

Tatsiana (Tanya) Dudzina, MSc Air Pollution Management and Control

What are you currently doing?

Right after my viva in September 2010 I had the opportunity to take part in an internship at Birmingham City Council. This allowed me to be involved in a daily working routine with the Air Quality Team for about 1.5 months. I have basically learned in practice what I studied theoretically at the University which further helped me to find a full-time job in Environmental Consultancy in Brighton in November 2010. At the moment I work as an Air Quality Consultant doing lots of dispersion modelling and report writing for planning applications and occasional dust monitoring at construction sites. And I am glad that my studying at the University of Birmingham has actually helped a lot in what I do now, providing me with deeper knowledge in Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics and Air Pollution Meteorology to interpret and explain the modelling results, as well as appreciation and application of current UK Air Quality legislation studied within the Air Quality Management module framework. Practical workshops held as part of the course were also very helpful.



How did you find your year in Birmingham?

At the beginning I found living in Birmingham area just stunning when you learn something new every day. And Birmingham itself is an amazing multilingual and multicultural city full of contrasts. Here anyone can find something to indulge in: a shopping area in the city centre and quiet green parks for outdoor activities. As for me, I really enjoyed the jazz night festival in the Winterbourne Botanical Garden this summer. I would definitely recommend it as it is worth visiting and one would never be disappointed.

Do you enjoy studying overseas? Describe how living and studying in the UK is different from your own country and culture?

I enjoyed it a lot! First of all, I would like to emphasise that in the UK universities are more or less independent from the government and the majority of them get funding from external sources which in turn gives them more freedom in development and research strategy. Secondly, the studying process itself is a bit different (i.e. module evaluation, exam structure, etc.) which means a student is required to do a lot of their own research and spend more time reading relevant literature. And the major advantage, in my opinion, is that the way of communication and support between the academic staff and students is very democratic which facilitates and encourages innovation, freedom of views and critical thinking. A student can always get help and advice from the relevant member of staff so that at the end they can feel entirely secure and confident.

How did you find living in the UK? Was it how you expected it to be?

Living and studying abroad is always a fantastic life experience but it also gives you the feeling that you miss something extremely important apart from missing your family and friends of course. Every little thing just reminds you that home is far away, and only new friends and realizing the fact that you are heading to better prospects make life better. In general, life in the UK is fun and full of adventures for international students in every possible way from buying train/bus tickets and renting an apartment to what one actually should do to be able to drive a car in the UK.

How did you settle in as an international student? Have you found the student community here supportive?

I was lucky to have my family settled in the UK before I actually came here, so I didn't have a problem with accommodation, but I know the majority of students do. The best way to solve any problem and get support is to ask for advice at Students' Guild. They usually have a range of offers from officially checked and approved (by the University) landlords. They can also help you with finding a flat mate, upgrading your CV and providing you with a part-time job.

Did you join any student societies or take part in any events?

As an overseas student I was keen to join one of the students society devoted to learning Russian language and culture. As a result I became a member of REES (Russian and East European Society). Here we had a few nights out visiting Birmingham night clubs and held regular Russian film evenings. Also, what I am proud of the most is my personal contribution to one of the student's MSc diploma. She was originally from the UK and studied Political Science and my part was to help her with transcription of the interview (i.e. transferring speech from audio format into text) she had taken earlier in the Crimea about the role of Russian Federation in this autonomous region of the Ukraine. I was really fascinated by the process and incredibly enjoyed it!

Any tips or words of wisdom that you would like to pass on to other international students thinking of coming to study here?

One thing I am sure of is that with diploma from the University of Birmingham you can feel confident in both the national and global job market. You will get everything you need for your bright future and your career plans of Napoleon's scale. The last tip: make use of the Main Library facilities, Barber Institute of Fine Arts and University Career and Employability Centre. And don't forget that you are supported by the International Student Advisory Service (ISAS), they are here to help you.

What are your aspirations for the future?

I would be happy to continue my consultancy job but I am that kind of person who always longs for change and is looking ahead. Thus, in the near future I am planning to pursue my education further. I would really like to do a PhD in Environmental Science which I am intensively working towards. There are plenty of opportunities even for non-EU students. All you need is tenacity, patience and optimism.