

Jo (BA English Language (Work Place))

For my Erasmus Work Placement year, I had already decided that I wanted to go to Berlin even before I started at Leeds! This was my main priority, with the placement being secondary, so I think I was very lucky in getting a fantastic internship at Bombardier Transportation, which has its headquarters in Berlin.

I wanted to talk about my process of finding a placement. I used many job sites specifically for Berlin (because I only wanted to go here) and found <http://www.unicum.de>, <http://www.creative-city-berlin.de/en/> and <http://berlinstartupjobs.com> to be the most useful. Berlin Startup Jobs advertises only internships in English, so that may be useful for some non-language students. The Berlin city website also has a list of corporate companies that are in Berlin, which could be good for finding jobs. Bombardier is a big corporate company, which made the application process much easier, as well as arriving there and having lots of forms to fill in and sort out.

It is extremely tedious looking for placements, writing applications, sending them off and being rejected over and over again. To make this process as painless as possible, I collected as many advertisements for internships off these sites as possible and then split them into 'A' and 'B' groups.

Group A consisted of 10 internship advertisements that I would be really happy to have (1 was for Universal Music, for example), so for these I spent quite a few hours on my application, to make sure that it was as good as it could be. Group B had about 20-30 internship advertisements and were placements that I would feel pleased to have, but wasn't all that excited about. For these, I used a fairly generic CV and cover letter, and spent about 20-30 minutes on each application. All I did was have a quick look over the website and then wrote a sentence or two specific to the company. Other than that, all my applications were basically the same.

I started applying in mid December 2012 and it took me till May 2014 to get two offers (I got another offer from a start-up called Glossy Box). I had sent out 32 applications by that point. I say it took me about 5 months to get something, but I honestly wasn't working on it everyday! I probably sent 2 out in December and then had a panicky blast over February – March. I had my interview with Bombardier at the end of April and then was offered the internship about 3 weeks later.

I'm lucky as my cousin lives in Berlin and very kindly let me stay with her for the first month while I sorted out my flat for the year, which took the pressure off of having to find somewhere to stay as soon as you arrive. She also helped me with getting a phone contract sorted, bank account and registering in Berlin. Sorry I can't give much more help on these things!

Flat-shares are big in Germany and I wanted to live with other people, so I used the website <http://www.wg-gesucht.de> to find the flat I'm in now. Again, I was very, very lucky in finding really wonderful flat-mates.

For finding a flat, I used the same method for finding an internship. The rejection from people off this website is intense and made me question my decency as a human being, but it's just all about luck really and playing the numbers game. And actually, going to WG 'castings' for a room is a good way to meet other people new to Berlin and desperate for somewhere to stay...

I'll finish by saying that it's all worth it – all the effort in finding a job, finding a flat, finding friends, being at the end of so very much rejection. At this point in my life, it's been the best and probably most important years. Berlin is amazing, my internship was fantastic, my new friends are wonderful and I've had the chance to travel in Europe as well!



NYE in Berlin