

DAAD Prize 2023 goes to Anastasiia Hresko

The prize of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for outstanding achievements of foreign students goes this year to Anastasiia Hresko from Ukraine.

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Anastasiia Hresko is currently studying International Business Management in the 5th semester. She convinced the jury with her quick comprehension, high level of abstraction and her excellent self-organisation as well as a grade point average of 1.1.

In 2022 and 2023, Anastasiia Hresko was awarded HWR Talent, she is also a scholarship holder of the German Academic Scholarship Foundation. In addition to her studies, she volunteers for refugees from Ukraine and supports international students as a buddy when they arrive in Berlin.

In the following interview, she talks about her path to the HWR Berlin, her volunteer work and her plans for the future.

What does it mean to you to be honoured with the DAAD Award?

First and foremost, the 2023 DAAD Award represents recognition of the efforts I have made throughout my academic journey at the HWR Berlin.

I learned basic things like not being afraid of answering questions of professors wrong during the classes and huge things like managing multiple activities under stress. My academic journey was always disturbed by various “external” challenges like COVID, issues with apartment search and Russian invasion of my home country. I made sure to convert these challenges into opportunities to grow and not let them negatively affect all the aspects of my life.

Outside of university, I have collected much work and voluntary experience and joined amazing communities of AIESEC and Studienstiftung. I am beyond grateful to all the people who have supported me throughout my academic journey so far. Becoming a part of the community of DAAD international students is yet another valuable chance for me to connect with other like-minded people and contribute to exchange and international cooperation.

Why did you choose to study at the HWR Berlin?

I would say that my choice was mainly due to the IBMAN programme that not only matched my basic requirements (I was searching for an opportunity to study in English because at that time I could not speak German and also wanted to start studying in the summer semester) but also attracted me a lot due to its international focus as well as practice-oriented approach.

I would also like to highlight that an important role for me was also the question of tuition fees and I truly value that in most German universities including the HWR Berlin there are no extra charges for non-EU citizens which provides an equal chance

for everyone to access education and develop themselves and was a precious opportunity for me that allowed for all the valuable experiences and learnings I acquired in Germany.

Anyone who sees your CV will immediately recognize that social commitment is close to your heart. Be it in the Buddy Programme of the HWR Berlin or for the people from your home country, Ukraine. What is your motivation to support international students in their arrival at the HWR Berlin?

My first “non-email” contact at the HWR Berlin was with my buddy, Nina Schiller. She shared lots of valuable insights about studies and it was also very interesting to get to know her. Nina’s commitment to academic development and motivation made her my role model and I was very happy to have a buddy. That is why, when I received an email about the chance to become a buddy myself a year after, I applied without hesitation. Being a buddy, however, means not only to help students and motivate them but also to develop many soft skills which is another benefit. I believe that it is while making an impact that we can develop ourselves and grow the most.

Your motivation to support people from Ukraine is absolutely understandable. Would you like to say something about how young people from Ukraine seeking refuge in Germany can best be supported?

I do not think that there is a better way to support young people from Ukraine seeking refuge in Germany than the one that is already being implemented. They have access to numerous education and work opportunities and I am thankful for the immense support that people from my home country are getting in Germany in these hard times.

I will never forget the feeling when I first came to the Berlin Central Station to volunteer in March 2022 and was astonished by the number of non-Ukrainian volunteers who came there to support refugees from Ukraine. It was yet another learning for me and I was questioning myself: “Would I also be here now helping refugees if it was not my country that had been invaded?”. I am not sure that the answer at that point of time was “yes” – but it is “yes” now for sure. My experiences in Germany taught me a lot about the value of global citizenship and the power of the international community. I truly hope that equality and inclusiveness will continue being promoted in Germany with regard to people of all nationalities.

What are you planning to do after graduation?

I have chosen finance as my minor and already completed my internship in Investment Management at Deloitte where I could gain many practical insights into the field. Currently, I am deepening my knowledge further at EDHEC Lille where I pursue the double-degree programme. After graduation, I plan to work several more years before deciding on the exact aspect I want to specialize in and pursuing my master’s degree. There are many things that I admire about German society and my long-term plan is to live and work in Germany.

At the same time, I noticed that I enjoy combining multiple activities at the same time (i.e. study, work and volunteering) which is both challenging and fulfilling. I am therefore also committed to using my education and skills to continue making a difference in the world. I have recently launched “The Truth Spectrum” project that aims to share stories of people from different backgrounds residing in Germany and show multiple versions of truth on complex global issues. I am excited to continue developing this project during the rest of my studies and beyond and contribute to creating a world where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued.

HWR Berlin has been awarding the DAAD Prize since 2006

With the DAAD Prize, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has been offering the HWR Berlin the opportunity to honour exceptional achievements of its international students since 2006. The stated aim of the prize is to put faces to the international students at German universities. The HWR Berlin is proud of its approximately 1500 foreign students who enrich our university.