

From the First Person: how to Study at Leibniz University of Hanover, when the World is Quarantined

Many of SPbPU students and staff go to study and take internships in other countries. International trips and events are now suspended. However, some polytechnics who left abroad long before today's events continue their educational and research activities abroad. We contacted our colleagues and students from different countries to find out how they are going during the quarantine, and just once again make sure that they are fine.

One of the first to respond was Darina KLIMOVA. She is currently studying at the Leibniz University of Hanover (Germany) as a part of the [international Master's Degree Program](#).



- Darina, we are very happy to hear from you! Tell us how things are going at the Leibniz University of Hanover. What measures has the University taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus?

- First of all, we need to explain that the academic calendar in Germany differs from the Russian one. The winter semester started in mid-October and ended in

late February. The second semester was supposed to start on April 13, but due to the pandemic, it was postponed. On the 10th of March all students received a letter from the President of LUH, Professor Volker EPPING. It reported that all student services, offices and others were closed for personal contact with students. You can only communicate by phone and email. A week later, a new newsletter came from the President of LUH: all buildings of the University, including the library and canteens, were closed for all students without exception. In addition, the other day we received another letter saying that the semester postponed to April 20 will be held in a distance mode. All the measures – until further notice and stabilization of the situation.

-Do you think these measures are sufficient to prevent the spread of the virus?

- In my opinion, the University has taken all possible measures to reduce any risks of infection spreading on the territory of the University. As students, we will see how online learning will be realized later. This will be a kind of challenge for both teachers and students. Nevertheless, at the same time – a unique and very useful experience.

- Many people can hardly imagine how to replace live communication with something. What are the advantages of distance learning for you personally?

- On my program in the winter semester, there were no online courses at all. Since the summer semester has not started yet, I can only imagine what advantages I can get from distance learning: first of all, saving time that I usually spend on getting ready and moving around the city to get to the University. Secondly, a comfortable environment during distance learning.

However, for me, there are still more disadvantages. Lack of personal communication with teachers and classmates, lack of campus atmosphere and socialization, difficulties with self-discipline in the home environment – I really hope that this crisis will end soon, and we will return to our usual life.



- How else has your life changed with the switch to distance learning?

- I am working on my Master's thesis; I communicate with my supervisor by email. I am a little worried about how the exams scheduled for May will be held – it is still unknown whether they will be postponed to a later date or they will be held in some other form. Despite the fact that the summer semester has not yet started, the management and departments of the University are actively working to ensure the educational process in remote mode. The University's website already contains information in German about which resources can be used. The employees during the official vacation are having the stage of preparation for distance learning.

- What do you do in your free time while the country is under quarantine?

- I was visiting my parents in Tallinn just in mid-March, when countries began one after another to impose restrictions on land and air traffic and close borders for foreign citizens. Therefore, I am actually very lucky, I spend a lot of time with my family. I could not do for many years after moving because of my studies and work. Moreover, of course, I devote time to my hobbies, in fact I didn't have enough time before.

- Communication and support of relatives and friends is very important now! Tell us, what would you wish to other students in this difficult time

for everyone?

- Use quarantine measures to your advantage: focus on yourself and your life, things that you didn't have time for. Think of the quarantine as that special period in your life when you finally have time for yourself, your interests, hobbies, training, taking care of your health, and doing sports at home. Take your time and focus on your interests – and it will be much easier not to panic and take your benefits and inner harmony.

- Darina, thank you for an interesting interview! Wish you every success and good health!

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