

Experience Report, Dubai

I completed an international internship at our HOYER branch in Dubai from 24 June to 12 August 2019.

Bigger, more expensive, better, faster – the first words that occur to me when I think about Dubai. A city of superlatives.

The HOYER office in Dubai is located directly at the airport in the “Dubai Airport Free Zone”, because foreign companies are permitted to establish themselves only in free zones if they cannot show a sponsor (an indigenous company). HOYER is also not allowed to write invoices or issue offers in Dubai. That must take place through a local agent, the Gulf Agency Company. Therefore, the work consists mainly of recording data. There are 14 employees in the office, and they are working in three areas: Sales, Operation and Cost Control.

I started in the Sales team. There I was shown how offers are prepared, and the things to which attention must be paid when doing this. For example I learned that the extra costs that arise in various ports must always be taken into account. The finished offers were then sent to our agent, who then forwarded them to the customers. My second position was in the Operations area. The colleagues monitor all the container activities, e.g. the arrival and departure of Tank Containers, and enter them into the system. A visit to our container depot in Jebel Ali was one of the highlights, although the temperature there was slightly stressful.

Working life was very relaxed. For example, there was Casual Tuesday when everyone came to the office in T-shirts, jeans and trainers. Learning about the different ways of working and cultural customs was a special experience for me. In Dubai, everyone has his or her clearly defined areas of responsibility and is concerned exclusively with his or her duties. There are no handshakes when external visitors are welcomed or when they depart. Waiting until guests take the initiative to express a greeting is considered to be polite. Another novelty for me was that Sunday is a working day. Friday and Saturday are the weekend in Dubai, and are thus not working days. Moreover, the government only announces public holidays two or three days beforehand. Furthermore, one comes into contact with a very large number of different cultures in everyday work, due to the high density of expats and resident international companies. Therefore, a certain degree of sensitivity and understanding for other cultures is very important.

Everyone in the office took care of me really magnificently, and I was able to ask for help at any time. From time to time, work colleagues also invited me for a beer after work. It is normal in Dubai to do more with one's work colleagues after work than is customary here.

While in Dubai, I lived in Bur Dubai, which is close to the airport. However, Bur Dubai is a very poor district by Dubai standards. Even though there is to some extent a lot of poverty in Dubai, the criminality rate is almost zero. No matter where I was, I always felt safe at any time of day. In my hotel apartment, I even occasionally had the opportunity to cook something for myself, but I also used the free time to eat out and thus to learn about new things. My journey to work took about 25 minutes. In the immediate vicinity of my apartment, I was able to board the green Metro line which took me to the office. For me, the only problem in Dubai was the temperature, because we had a constant 45° to 50° Celsius. Walking the shortest distance was agony. Often, the only option was a taxi, which is also relatively inexpensive. I think I paid EUR 7 for a 20-minute ride. However, Dubai itself is very expensive, so one should budget a little more money.

Downtown Dubai and the Marina district impressed me most, because everything is modern, one building is more elegant and higher than another, and there are many expensive cars on the roads. The impression it made was really like something out of a movie.

I can recommend an international internship in Dubai to anyone, and I really had an amazing time!
However, many things work differently.

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