

Master's degree student Fikria Shaleha from Indonesia: "Russia is forever in my heart"

Fikria Shalekha, a Master's degree student at the Institute of Computer Science and Cybersecurity in the Intelligent Systems program, spoke about her success in studying at Polytechnic University and living in St. Petersburg.

— **Fikria, how did you end up in Russia and why did you choose SPbPU?**

— Even in elementary school, I dreamed of Russia. My parents bought me encyclopedias for academic success, and in one of them I read about Roscosmos. It became my childhood dream. Later, I became interested in the history, culture, and architecture of Russia — everything seemed so aesthetically pleasing and exciting. After my bachelor's degree, I decided to delve into computer science, as I already work as a web developer. Polytechnic University was my first choice: there are many strong scientific publications here, and the campus is just great for studying and photography.



— **How was the first semester? What would you recommend to yourself now at the beginning of the journey?**

— Honestly, it wasn't easy. I became the head of the Association of Indonesian Students in St. Petersburg, and at the same time I work remotely as a web developer, and studying is not easy — almost everything is new to me. I've advised myself in the past: don't put too much pressure on yourself, don't be a perfectionist, ask teachers, keep an eye on your health, eat right, and don't forget to call your parents.

— **By the way, you were recently elected chairman of PERMIRA St. Petersburg. Tell me about it?**

— Yes, it is a great honor! After the general elections among Indonesian students in St. Petersburg, I was elected chairman of the St. Petersburg branch of the Association of Indonesian Students in Russia (PERMIRA). This is the main organization of Indonesian students in the Northern Capital, and I am very proud of the trust of my fellow countrymen. For me, this is not only a responsibility, but also an opportunity to strengthen the ties between our cultures.

— **What learning habits help you keep up with everything?**

— I've learned how to plan time. I write notes and reminders, glue them on the wall. I try to focus as much as possible on the lectures, and then I review the material separately, looking for additional sources. This helps you stay organized even under heavy workload.



— **Where is the most convenient place for you to study?**

— If I need to concentrate in silence, I go to the library and turn on the music on my headphones. If I want to discuss something with others or work in a more relaxed atmosphere, I choose a coffee shop where you can study and drink coffee with dessert.

— **Have you ever had any funny situations related to the Russian language?**

— Once in the «Teremok» I wanted to try a new chocolate drink and said, «Please give me Aubai chocolate.» The seller did not understand. When I showed him the picture, he smiled: «Ah, Dubai!» It turned out that Russian letter «D» in the font was similar to «A». It was very funny and a little embarrassing!



— **How do you like the teachers at Polytechnic University?**

— They speak excellent English, they have impressive scientific achievements. They are very responsive. One teacher, when she found out that I was busy with a lot of things, said that she was proud of me and supported me. It's very motivating. I especially want to thank the teachers of the Intelligent Systems group — I will try not to let them down!

— **Did you manage to find friends in Russia?**

— Of course! I'm an extrovert, I can't live without friends. At Polytechnic University, I met guys from different countries and cultures, but with common goals. The Indonesian students and Farah's friend from Egypt are especially close to me. They support me even in the most difficult moments.

— **We have heard that you not only study and lead, but also express yourself creatively?**

— Yes, I participated in the international festival of St. Petersburg university students «Golden Autumn — 2025» and became the winner in the Vocal category. It was an unforgettable and inspiring event that connected me even more with the culture of Russia and other countries.



— **What surprised you about your life in Russia?**

— The people here are very tall! My height is 149 cm, so in the subway during rush hour I am sometimes «squeezed» from all sides. It's also cold — even at +10°C, the wind makes it feel like minus five. But I still romanticize Russia — it will always be special to me.

— **What are your plans after graduation?**

— I want to return to Indonesia, to my native Rokan Hulu in Riau province, and apply the knowledge I have gained here, professionally and personally. My dream is to help develop a community, create opportunities, and inspire others. And, of course, I hope to come to Russia often — it is forever in my heart.

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