

MSc. in Politics Economics and Philosophy at the University of Hamburg

Introduction

After graduating from the bachelor programme *Ökonomie a finance* at IES I have decided to pursue a master degree in so called PPE (three letters that were made famous by the bachelor programme at Oxford which started careers of many important people such as David Cameron). This three letters stand for Philosophy, Politics and Economics and the programme combines the three sciences to approach problems from different, but often complementary, perspectives.

Application

The application process is quite simple in an online application tool of the University of Hamburg.

Applicants need to have an English certificate and background in one of the three disciplines.

Assessment is based on of two recommendation letters (20%), motivation letter (20%), grades from your previous studies (50%) and extra 10% for having some additional background in one of the other disciplines.

There is approximately 35 places in the master programme and getting in is quite competitive, however, it is definitely not comparable to “elite” universities and shouldn’t be a problem for a motivated student.

Programme

Programme itself is taught in English and spans over two years with the fourth semester exclusively for writing your thesis. There are no tuition fees, only a semester contribution of around 300€ which contains a pass for public transport. I will not talk about the exact coursework but would like to point out some main advantages of the programme. First, it is definitely the composition of the class.

Approximately half of the people come from various countries, the rest is German. Backgrounds are also mixed – people have really studied different disciplines and come from top universities all over the world. Second, it is a very lively and discussion based programme. Due to the fact that people come from different backgrounds there is rarely a class where students wouldn’t ask plenty of questions or fiercely discuss some pressing issues they have in mind. Third, as a part of the programme you need to complete two interdisciplinary seminars each for 12 ECTSs. These always

deal in depth with certain topic and merge two of the three disciplines together in a rigorous way. I believe that all this is a unique experience which is not to be found in a programme which deals with a single discipline.

There are also drawbacks of this particular programme and perhaps of PPE in general. First, interdisciplinarity comes at a cost. It is not well possible to bring everyone to the same level in all the three discipline and thus some economic classes can sound a bit like repetition to a student coming from economic background and vice versa with other disciplines. This results in going into less depth with all the three subjects. So if you look for a place to apply all the knowledge from the IES math courses you are definitely at a wrong address. Nevertheless, you can always take electives from any of the three faculties and dive a deeper in whatever area you like. Second, Hamburg University is not particularly known to be awesome, there are courses with higher or lower quality and also the facilities are not extraordinary.

To summarise this: it is a great and highly interesting programme (only PPE in Germany as far as I know) with great people on a standard German university.

What can I do with it?

This is always the primary question I hear when I tell anyone what I study and I don't know the answer. Mostly it depends on people's backgrounds. I am an economist and I believe that I have very solid knowledge already from the bachelor. Throughout the master programme I am still an economist but with somewhat broader view and the ability to think in two additional layers and combine them. Most of the people end up in consulting or other related businesses (usually something else than the big three), I am currently working in an almost unrelated field of data science. The programme is not teaching as much technical skills as compared to other programmes IES students like to pursue, however I believe that it gives you a unique way of approaching problems and very high personal development on top of still fairly good economic coursework.

Hamburg as a place to live

Hamburg is a big city (slightly bigger than Prague) and it feels very nice to live in. It is one of the most important harbours in Europe which enriches and defines local culture and brings excitement in form of seeing huge cargo ships and cruisers. It is generally very green, clean and rich. This brings the biggest disadvantage which is the cost of living and housing. Looking for a room in a flat can be very annoying and takes a long time, rent is ranging from 350€ – 500€. I was lucky to receive a place in a student residence and now I only pay 250€, however, waiting list is approximately half year long and you might not end up in your favourite destination. Lunch at the university's canteens costs around

3€, espresso in a café around 1.7€, prices for groceries are fairly similar as in Czech, going out is relatively expensive. Monthly costs for a student are then around 800€ per month without economizing too much. Definitely check out DAAD scholarships in advance, they offer plenty of opportunities to help you finance your studies.

Conclusion

Going interdisciplinary is a great thing and I would be very happy if this helps or perhaps even motivates anyone to go for this or any other similar programme. Please feel free to drop me an email with some additional questions if you are interested!