



Masamichi, Japan

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My name is Masamichi KIJIMA. I was a Graduate School student of FHTE from 2000 to 2002. I introduced the Graduate School and FHTE to Japanese students and engineers on the journal of Japanese automotive society in October '04.

The automotive industry is an international field which has been developing products for the world market. And mainly in Europe, America and Japan, people have fostered their own automotive culture putting their identity into account. Then, in these years, we feel that the large change of the automotive industry's tide affects the engineers working there very much. Therefore it's worth for young automotive engineers to study and experience in overseas. If you are interested in study automotive technology abroad, I recommend this master program in English at a German University of Applied Science.

The city and the University of Applied Science

At first, I explain the city "Esslingen", which may be unknown to the most of Japanese. Unfortunately this city doesn't appear on major tourist guidebooks. This city is located nearby Stuttgart. The town lies in the vineyards valley of the Neckar River. The atmosphere of this city is still the same as in the Middle Ages. Concerning the history of this University, the German name "Fachhochschule Esslingen, Hochschule für Technik" (=FHTE) started as an Engineer School in 1868 as an answer to the rapid industrial growth at that time. Many engineers who graduated from the FHTE started their job at the representative industry of the Stuttgart area, automotive industry, namely Daimler Chrysler AG and Porsche AG. In the field of electronics FHTE has a strong connection with the Robert Bosch GmbH. And there is a leading R&D center of IBM nearby therefore FHTE is regarded as a leading University of Applied Science. The city of Esslingen is not major, but this university is a leading institution of higher education in Germany.

Program content

The FHTE international master program that I joined started in 1999 for students in Germany and all over the world to develop their talents to be well prepared for the international challenge. There are three programs in the Graduate School: Automotive Engineering (MSc/AE), Information Technology and Automation Systems (MSc/IA) and MBA in International Industrial Management. I studied Automotive Engineering in this Graduate School. In my student days, 74 students from 30 countries attended all master programs. The unique point of this master program is, that all lectures are given in English and in intensive terms. MSc/AE and IA last one and a half years, MBA 16 months. Especially MBA usually takes one year, therefore many students applied for the FHTE / MBA.

Concerning the whole schedule of this program, this master course starts in the first week of September. In the first three weeks students have to take part in a German intensive course, then each program starts as regular lectures. The first term "winter semester" ends in January and the second term "summer semester" lasts from March to July. At the end of both semesters final exams have to be taken and marks will be given. After one year of lectures at the campus the master thesis study starts in a company for half a year.

Feature of lectures: besides ordinary university professors' lectures, there are lectures taught by managers from companies like DaimlerChrysler, Bosch, Porsche, etc. The lectures of the managers who work in the developing leading edge of the global giants interested and impressed very much. I think we Japanese should follow this close relationship between universities and companies e.g. internship and master thesis study in a company. Of course, almost all university professors collaborate with the companies and used to work in companies therefore their lectures are a mix of theory and practice.

Master thesis:

Between the winter and summer semester there is one month spring vacation. I was quite pleased with this long vacation but it was not such a luck as I thought. Because during this spring vacation we had to look for the company which was offering a master thesis, German name "Diplomarbeit", starting in August. All students can't get the subject they hope for their master thesis. This is a key point to spend worthwhile study activities. But it's hard for foreign students like me who can't speak German. I could not find a Diplomarbeit soon. Fortunately the automotive electronics department of SIEMENS, "SIEMENS VDO Automotive AG" offered a cooperation to me.

After the summer semester I moved alone from Esslingen to Regensburg in Bavaria state where SIEMENS VDO was located. The SIEMENS staffs welcomed me. The topic offered was a system simulation of an electro-magnetic valve for hydraulic pressure control namely a linear solenoid valve. I had been interested in a linear solenoid valve for a long time therefore I got the best surrounding for my thesis study. However my study never went well at the beginning. I have never been an electronics engineer and the Japanese and the Germans communicated in English therefore many big and small issues came up. But the knowledge taught in FHTE during the former one year helped me a lot. In November, when my studies got back on track, some results could be seen.

When SIEMENS electronics experts heard my results and looked positively surprised, I got really relieved.

I went back to the university and did the "Defense". I have been given an "A" to put a value on my studies content and the presentation. At the end of February we had the graduation ceremony. All students gathered from around Germany and admired each other efforts. The biggest benefit from this study abroad was these friends who I met in this program. They came from Asia, Middle East and so on, where the automobile industry was not advanced, but I realized there were so many students I would never be able to make it up to them. And I couldn't know how to thank for their kindness. If not for the sake of their help, I would have given up this course on the way. The greatest fascination of this program is to see many friends from the all over the world in one place - Germany. I'm heartily looking forward to seeing them sometime and somewhere.

Summary:

It must be appealing for engineers working in an automotive industry to study at the cradle of automobile - Stuttgart. Anyone who soon graduates from university or college can apply for this program, but I recommend it to young engineers who have been working in a company for three or four years like me. The lectures are so nice and it can be a good chance to understand German companies and culture during your Master Thesis. And, on the other hand, you Japanese engineer can enrich the other students and share your experience with other Germans who don't know about Japan.

Source: Esslingen University of Applied Sciences

www.study-guide-bw.de



Baden-Württemberg

The German Southwest.