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"Cross-cultural experience is a key part of the programme"

Erica Callery, organiser of the HWR Berlin Summer & Winter School, about this year's winter school courses and the lasting importance of intercultural exchange.

21.01.2019

The HWR Berlin Winter School has now come to a successful close. What do you think were the highlights of this year's Winter School?

This year's Winter School was a real success and that is thanks to the motivation and passion of both the participants and the lecturers involved. Highlights this year have to be the launching of our brand-new "Strategy and Brand Management in the Beer and Brewing Industry" course which offered students the chance to explore aspects of branding and general business strategy through the lens of one of Germany's most important and historically significant industries. The course included a visit to Professor Carsten Baumgarth's lab at the HWR Berlin to take part in eye-tracking experiments to explore consumers' responses to different branding.

Another highlight was the variety of company visits the participants undertook. Our students on the "International Business Strategy" course who take a closer look at the services industry in Europe had the opportunity to visit and learn more about leading recruitment company Hays and from Berlin's flourishing tech scene, content provider Blinkist.

What makes the HWR Berlin Summer & Winter School unique and who is it targeted at?

The intensity of the programme is definitely noteworthy. After the two to four-week programmes students come away with deepened knowledge of how business works in Europe and a totally new intercultural perspective. Students tackle a new module and new content every week followed by an assessment. As well as earning ECTS credits the participants explore Berlin's multifaceted history and thriving cultural scene via a series of organised visits and events. From ice skating to modern art, the Berlin Wall and the city's underground bunkers, students come to better understand the city they are studying in.

We welcome applications from upper undergraduate and graduate students of business and related fields from across the world. We particularly welcome applications from our network of partner institutions as this in turn boosts the exchange opportunities for HWR Berlin students. The programme is conducted in English so a good level of English is required.

What key topics are covered in the courses?

All courses fall under the topic of 'doing business in Europe'. The two Winter

School courses focus on business strategy and branding in the services and brewing industries. The focus of the seven Summer School courses is broader, and includes business law, economics, entrepreneurship, marketing, plus a course dedicated to German language and culture.

Aside from the academic content, what role does the development of intercultural skills play in the programme?

The cross-cultural experience is a key part of the programme. Thanks to the wide variety of nationalities represented (over 23 in 2018) students learn invaluable soft skills through their interactions with fellow participants from across the world. To ensure that students maximise their intercultural experience during their time in Berlin, they complete a module dedicated to intercultural perspectives in which they have the opportunity to deepen their cross-cultural experience via a series of reflective papers.

For many participants this may be their first time studying or even travelling abroad and the experience often encourages them to embark on other international adventures, whether in their postgraduate studies, career or personal life.

For many participants this is their first time in Berlin, what do they find most surprising about the city?

For many participants their stereotypes of Berlin are challenged during their time here. Perhaps they had heard that Berliners can be unfriendly or cold but have had many very positive friendly encounters here, or they are surprised that they can eat such a wide variety of food here and not just sauerkraut and sausage! Either way we encourage the participants to explore and challenge these pre-conceptions during their time here. One rather surprising topic that often comes up is how well-behaved dogs are here in Berlin—so you see we also learn a lot from the participants, proving how intercultural exchange and learning never stops.

- [More information: HWR Berlin Summer and Winter School](#)