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ORIGIN**China**

UNIVERSITY**Universität Heidelberg**

STUDY PROGRAMME**M.Sc. Molecular Biosciences**

WEBSITE**www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/biowissenschaften**

When she first came here Yan thought she knew that Germans were punctual, obeyed the rules and always reliably stuck to their appointments. Class was supposed to start at eight o'clock – but no one in sight. «Looking back now, I realize, it shook my worldview. I had never heard of an 'academic quarter, c.t.' before.» Now, six months later, the 26 year old graduate student feels familiar with the habits in Heidelberg. She likes the cozy academic and yet international atmosphere. Everywhere there are people she can ask if she is unsure about anything. Yan and her class mates from China, Malaysia, Germany and the US also spend their free time together. A trip to Cologne, a walk up to the Castle or bicycle rides along the Neckar River – there is a lot to do in Heidelberg.

Yan works in a laboratory where she does calcium imaging to study the function of nuclear calcium. As the essential second message, calcium can transduce the signal to downstream effectors to initiate new protein synthesis. In addition, the calcium in the nucleus is important in activating gene expression in response to exogenous stimuli. Heidelberg's excellent reputation has encouraged her to stay and apply for a PhD position. «Graduates from Heidelberg can count on finding good jobs, I believe,» she says.

Her student job in the lab means that Yan's parents will no longer have to provide financial support and since she has always been a good student she has also received scholarships. «We live in a private apartment downtown, cook for ourselves and also eat in the student mensa. I'm happy that I can lead such an independent life in Heidelberg,» Yan smiles. The work is interesting and the living conditions are relaxed. «I told my friends in China what it is like

studying here in Heidelberg. Now some of them want to come for a post doc.»

Yan seems to be an advertiser herself, a real marketing tool for her degree course in «molecular bioscience». According to the programme's website, Heidelberg is one of the strongholds of neuroscience research in Europe. The working groups at the uni-

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versity in this field gained top rankings internationally. Publications in high-class journals, sponsoring from external sources, and outstanding personalities active in research, contribute to their scientific achievements. Joint ventures of research groups working in fundamental neurobiological research with worldwide operating pharmaceutical companies from the Heidelberg – Mannheim – Ludwigshafen region and with medium-sized biotechnological enterprises link neurobiological research in Heidelberg with its applications.

Yan has also thought of going into industry. But maybe it's a little early to make plans, she has just started her second semester.



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