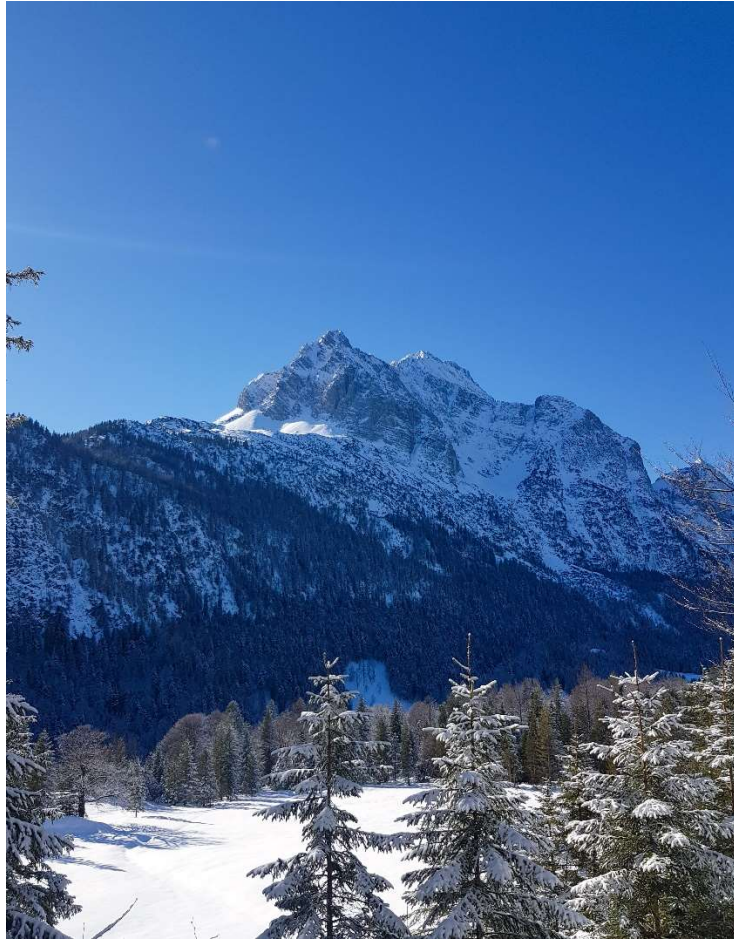
And lastly, some pictures!



Integrating at the Gäubodenfest in Straubing



Daytrip to Salzburg



Daytrip to Mittenwald



Chilling with a beer at Königsplatz