

Summary:

The Vietnamese Mai has just arrived in Augsburg. In this podcast she tells us, why she has decided to study at the University of Augsburg. As she is not yet familiar with the local campus, her German friends are about to give her some tips for her future studies here. Of course, the staff of the university is also here to help, and therefore it is good to get some pieces of advice by one of the university's employees.

Narrator: The campus of the University of Augsburg is sure to be one of the most pleasant places to study in Germany. It comes as no surprise, that since the establishment of the University in 1970 the total number of students has been increasing steadily – today more than 16.000 young people study already at the campus in the south of the city. More than 10 percent of the students came from abroad to study here in Germany. Especially for these international students, it often can be difficult, to orient themselves and get along well, right from the beginning. We accompany today Mai, a Vietnamese student at the University of Augsburg. She has spent already 5 months here and has in the meantime managed to settle in quite well.

Mai: Hi, my name is Mai. I come from Vietnam and study in my first semester „German as a Foreign Language“

Narrator: The University of Augsburg has 7 departments, the faculties. It is possible to choose from many different branches of studies, e.g. Economics, Law, Physics, Informatics, History, Sports and Media and Communications and a variety of languages.

Mai: I have chosen „German as a Foreign Language“ as my field of studies, as I have been interested in German language and culture already at home in Vietnam. Now, I am on my way to the cafeteria as I will be meeting my friends there.

Narrator: The „old“cafeteria is near the great auditory, which is situated in the centre of the campus. For many students it is the favourite place to eat, talk about shared projects and to have a nice chat while having a cup of coffee.

Mai: Hi Leila.

Leila: Hi Mai!

Mai: Have you been waiting for a long time?

Leila: No, no ... I have just arrived a minute ago. Now, it is only Paul who has not yet made it up here. ... Ah, there you are!

Narrator: May, Leila and Paul first met at the preparatory course for foreign students. The course always takes place before the start of the winter semester. It should help foreign students who are new to Augsburg, to find their way in their new environment. The course is part of the project "Welcome to Augsburg's universities" - a joint project of the City of Augsburg, University of Augsburg and the

Studentenwerk, Augsburg Student Service Organization. The goals of the initiative, explains to us Klaus Prem, head of the Public Relations Department of the University of Augsburg.

Klaus Prem: It might be known, that the University of Augsburg was not only participant but also initiator of this „Welcome“-Project. I believe that we are one of the few if not the only university town in Germany with a branch of the local Immigration Authority directly at the campus of the university. This makes it possible for legal tasks and responsibilities of public administration to be cleared and approved in cooperation with employees of the university, e.g. the official residence permit, which is a essential benefit for all internationals who start they studies in Augsburg. Furthermore, thanks to the tuition fees that have been introduces several years ago, our International Office has been massively expanded and especially the area that serves the care of foreign students, has been massively upgraded. This includes specific offers that the International Office organizes in cooperation with the university communities, for example the "International Meeting Place", where foreign students and of course, German students meet several times a semester. And there are other offers: There are, for example, study introductory courses offered by the International Office. All in all, a lot has been done lately to help foreign students to get started.

Narrator: The preparatory course has one more benefit: The participants get to know other international first-semester students. Also experienced students like Paul are there to provide tips on living and studying in Augsburg.

Paul: Hi!...Gee, I am tired after having three lectures in sequence. Right now, I really fancy doing something that has nothing to do with learning...

Leila: Well, firstly , take a seat next to us. And...aren't you going today to the university's sports centre ...to play basketball, right?

Paul: I am going to play handball . But, of course, basketball and many other sports a part of the offer of the sports centre.

Mai: Next semester, I'll most definitely will give it a try, too – I think a fitness class would be cool – I REALLY need to get rid of a few kilos I have gained during this winter – but right now, I am just too busy.

Paul: What have you been doing today? Actually, you had no lectures, right?

Mai: No, but I spent my time learning at the library. In addition, I had to finish my homework for my class in Italian.

Leila: Oh, good you mentioned that! Me too, I got some homework for tomorrow to be prepared, for my class in Chinese.

Paul: Italian, Chinese, I still think it is marvelous, that in the Language Learning Centre we can study so many languages - and even for free! But wait a sec, wasn't your aim when you arrived in Germany to first study the German language?

- Mai: Yes, but the opportunity to learn additional languages is just too cool, isn't it!
- Paul: Good point...By the way, are you getting on well in your classes in German? If you have any difficulties to understand something, I'll be glad to help you!
- Leila: In the German Language Class there are often words I don't understand. But, this is no problem for me. Because: If I would understand everything right from the start, I wouldn't need to study the language anymore..
- Paul: You're right!
- Mai: My German is not good enough yet. Still, as long as I keep on practicing it and as long as I do my homework, it works quite well for me!
- Narrator: Studying abroad can happen to cause problems for the students. Klaus Prem explains where they can find help, if necessary.
- Klaus Prem: First of all, there is the preparatory course for foreign students offered by the International Office, where language and learning techniques are being taught and in addition, all peculiarities of studying in Germany - which are relevant to the study structures different than anywhere else. The participants of this study preparatory course will also create brochures for those who do not participate in this course. Then there is always an Orientation Day for foreign students - a full day, organized by the International Office, where these brochures are handed out and the contents that were taught in this course. If someone faces learning difficulties, it always makes sense, if they go to the Central Student Counseling Service, which have specialized people, too: not just for counseling in the classical sense, but in addition for problems of psychological and learning difficulties and they advise as reasonably as possible. A similar team has of course also the Studentenwerk Augsburg, Augsburg's Student Service Organization, which also offers social and psychological counseling. Otherwise, it is for foreign students never wrong if they ask for advice directly at the International Office, because from there their personal problem can be handled really targeted, and according to the problem situation, they are then - if the International Office cannot offer direct help - further referred to the institutions in charge of and with the ability to solve the particular topic. Potentially very interesting: There is in Augsburg - on the initiative of the University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, the University of Augsburg and the Studentenwerk Augsburg - the so-called association "Faust e.V." - an association for the promotion of foreign students, who therefore, in cases if these students face material shortages, can step in. The association gathers funds through donations or membership fees, which can then be used to help temporarily in case of severe financial difficulties for foreign students.*
- Leila: What is that... do you see the poster over there? Uni Big Band.
- Paul: Right...the Big Band always has interesting projects going on. For example, they were on a concert tour with Anajo, one of Augsburg's well known rock bands. I had the

chance to be there at their final concert here in Augsburg's Municipal Theatre. It was really great!

Leila: Wow, this for sure sounds interesting. In the past, I used to play the trumpet, and I would fancy doing that with the Big Band.

Paul: The Big Band is always looking for new musicians. Just take a look at the website stated on the poster: www.uni-big-band-augsburg.de

Leila: I'm going to do that!

Mai: But first and foremost, the University of Augsburg offers with „German as a Foreign Language“ the field of studies I am interested in. Also, Augsburg is a beautiful city with friendly people, a long and fascinating history dating up to 2000 years back and a great cultural variety. The life here seems to me very enjoyable. In addition, I think it is great, that the university offers so many projects aimed at international students..

Narrator: The University of Augsburg – a pleasant place to study. Not only in the opinion of Mai, but of many other young people you will meet every day at it's campus. And to you, too: a warm and hearty welcome at the University of Augsburg!

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