

Final report

(Erasmus+ Internships – SMP)

General information on the internship

Subject of studies: Anglistik Course of studies (Bachelor/Master/Staatsex.): Bachelor

Time of internship: 5.July.2021-30.Sep.2021 Place of internship: English Language Academy Malta

„Internship title“ (z.B. „Internship at the Goethe Institute London in the library department“):
Receptionist at the English Language Academy Malta

Planning and preparation

In order to finish the intercultural project in an English-speaking country according to the requirements of my department “English Philology”, I decide to do an internship. However, due to the covid-19 restrictions, which is not easy to apply for the British visa, therefore, I plan to go to Malta where the official language is English there. I have found some internship possibilities through our department's database, and then I directly applied for the internship position at different English language schools in Malta and finally got an offer from “English Language Academy”. The application process was very simple, I did not through any agency rather directly submitted my resume to the institute. After the initial application was approved, the person in charge contacted me via email and asked me to complete an online placement procedure in order to test my English language ability. Two days later, I received an email from HR who asking for an online interview with me. During the interview, K introduced me to different departments of the school and asked me the preferred department where I want to be placed. I told her that I preferred execution- related work in order to get the general impression of the workplace. So, in the end I was assigned to administrative support position.

Financial support

Since the internship is unpaid, precisely speaking, it is rather as a traineeship program. In this regard, do not hesitate to contact Student&Arbeitsmarkt for scholarship counselling, they were very efficient and patient. I emailed them to speak about my situation, and then the dedicated person in charge recommended me to apply for Erasmus+ since it would be more flexible for



date modification during the whole internship period especially when you want to work longer, the exact amount is calculated based on the mobility period.

Accommodation

Summer is the high season in Malta, therefore the price of accommodation is often higher than usual. Also, Malta in summer is with unbearable heat. Therefore, make sure that the place you live will be equipped with air conditioning or at least a fan. I originally planned to book the accommodation via airbnb, however, the price was much more expensive than I expected even in a twin or triple shared room. Thus, I contacted the host institution for accommodation possibilities. They provided some options, such as their self-catering apartment close to the school, half board (breakfast and dinner) and full board (breakfast, lunch and dinner) in a host family either in a twin or multiple shared room or separate single room with personal supplement. At the same time, they also provide star-rated accommodation close to the bay view, depending on what kind of experience you want from them. Considering that I will stay here for almost three months, I chose the economical option - half board shared room in a host family, which calculated per month is less than 800 euro includes food and weekly cleanliness. Fortunately, due to the impact of the epidemic and the Malta government's vaccination policy for entry led to a significant reduction in the number of students, therefore, in the past few months, I have basically lived alone in a shared room. And even luckier, I was assigned to the satellite city Sliema, where is less than 100m from the sea and the other side connects to the St. Julian area, which is less than 1km away from where I lived. In addition, my colleague told me that through QuickLets, a local real estate agency, one can also gain the housing information.

Internship & Traineeship Program

The entire internship program covers many trainings in different areas, ranging from basic reception duties to other administrative tasks. The daily operation tasks included assist in welcoming and registering new students and handling students issues at school. During the period of covid-19, many hygiene measures have been adopted. There was a bottle of hand sanitizer at the door of the classroom on each floor. Students who arrived every day have to wear masks and register at front desk, their temperature were to be measured. For each new student, a welcome pack is to be distributed while they were registering. After they've filled the student form, I brought them downstairs for taking photos for student ID and guided them to the



classroom. Distributing textbook materials was also one of the tasks. On each Friday, certificates would be issued for students who have finished their courses before they left, together with the deposit refund for the apartment. At the same time, preparing the welcome pack for the new students in the coming week. Sometimes, they would have CFA exam on Friday afternoon, so I would assist my British colleague B to arrange the examination room and check the computer hardware facilities in advance.

Daily office work included using printer, laminator correctly. Telephone customer service at front desk was also an important part. Everyday various of calls from students, agents, host families would be received. Different calling enquiries were to be parked and then forwarded to colleagues according their Extension number respectively. Then was to check updated email from the school system. On the other hand, I also maintained the normal operation of their social media business suites to respond to customer inquiries every day, which I was mostly interested in. In addition, it is also worth mentioning here was to use their internal ClassNet system. Within this system, I've learned how to assist colleagues from the booking department to check for the booking details, flight and transfer information, together with how to entry and fill data into the system, and how to export data to generate invoice.

On the 14th July, the maltase government issued the emergency decree, requiring that only tourists who are fully vaccinated are allowed to enter the island due to the sudden high infection rate. Meanwhile, all English language schools have to been shut down until further notice. The school took immediate action on this, and all courses were converted to online courses. During this period, I helped the teaching department to check each student's information especially email address, sending emails to notify them with zoom-link and timetable. On the other hand, what I have done during this special period every day were to assist colleagues handling calls and emails from students or agencies who requested to withdraw their already booked courses and trips. I was busy up to my for this sudden chaos. Two weeks later, the school was permitted to reopen, but only fully vaccinated students would be accepted. The number of students has been greatly reduced, some adjustments have been made to daily routine, more often the time was to help to sort out and archive previous office documents. During that period, the British manager D asked me to be responsible for a market research project, which aiming at the DACH market, seeking for agency collaboration possibilities related to "Sprachreisen (Study Tour)".

In general, the whole team treated me well with patience. The overall working atmosphere was relatively relaxed and chill. In regard to English language skill, I only chatted



with British or Irish colleagues to improve my English. Now and then, I would also take the opportunity to talk with those English teacher directly for better practicing oral English because other working staffs spoke Maltese English which was horrible to get used to that pronunciation.

Everyday Life and Leisure

The public transportation card in Malta called Tallinja Card, which was cheap and easy to get around the island. However, it is also highly recommended to take the ferry to Valletta. The round-trip fare is less than 3 euros, and the ferry came from Silema to Valletta every 30 minutes, which the whole journey took less than ten minutes. I lived in the satellite city of Sliema and the location of my internship is in Gzira, where it was within 1km away from my host family's home, I only walked to the school within 15 minutes, so I did not buy any monthly transport card during the time. However, here are indeed lots of electric scooters parked on the roadside, but it is not recommended to use them quite often because the streets in Malta are quite narrow and bidirectional. Roads in general are in bad conditions, people who drive motorcycles often have very loud and harsh noises; also, Malta, as the car-loving island, is one of the most traffic congested places in Europe. But most of the time I did not quite understand the traffic lights, I have even witnessed cars and trucks came from four directions simultaneously so I was very afraid of crossing the streets. In addition, be sure to bring enough cash with you or at least you have a credit card, because it is quite inconvenient to withdraw money in Malta. Also, never use euronet ATM, and the currency exchange rate and fees varies from city to city, but they're never fair and it is a blatant travel scam. But, the local people have their payment app called Revolut, which is very similar to N26 bank. You can use this to pay online, or you can use this to withdraw money from the local bank for free.

Malta is an archipelago that consists of three islands: main island Malta, Gozo and Comino. Since I lived in Silema, the beaches I often went to were Sliema Promenade in Sliema and Spinola Bay in St'Julian, where those two areas were often full of tourists. Bars, cafés and restaurants were also all around. Most cafés offer classic English breakfast with fare price, and the local Imbiss always has basic ham and cheese toast. If you want to taste the local breakfast, then Maltese ftira, which was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, and their milk tea are meant to be necessary. In addition, you can also eat authentic Sicilian cuisine in Malta. The Maltese are very hospitable, good-natured, friendly especially I have interacted quite closely with my landlord's family. Their family was very enthusiastic, living with two well-



behaved puppies and a lovely granddaughter. I still remembered that day of my birthday, the landlord's family drove me to the local beach for dinner. I was very touched and felt thankful for this. They treated me very well and invited me every time when they barbecued at home, always serving me with a large portion.

During my internship, my French colleague J and I became good friends. We often went to the beach together after work and also to the local fish market Marsaxlokk on Sunday. Moreover, what impressed me the most was the group of students from Paris. They were very enthusiastic and unrestrained, we danced together with chill music at the beach from dusk till midnight, cliff jumping at Sliema Chalet and swimming in the artificial pool.

Apart from work, I spent plenty of spare time exploring Malta. In general, I would go to the beach to sunbathe in the sun and enjoy the sea breeze and spot the sunset. Sometimes, I also played squash in the local sports center. During weekends, I usually took public transportation to the farther beach, like Għajn Tuffieħa Bay, where there was a surfing school. For Erasmus students, I got 25% discounts. Also, they provided stand-up paddle group courses and tours to explore cave and amazing corner of Malta. The less visited Southeast part of Malta is home to some of the islands' most extraordinary sites, which should definitely make it onto the 'must-see' list for tourists. One of these locations was none other than the magnificent - Blue Grotto. The Blue Grotto is a complex of seven caves found along the southern coast of the island, right across from the little islet of Filfla, and less than a kilometre west of Wied iż-Żurrieq. However, it was a pity that the waves were too big on the day I went, so the boat tour was no longer available, so I couldn't witness the spectacularity of the Blue Grotto facing the open sea.

Although I am not a person who is interested in history, still I went sightseeing in some historical places. Sliema is right across the harbour from Valletta, and I caught my first glimpse of Valletta's golden rooftops shining in the evening sun from the Sliema waterfront. The new City Gate is a good place to start the visit to Valletta. This gate is the fifth on the site and replaced one built in the 1960s designed by Renzo Piano, who also designed the Maltese Parliament building next door, as well as the Shard in London. To be precise, the buildings around composed of four parts: the Valletta City Gate and site, an open-air theater "machine," a Parliament building, and landscaped space. Going up through the tunnel, on the west side of the City Gate is the public garden "Hastings Garden". What can't be missed in Valletta is the "Saluting Battery", which was mainly used for firing ceremonial gun salutes and signals, but it also saw military use during the World War II. It is embedded in Upper Barrakka Gardens. Along with the Lower Barrakka Gardens in the same city, they offer a panoramic view of



the Grand Harbour. If you are a yacht lover, then you must go to three cities especially the Birgu area, Camper & Nicholsons Grand Harbour Marina.

My landlord told me that I should go to Mdina, where Mdina still remained the centre of the Maltese nobility and religious authorities. In addition, the Mdina Gate, also known as Vilhena Gate, is the main entrance into the ancient walled city of Mdina. This medieval egress, which is reached by crossing an arched moat bridge, makes its Game of Thrones debut in *Lord Snow*. Actually, I didn't stay in Mdina for too long, instead, I took the bus to Dingli cliff later on that day. It is famous for gigantic cliffs overseeing the beautiful Mediterranean sea, which offers a true experience of wild nature, something which is not so common in cluttered Malta. Dingli actually is a village sits in a unique spot where on the one side there's the unending sea, and on the inner side is a beautiful old town with old townhouses. As I planned to watch the sunset, however, it was already afternoon on that day, the sky was grey and the wind was quite strong. Therefore, there were only cliffs, open sea and especially at a relatively high altitude, I couldn't expect anything less.

Malta has the oldest temples in the world called Ħaġar Qim in Qrendi, which are megalithic temples. Although small in size, but Malta is home to those oldest free-standing structures in the world - older than Stonehenge and the Great Egyptian Pyramids. And from the back of Mnajdra Temple, one can vaguely see Filfla Island. The companion told me that here is very close to Tunisia. Later on, I was with my companion followed the downhill road towards the open sea. There was a Għar Ħanex, a mini version of "Azure Window". I would like to say though, that is not as easily accessible as the other sites I usually went to. We have climbed quite a steep hill and I often have to stagger forward in a way of 'sit on the bum'. I went down just few meters on the right from the memorial, as there seemed to be the way, but when I climbed back up I came up exactly behind the memorial, so there are definitely at least two way to get there. I have to say that it was one of the most unforgettable experience I have had for the whole stay.

What I must mention here is the place Rotunda of Mosta, which is a Roman Catholic parish church located in Mosta area of Malta. The design of the present church is based on the Pantheon in Rome and has the third largest unsupported dome in the world. The church narrowly avoided destruction during the World War II when a German aerial bomb pierced the dome and fell into the church during Mass, but failed to explode. Therefore, this event was interpreted by the Maltese as a miracle. The Interior of the rotunda is exquisite. Colors of the



main altar are fabulous. But due to limited time and weather, I did not go to Gozo and Comino. I heard from my landlord that these two islands are really worth exploring.

Overall, the stay in Malta was pleasant. On the one hand, I have gained a certain amount of work experience, involving to the multilingual work environment. What's more, when I was away for the mobility, what I felt most was that the German side was much more well-organized and meticulous comparing to my maltase colleagues, no matter from some agency I was indirectly contacted with or German students to the support and monitor from Student und Arbeitsmarkt. I would say, all these makes me grow. On the other hand, without doubt, the natural scenery of the Malta island, sun, and beaches make me linger.