



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

*“Home may be  
most certainly am not.”*

*the same but I*



Modern Languages

**GERMAN  
YEAR ABROAD**

## GERMAN at SWANSEA UNIVERSITY: STUDIUM mit (WELT)AUSSICHT

All our modern languages degrees combine both language and cultural learning in the first and second years before our students embark on a year abroad either studying or working in a country of their chosen language. There is plenty of support from the team here at Swansea University for your intercalary year. We work closely with our European partner universities if you choose to study in Germany, and there is additional support from the British Council if you would like to join their English Language Assistants programme and work at a German or Austrian school teaching English as a foreign language. We also support students wishing to do a work placement in a German organisation:

### Year Abroad Options

#### (1) Study Placement at a German partner university

##### John-Henry Rogers

BA German

Mannheim University

Pictured in the centre with Mannheim University's International Football Team



#### (2) Work Placement as an British Council English Language Assistant

##### Shane Richards

BA German

BC Teaching Assistant Cologne, Germany



### (3) Work Placement in a German or Austrian organisation



**Rob Stevenson**

BA German

Work Placement

Face-to-Face Marketing VM3

Fuhrpark Porsche Driving Experience

Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft

Picture on the right: with **German Lecturer Ute Keller-Jenkins** during a pastoral visit in Germany



We pride ourselves on the pastoral care which we offer to our students during their period of study both at Swansea University and during their study abroad. Students are allocated a Personal Tutor throughout their time at Swansea University. During the Year Abroad they will receive additional advice and support from Swansea University's Go Global Team and a dedicated Year Abroad Tutor who will keep in touch and monitor their progress.



**Laura Hunt** (second from right)

BA German

Work Placement

Leinhäuser Language Services GmbH, Unterhaching near Munich

After graduating Laura started her professional career as a project manager, translator, editor and copywriter for Leinhäuser Language Services GmbH.



## Partner Universities

### Universität Augsburg

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### Universität Bamberg

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### Universität Mannheim

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Web <http://www.uni-mannheim.de/io/internationale/austauschstudierende/index.html>

#### Maria Kotoula

BA German  
Mannheim University  
Pictured in front of the university building



### Universität Regensburg

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Email [international.exchange-student@ur.de](mailto:international.exchange-student@ur.de)  
Web <http://www.uni-regensburg.de/ur-international/international-office/incomings/index.html>



**Tara Power** (pictured in the centre)  
BA German  
Regensburg University

## Universität Würzburg

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Bayerische Julius-Maximilians-Universität  
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**Hayley Briars** (pictured on the left)  
BA German  
Regensburg University  
After graduating she started her career as an account specialist, working at Burberry's headquarters in London.



Hayley on a trip to Bonn with a group of Erasmus students



**Cara Bebbington** (third from right)  
BA German  
Würzburg University  
Picturing Cara during a trip to Brussels in her role as European Ambassador for Würzburg University  
Read more about Cara's year abroad on her blog:  
<http://ayearinwuerzburg.blogspot.co.uk/>

For more info on all Swansea University exchange partners please visit our **interactive map**:  
<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/interactive-map/#>

## Year Abroad and Employability

The Year Abroad offers many challenges and rewards: Students become fluent in their chosen language and gain valuable experiences to enhance their employability. In today's highly competitive job market employers tend to favour applicants with a profile combining both sound academic achievements *and* a range of other highly sought after skills and characteristics:

- 🇪🇺 Communication skills
  - 🇪🇺 Cultural sensitivity
  - 🇪🇺 Willingness to travel
  - 🇪🇺 Organisation skills
  - 🇪🇺 Problem solving skills
  - 🇪🇺 Self-management skills
  - 🇪🇺 Leadership skills
- } self-motivation  
determination/ resilience

The Year Abroad will offer plenty of opportunities to develop these skills further by

- 🇪🇺 Adapting to a different culture hence increasing cultural awareness
- 🇪🇺 Adapting to a different academic culture/ teaching style
- 🇪🇺 Increasing students' confidence by learning to handle difficult situations and unfamiliar surroundings
- 🇪🇺 Building up global contacts

### What former graduates say

**Tom Low**  
BA German Studies

*"After graduating with a first class degree in German Studies (including Spanish language) I decided to move to Madrid and develop my passion for language and culture even further. I spent two rewarding years at a primary school in the suburbs of Madrid, where I was fortunate to work with wonderful pupils. My passion for learning languages developed very quickly into a passion for teaching languages. After two successful years in Madrid, I completed my PGCE back home in Wales before moving back to Spain to take up a position as a German teacher at a British School in Alicante.*

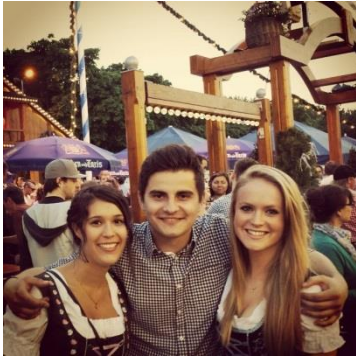
*Never will I forget my experience at Swansea University. I feel extremely fortunate to have received such an outstanding education by the staff in the German and Spanish Department. The friendships I formed both at Swansea University and from my Erasmus year at Mannheim University in Germany remain strong to this day. My experience at Swansea University opened many doors to my career, something which I forever appreciate."*

## Year Abroad Essays

The following are year abroad reports written by Frances Graham studying at Regensburg University, Daniel Bryan who worked as a teaching assistant in Kitzbühel (Austria), and Michael Evershed who spent a semester studying at Reutlingen (Baden-Württemberg) before taking up a placement with Bosch near Stuttgart. Hopefully their stories will be a real encouragement for *your* intercalary experience.

### Frances Graham (BA German)

#### ***Study Placement at Regensburg University; pictured on the right, at the Regensburger Dult***



As I said goodbye to my family all I could think was how I didn't want to be leaving. Leaving behind my friends, family, boyfriend, and a fantastic time at Swansea. Now when I think back to this I cannot believe I didn't want to come here for it has been the best year of my life. I remember my mother telling me how lucky I was to be going to live in Germany and so many people saying how, when it came to the end of my year abroad, I wouldn't want to leave Germany either. And how right they all were! Arriving here in Regensburg you cannot help but be blown away at how beautiful it is and still, after a year, I catch myself staring at the same views in awe, as if it's the first time I've laid eyes on it. Naturally, arriving in a foreign country not knowing a soul is a terrifying thing, but in reality it really wasn't so bad. Once you have sorted out the administration and have your accommodation, internet, mobile and everything up and running, you focus your energies on meeting all the new and

exciting people around you. You become excited at the prospect of all the wonderful experiences you will gain, such as travelling and simply living in the amazing historical town of Regensburg!

Living here and attending Regensburg University has helped an incredible amount with my language skills - living in the country is definitely the best way to learn the language. I have used German every single day and even when you don't realise it, you are learning subconsciously (just from shopping or adverts etc). My German as a foreign language course has also helped me tremendously, having signed up for modules focusing on specific skills, such as listening, speaking and writing. This has helped me really understand and pick up on phrases when someone is speaking fluent German, and I have also been taught how to prepare successful presentations, and even how to format a job application and CV for Germany.

Having moved here at the beginning of September I have been able to enjoy an entire year of living here and experiencing the German culture. With the Regensburger Dult and the Oktoberfest I was able to invest in a Dirndl and delve into the fantastic tradition, meeting many Bavarians and learning more about their culture. I feel I have really adapted to living here, embracing the local cuisine and also taking advantage of the fantastic Bayernticket and travelling all over Bavaria, including Bamberg, Nuremberg, Munich and Augsburg. However, I could not be more delighted with having lived here in Regensburg. The beauty of this city, the wealth of history and the vibrant atmosphere is unmatched. As a Classical Civilisation student, I took great delight in discovering the ruins of the Roman legionary camp, but also just exploring the medieval cobbled roads and the vast amount of beautiful churches and architecture. Regensburg is such a beautiful medieval town, yet so full of energy with exciting events most weekends - an ideal place for a student.

My most valued experience this year is the people I have had the pleasure of meeting. Before coming on my year abroad most of my friends were British, but now I have an array of friends dotted all over the world. It has taught me the importance of understanding different cultures, but also how no matter how different someone's background is you always find common ground and it makes for an exciting and interesting friendship. We have shared amazing things together, especially this summer term which went beyond my expectations. I will always remember these scorching hot days, getting our bikes and cycling to a local lake to spend the day there, enjoying barbecues overlooking the impressive Regensburger Dom and simply sitting on Bismarkplatz every warm summer's evening, surrounded by students, all enjoying ice cream or beer. The students over here certainly have a great way of life, and I will miss their outlook on life - being closer with nature, casual drinking rather than binge and the importance of good conversation with friends.

Regensburg is in a super location for travelling, and not only have I travelled around Bavaria, I also travelled to Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna and Prague. This can all be done with minimum costs and the ease of visiting these wonderful cities all on the doorstep will certainly be missed. However, with my network of friends from across the world I know travelling in the future will be made easier, with the prospect of travelling to Korea to stay with a friend and also to Croatia. Living over here and studying here has certainly made me realise I would love to live and work in Germany in the future. I have learned so much here on my year abroad and not only have my language skills improved I also feel stronger and more confident in myself as a person. I know now that I can face up to challenges and overcome them and fend for myself.

My year abroad has definitely been the best thing that I have done so far in my life and I will treasure the memories and experience forever.

### Daniel Bryan (German)



## **Teaching Assistantship in Kitzbühel, Austria (Tirol)**

My year abroad surpassed any expectations I had, it was the greatest experience I have had so far.



Although I was originally born in Austria and had already completed a year abroad at the age of 16, where I attended a College in Austria, nothing could have prepared me for the challenges that I was to face in the forthcoming year. A month before I left to embark on what was to be my biggest challenge so far I felt a wide range of emotions, a mixture between excitement and nervousness. I had the daunting task of living alone in my apartment for the majority of the year, which was a massive difference in comparison to my first and second year of University where I lived with 9 other students. These mixed emotions soon all turned into excitement the moment I landed into Salzburg airport and realised the endless amounts of opportunities that were going to be available to me for the duration of my work placement.

The most difficult part I found as a Teaching Assistant was the initial period of settling into my new home, which is a lot difference in comparison to those who opted to study at a University for their Year Abroad. Having been placed into a small town in Austria I had to be motivated and proactive in order to integrate myself into the community, however I quickly found that everyone was very friendly and often greeted each other on the street with “Grüß di (Grüß Gott) or Morgen (Guten Morgen)”, which I found to be both enlightening and refreshing as I would be lucky to even make eye contact with some of the locals in my home town, let alone greet them. The training week which is

compulsory for all English Assistants in Austria to attend gives you the chance to meet all the English Assistants from all over Austria and is arguable a week similar to “Introduction Week at University i.e. Freshers”. Although you do spend the day ‘learning’ with others, it is more of a chance for you to gain contacts with Assistants from all over Austria in order to settle your nerves of not knowing anyone. One of the first things I did when I arrived in Austria was joining a local rugby team, which was full of a wide range of nationalities from all over the world and gave me the opportunity to travel through the whole of Austria and surrounding countries. I also decided to attend evening classes in order to learn Czech and Romanian as a large amount of workers in Kitzbühel were from these countries.

The first weeks had passed and I was well settled into my new way of life, although the 6am starts in the school were still a shock to my system – school in Austria starts a lot earlier, however they also finish a lot earlier too! I was required to work Wednesday – Friday for a maximum of 13 hours a week starting at 6am and often finishing before 11am. As part of my role as an English Assistant within the school I organised a number of activities for the students to get involved in. For the older classes, which ranged from 16 to 22 years old I held a “Stammtisch” once a month where they would have the opportunity to communicate with other native English speakers over a few beers, whereas for the younger classes, which ranged from 14 to 16 years old I held conversational classes afterschool where they often took part in games that I prepared.

November had quickly arrived and so did the snow which only meant one thing, skiing! The small town, which was almost empty suddenly erupted with every bar, restaurant and hotel reopening which completely changed the town with thousands of tourists arriving every week. I was luckily enough to live a two minute walk away from the ski lifts in one of the most famous ski areas in Austria, which allowed me to go skiing every day from November until May. Throughout winter I worked as a ski instructor and in a night club which gave me the chance to further my language capabilities and provide me with memories that I would never forget.

Kitzbühel held host to a number of festivals and events throughout the year, most notably the “Hahnenkamm Ski Race” which is a world famous downhill skiing race that attracts over 100,000 people over a weekend. The “Hahnenkamm Ski Race” is known to be the most dangerous race in the Ski World Cup. The downhill race is an incredibly prestigious challenge, because the notorious runway “Streif” is thought to be one of the steepest slopes worldwide. The race starts with a downhill gradient of 50% but the peak of danger is waiting in the so called “Mausefalle” (mice trap) with an 85% gradient! Out of 22 racers, 7 skiers did not manage to compete the race with a number being seriously injured. Although I managed to ski down the “Streif” I was nowhere near as quick as the racers, which managed to complete the race in just under 4 minutes.

It is incredibly difficult to put your entire ERASMUS experience into words, it is something that you have to just experience yourself. Overall I would highly recommended this unforgettable and invaluable experience, not only for improving your language skills but to experience a completely different culture which you simply cannot learn from just being in a classroom. My year abroad allowed me to live independently completely differently as to how I have lived at University and I honestly think one of the most difficult things I face is reintegrating myself back as a student for my final year at Swansea University. The experience itself gave me the chance to get to know the world of world, both the highs and lows and the financial rewards. I feel like the experience has prepared me for life after University.



## Michael Evershed (BA German)

### *Study Placement at Reutlingen University and Internship with Bosch GmbH, Leinfelden*



'Living abroad can be a daunting but equally rewarding experience'- I had heard this phrase many times before my year abroad started, and was keen to see what rewards I would earn from it. Writing at the end of my sensational German year, the answer was clear: personal skills, friends from different cultures and backgrounds, a German work placement, a special appreciation for German culture and of course, a much better understanding of German!

To begin with, it was a daunting experience, starting life as a resident of Reutlingen. After a rusty start from a summer with little German exposure, I slowly captured my past knowledge of the language

and then set about applying it. Nevertheless I was still faced with some obstacles: washing and drying machine issues, different

food and drink, and endless mountains of paperwork.

However, these hurdles kick-started my problem solving skills from my first week in Germany. Teaming up with early, and to this day, strong friends, we shared problems and helped each other, such as 'team' visits to the international office. It started to change though, when I realised that I was enjoying my time. One memorable moment was returning back from work on the train, from Stuttgart. The sun was setting behind the forest, and as we passed the Mercedes Benz factory, the sun caught the spinning 3 pointed star making it glow orange. To top it all, I was listening to the local radio- Ivy Quainoo's new single 'Do You Like What You See?' started to play. I agreed with Ivy- I did like what I could see! At the time I felt like a resident enjoying the local German culture, discovering a personal appreciation for it.

As for the location, I had never visited the south before- I discovered it is awash with industries, culture, beautiful forests and stunning scenery. Reutlingen itself is the perfect blend- it is not an industrial metropolis that goes on for miles but a warm, friendly and practical town. There is plenty of choice, activities and places to explore. From classical German cobbled streets, to the outdoor swimming pool, and nearby mountain crests just outside the centre, offering stunning panoramic views of the region.

After my first month, it was time to don the Lederhosen and fix a feather to my hat for the world famous Oktoberfest with friends. We arrived to the sights, sounds and smells of good atmosphere: massive beer mugs, a Bavarian Oompah band and freshly baked brezels. I was amazed at how quickly we had organised this unique opportunity to go, by ourselves. This was our personal excursion- from costs per person to navigating through Munich's busy streets, we had it covered! Initiating your independence in a foreign country is a good example. Sharing and developing it with help from friends is another!

As my studies progressed, I felt I was making steady, useful progress. I had also decided to take French classes to keep my second language of study ticking over. I was the only international student in the class, yet warmly welcomed by the other German students. For the extra language juggling skills, the lecturer would sometimes explain a French grammatical rule in German. Nevertheless, I was very proud of myself when I acquired a high mark for the overall assessment at the end of the semester. I had never used German and French together like this, using one language to assist the other, to solve a problem- in this case grammar!

Semester one was flying by and I needed to turn my attention to semester two- I wanted to aim for a work placement in a German company. Would it really be possible for an English student to win a position in a German company, when facing the grilling during an interview? And do the entire application process in a foreign language? Encouraged by my Year Abroad Co-ordinator I accepted my mission. After enduring multiple, stressful interviews in German, pushing my language skills to the max, (I had never even had an interview in my mother tongue language before!) I was luckily awarded a placement at Robert Bosch GmbH in Leinfelden. This was a big step for me, on a personal level. I was very proud of myself, knowing that I had finally found a position at a company who wanted me...and the beauty of it all? I had done the whole process in German, without a word of English- I had never, ever imagined that my year abroad would take me this far!

When I started my work in the sales department of Bosch power tools I knew that this was the real world of work- clients dealing with end customers and large sums of money. Not only representing the universities of Reutlingen and Swansea, and indeed the United Kingdom as a whole, I did not want to let the side down.

My first adventure began with the telephone. Clients from Germany, Austria or Switzerland could call us requiring delivery dates and product advice. Knowing the vocabulary of the products was just the start! When my phone inevitably rang I could feel the whole office watching me - silence ensued as I took the call - a Swiss customer thankfully speaking German which I understood, asking if a particular item was in stock. After a frantic flick through a catalogue and some nifty button-pressing on the database, I finally answered with a simple 'yes'. After saying goodbye, I was



hot, flushed with success and thought 'one down...many to go- I can do this!' Yet my linguistic skills began to take off, dramatically. From small talk in German over lunch- describing my breakfast and the rush hour's traffic jam- I was surrounded by German all day until I came home exhausted! Clients on the phone did not always speak in 'Hochdeutsch' German but their local dialect instead. In the first month I could not understand them, but after developing a strategy of jotting down essential information, I slowly began to gain confidence on the phone. I began to develop problem solving skills on a whole new level. Business is challenging- I could see that even with my mature colleagues, yet at the end of the tunnel there is usually some light. Just like a patient detective, you have to solve a puzzle to find the answer, and I employed this strategy from the start to the end of my placement.

My year abroad has allowed me to embark on two unique experiences: the first, studying as an Erasmus student, embarking on amazing excursions around the country with friends from around the world: from the roaring racetrack at Le Mans 24 hours, to a tasty ice cream parlour in Heidelberg. The second, getting a taste of the world of work- its highs, lows and rewards. I now believe I have a better idea of where I would like to go in life, and the confidence to return to live and work in Germany.

In short, your Erasmus year begins as a blank canvas: by the end, you will take home a masterpiece of experiences to treasure, forever.

*Gute Reise und viel Spaß!*



*We look forward to welcoming you here at Swansea University!*

For further information contact Year Abroad Coordinator **Ute Keller-Jenkins**

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