

Master in Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Interview with Pavel Grachev, student of the Master



The Master in Entrepreneurship and Innovation has been launched in 2007 and is the result of the partnership set up between the University of Luxembourg and the Chamber of Commerce of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg through the Luxembourg Business Academy (LBA). The broader objective of the collaboration is to stimulate the creation and development of innovative companies by providing students with an advanced education in the fields of entrepreneurship and the management of technological and organizational change, and by immersing these students into daily business practice through a privileged relationship with a mentor company.

LSC: Dear Mister Grachev, could you please give a quick resume of your career path (origins, educational background, possible past professional experience).

Born in Uzbekistan and grown up in Russia, I am the only representative of a post-USSR country on the programme this year.

I gained my first professional experience while working in a consulting company for Productivity Improvement, being still a student of the Siberian Institute of International Relations (Novosibirsk, Russia).

This experience first sparked my interest in business; I became deeply interested in how business processes work and are organized. Since then, I have been determined to further my career in the field of business, connecting my final thesis to the Regulation of International Economic Activity.

To complete my studies I became increasingly aware that my education in International Relations did not provide me with the basic know-ledge needed to embark on a business related career. I applied for the company KPMG which offered education in Accounting through the opportunity of taking ACCA exams, while putting the knowledge into practice.

Almost two years of working experience with KPMG gave me an excellent overall training in the basic principles of accounting, dealing with different projects in leading companies working in Russia. Having acquired this essential know-ledge in accounting I felt that I needed to shift from dealing mainly with numbers to a more creative environment.

LSC: How did you get to know about the Master “Entrepreneurship & Innovation”? What was your motivation to apply for the MEI?

I was looking for a way to take my career to the next level by gaining a European MA, and I found the MEI during my research for possibilities.

Although KPMG is an international company, its work in Moscow is very Russia-centred and I wanted to extend my knowledge about the internal organization of European businesses. I was particularly interested in working in Europe as a thorough understanding of the organizational structure of European businesses would be of immense value to my potential future activities in Russia, raising levels of efficiency and business organization.

LSC: What are your expectations regarding these studies and what do you think is its added value?

I see the value of the programme in three aspects:

The first aspect would be the international spirit of the programme. Being around people from all over the world broadens my mind. The statement “thinking out of the box”, which is very often pronounced in our auditory, is truly put into practice in the programme.

Secondly, the teachers are professionals with international experience. Many of them are practitioners in the field they teach. This is very important. The teaching style is also different from what I experienced in Russia: it is quite interactive and everybody feels free to ask questions and argue on any matter.

Thirdly, the programme is very efficient in terms of its schedule and one-year organisation. As I already have some professional experience, two years would be too long a break from the profession for me. The course leaders managed to condense a lot of information into the year. Moreover, the opportunity of linking my master thesis to my internship experience in one of the Luxembourgish companies is very appealing to me, as I want to focus my study time on making use of the knowledge I receive.

LSC: What are your impressions of and experiences in Luxembourg since your arrival?

My girlfriend is Luxembourgish. Having been in Luxembourg several times before my studies I learned to appreciate Luxembourg as a multilingual country with a high standard of living and extremely developed business standards.

Since the programme began I have experienced many things: a mild winter (even this year), great wine, great cheese, many cultural events at affordable prices for students. My most valuable experience of Luxembourg which is not dominant

in Russia is the spirit of multiplicity, tolerance, and respect of the individual. There are nice open people in Luxembourg. It is amazing that everybody speaks several languages here!

LSC: What are your future career objectives?

Regarding my aspirations for the future, I believe this MA gives me an invaluable opportunity to open my mind to a business practice that takes into account and is able to utilize a variety of outlooks to be creative and innovative, to develop my own ideas and broaden my theoretical business knowledge. This MA provides me with the possibility to write my thesis in a reputable Multinational Company (Paul Wurth). I hope to potentially start my own business in the future. But for now I would like to stay in Luxembourg, learn Luxembourgish and be a part of a team developing business with Russia.

LSC: Why should other students get interested in Entrepreneurship & Innovation?

Because of the values of the programme I have mentioned and different experiences which they can get living in the heart of Europe – Luxembourg. ■