



 Rapidly acquiring his doctorate was his path to excellence: The Universität Ulm's Graduate Programme in Molecular Medicine was recently funded by the German excellence initiative, and Anton Lebedev from Russia is certain: "No other programme offers such a quick way of obtaining a PhD. Especially if you regard the route from Bachelor and Master to PhD as part of a single programme".

After graduating with a diploma in chemistry from Novosibirsk State University in Russia in 2004, Anton was on the lookout for opportunities to continue his studies in other countries and at other universities. "Doing research in a German speaking country was the obvious next step for me, given that the most prominent institutions in life sciences are concentrated in the triangle of Switzerland, Austria and Germany. Exposure to other academic cultures was no problem for Anton, who is about to earn his PhD this year: "The academic programme is very similar in Germany and Russia. More than 200 years ago the Russian educational system was set up on the Germany model, with some minor local alterations," according to the young 26 year old PhD student.

In Ulm, exactly on the border between Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, Anton Lebedev found the topic he needed for his thesis. The very rare progeria syndrome, which is caused by a gene defect, makes people grow old very fast. Patients rarely reach their twelfth birthday. DFG and EU provide substantial funding for Anton's research to ultimately discover the secret of the disease by studying processes that occur in the cells of these patients. "Professionally, I definitely want to stay in research. Whether in an application-oriented industry job or a position

at the university? I don't know yet. But I am going stay a bit longer in Ulm – my wife still has several semesters of study ahead of her before she receives her PhD," says the young Siberian who has just received a „Doctoral Student Award 2008“ from the International Graduate School in Molecular Medicine.

The International Graduate Programme offers seminars and weekly journal club meetings where scientific publications are discussed and students prepare for the fascinating world of research. "We have to learn how to use proper scientific language – in writing and orally," according to Anton. Regular progress reports complement work in the labs. Our program

*«Universität Ulm may be small,
but everything is under one roof.»*

co-ordinator, Bettina Schulz, and I, as a student representative within the Graduate School, make sure that students all get the information they need; we also organize all kinds of things that are helpful for doing our job.

As the programme is substantially funded by the DFG Excellence Initiative, participants can all stay at any scientific lab – inside or outside Germany – for six months with full coverage of costs: a fantastic possibility to broaden research experience and exchange knowledge.

Find out more about study programmes, research opportunities and life in Baden-Württemberg on www.study-guide-bw.de