

A student from Vietnam, Nguyen Thanh Cha: "Russia has taught me not to be afraid of cold and difficulties."

Nguyen Thanh Cha, an energetic St. Petersburg State University student from Vietnam who studies under the quota of the Russian Government for Vietnamese citizens, told how she decided to go to Russia, what difficulties she faced when moving and why she enrolled at Polytechnic University.



— **Nguyen Thanh Cha, let's start from the beginning. How did you end up in St. Petersburg?**

— It all started in Hanoi, at the Hanoi-Amsterdam High School for the Gifted. I studied English and Russian in depth. I was fascinated by Russian culture, and when my teacher told me about the competition for a Russian government scholarship, I decided, «This is my chance.» The competition was tough — three rounds at the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Hanoi. When I found out I had passed, I couldn't believe it! My dream of studying abroad became a reality, and with such support.

— **Why did you choose Polytech and the Advertising and PR program?**

— I studied reviews and photos. I was impressed by the modern campus, the huge territory, and the many foreign students. And the Advertising and Public Relations major at the Institute of Humanities was a conscious choice. Even in school, I was involved in media: I wrote articles, managed social media accounts, and even worked as a freelance photographer. I like to create meaning and influence perception.



— **What were your first impressions of Russia and Polytech?**

— My first impression when I left the airport was the cold! But St. Petersburg immediately charmed me — it's so majestic! I got lost at Polytech on my first day. The campus is like a small city: spacious, green, with seven cafeterias. It's a student's paradise!

— **Moving to another country is always a challenge. What «practical» difficulties did you encounter at first?**

— Documents! So many papers, certificates, registrations... My head was spinning. It's good that now foreign students at Polytech can get everything done in one place — [at the Unified Service Center for Foreign Citizens \(USCFC\)](#). And, of course, there was the language barrier. Although I studied Russian at school, it took me three months of preparatory classes to feel confident speaking. Thank you to my patient teachers!

— **Speaking of teachers, what is your impression of them?**

— I believe that love for a subject comes from the teacher. I was lucky at SPbPU! The teachers here don't just teach theory — they spark interest. In lectures on the basics of advertising, psychology, or visual communications, you feel the world of this profession opening up. Many thanks to all my teachers who inspire me to overcome any difficulties.

— **Tell us about your favorite places in St. Petersburg.**

— I'm a museum fan! The Hermitage, the Russian Museum, the Kunstkamera... They're treasure troves! But most of all, I love just walking around. Strolling along the embankment, getting lost in the courtyards, feeling the breath of history. I advise everyone — just go and see! St. Petersburg will not disappoint.



— **What surprised you most about Russia after Vietnam?**

— Apart from the cold? The food! We have completely different tastes, spices, and cooking methods. It was unusual at first, but now I love borscht and syrniki! And also the scale. The wide open spaces, broad avenues, high ceilings in buildings. It's impressive.

— **What are your plans for the future?**

— Right now, the main thing is to successfully complete my bachelor's degree. And then — on to a master's degree! I want to deepen my knowledge. Maybe here at Polytech, maybe through an exchange program. I have two whole years ahead of me, so there's plenty of time! I also dream of seeing more of Russia: I've already been to Murmansk and Sortavala, and I'm planning to visit Kazan and the Golden Ring.



— What advice would you give to those thinking about studying in Russia?

— Don't be afraid! Yes, it will be cold, and the language and paperwork will be difficult. But it is definitely worth it. You will receive a high-quality education, a unique life experience in an amazing country, and meet friends from all over the world. Russia teaches resilience and opens hearts. The main thing is to take the first step, as I did!

Дата публикации: 2025.09.26

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