

Polytechnic student from Egypt: In Russia I became a grown-up version of myself

Omar Rateb came to Russia from Egypt and has been living in St. Petersburg for five years. At Polytechnic University, he is studying international business in English at the Institute of Industrial Management, Economics and Trade. He is approaching the defense of his thesis, the subject of which is the implementation of robotic technologies in the aerospace industry from a management point of view, and serious plans for the future. About this and more read in our interview.



— Omar, did you choose studying at a Russian university right away, or were there other options?

— Before coming to Russia, I read a lot about universities in Spain, Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic. But studying in them turned out to be too expensive for me. So I started to study Russian universities, and I realized that, for a much more democratic cost, the education there is very competitive. So I chose Polytechnic University and I don't regret my decision. Russia has a very interesting culture. From the very first days I got rid of the stereotype that Russians are cold in communication and do not like to joke. Not true — they joke all the time!

— By what criteria did you choose your university?

— I looked at what rankings the university has in the world and in my country. Polytechnic University has a fairly high position, which attracted me. Besides, I wanted to know how many foreign students are at the university and what its history is. I read that the history of Polytechnic University is very long, and many outstanding scientists worked there.

— Can you describe what moving to a new country was like for you?

— My worldview has completely changed. In Egypt, I lived with my family and didn't even think about how different everyday things happen. And here began an independent life, a completely different level of responsibility, a lot of new tasks that no one but me would be able to solve. This experience has taught me new things, I've grown and become an adult version of myself. And for that I am grateful to my family for giving me this opportunity.

— Did you feel it when you first came back to Egypt after starting your studies in Russia?

— The first year I was in the preparatory department, studying Russian. And when I finished, I went home. And I realized that I looked at many things with completely different eyes. I also noticed that my friends and I had different interests. I started to be more attentive to different cultures, to study their features, to pay attention even to the smallest details.

— And in general, do you think there is a tendency in Egypt to go to study abroad?

— Yes, and for about ten years now. Egyptians travel a lot, international education is not uncommon here, nor are intercultural skills. English is very important for us — you might be asked about it when you get a job.

— You study in English, tell me, how is your Russian?

— I started learning Russian back in Egypt. But when I came to Russia, I realized how rich and complicated it is. Much harder than English, by the way. In the first weeks, I didn't understand a word of Russian. The language barrier was a big problem for me. After a few months I began to understand what people were saying, but I still couldn't answer. All in all, it took me about a year to be able to maintain a conversation in Russian.

— Is it easy for you to study at Polytechnic University?

— I won't say it's easy, but it's not hard either. The truth is somewhere in the middle. The most difficult for me was the first year. In this period, you adapt to the Russian system of education, get used to everything new. And then everything goes much easier. I like the fact that we have a lot of practical work, for me it is the best way to learn.

– What are your favorite subjects?

– Marketing is number one. I'm also very interested in sociology, and also in organizational behavior: we study how people behave within the company and interact with each other. Management in its various aspects is also interesting to me.

– What is your impression of the teachers at SPbPU?

– I like the fact that the teachers at Polytechnic University are passionate about what they do. They have a lot of experience and knowledge, and you can see that they are eager to pass this on to the students. It is great that SPbPU has professors from different countries — for example, we had a professor from Poland who taught commercial law and I still remember his lectures. The materials he gave us were very useful. I also really like the fact that you can ask a professor about anything and they will help you.



– Are there many foreigners in your group?

– Yes, we have a multicultural group! There are guys from Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Indonesia and of course Russia. We have a good time together. Despite the fact that we all are from different countries, we easily found a common language.

— Tell us, what are your plans for the future?

— At the moment, I am considering two options — to work in marketing, or to start my own business. Either way, my future activities will be related to the education I am getting now.

— What is your advice to other students who are planning to study abroad?

— Three words: act without hesitation. Studying abroad is so much more than just an education. You'll gain the most powerful life experience, opportunities to improve your knowledge and find your dream job. You'll be able to make better decisions, travel, meet new people, and learn new cultures.

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