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Württemberg/ Business Administration and IT/ 1 semester/ 6 months

Declaration of consent: I declare that I give my consent for this feedback report
to be shared with students or published on the website

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1. Preparation of the stay

For my semester abroad I did not do any language preparation as I studied German during highschool and I was hoping that I would still remember some phrases/words. That was not true because when I got to Stuttgart I could not understand anything but it still helped me to know some words that I could read in the bus, on the streets or at the supermarket. I knew some things about the political situation in Germany, general historical facts and all those misconceptions that I wanted to find out if they are true. I don't think any preparation is necessary before going to Stuttgart for one semester, just to make sure you have in order your papers such as european health card, your passport and also have found an accomodation and also remembered to book a time slot with the janitor so you can take the keys from the first day of your arrival.

2. Study in the host country

Compared to our university in Copenhagen, DHBW is much bigger and with many buildings for different fields of studies. The system is pretty similar with what I was used in the first 2.5 years of my studies but the schedule was a shock. I had classes from 8, some days only one class or other days from 8-21.00 only with 1 or 2h lunch break. This only happened to me and a few other exchange students because I had to take 8 courses in order to have the 30 necessary credits to come back to my school with. Some of the classes were hard because there was a lot of information to comprehend in 2 or 3 hours and we had some homeworks for home (fx for the Finance and Investments course I took). The teachers were all really nice, trying to provide us with the most important and useful information, they knew we were exchange students and closed their eyes sometimes if we had 2 courses in the same time for example and we could not make it to one class. Most of my exams were written papers in 1 hour, with different questions. I can say it was different from my school but I liked it this way because you had to learn for every subject and then write the exam and be done with it. Usually, at KEA we have one oral exam and presentation for all the subjects we had that semester. The way they do it at DHBW is more structured, you go to a number of classes and have the exam around one week after you finish taking the classes. I also liked the fact that I had exams starting from October and not all of them at the end of the semester, in 1 or 2 weeks.

3. Stay in the host country

I had a really good experience of living in Stuttgart for a semester. The dorm I was given had a really good location and price (Johannesstrasse 90) but the conditions were not excelent. Being used with living alone in a dorm here in Denmark, it was a shock to share the toilets and showers but I did not let that change my opinion and I adapted fast to it. In the first month I had only one course so it was a good thing that they offered us to take a german class for free and it helped me learn some more German and adapt a bit faster and get into a routine to keep myself busy.

The first week in Germany was only with intro activities such as visiting Mercedes Benz museum, a pot-luck dinner, visiting the TV tower and on Friday a great pubcrawl. As an advice for the first week, try to take the initiative and invite the other students to go for a beer, dinner etc so you get to know each other faster and start creating friendships. The activities from the International Office are not enough but they are a start. You will notice that is harder to get closer to people from some countries but don't let that stop you! That's the magic of an exchange, people are different and getting to know them will be a truly incredible experience.

4. Participation in conferences, workshops etc.

During my semester at DHBW I participated at the mandatory training „Basics of Scientific Working“ and the training „Intercultural Training Germany“, held by Zeina Matar, a wonderful lecturer. The latter offered us great insights and we had some activities which really helped us to get to know each other better and also discuss some preconceptions and facts about Germans and Germany.

5. Hands-on tips

Make friends. Talk. Go out. Explore. Enjoy. This semester is your chance to get to know how it is to live in a different country than yours, get to know people from different countries and even continents, to enjoy the lectures because most of them are good and to travel because Stuttgart is a great location from where you can make it to a lot of countries in a short bus/train ride or flight. At the beginning it will be hard, especially if this is the first time when you move to a new place alone. Take it easy, join the activities and with time you will realize what a great experience it is and how lucky you are. Don't miss too many classes, the professors will accept if you ask to leave once or twice but it's better if you go to all the classes because it will be easier to read for the exams.

6. Personal evaluation of the stay at the host university and in the host country

I had all kind of feelings about my semester in Stuttgart but when I left I was really sad so that must mean that it was a really good experience in the end. I am happy with the classes I took, most of them were useful, I liked the professors of DHBW and all the people I met during my time there. Cannstatter Volksfest was the best party I ever went to and those memories will stay with me for a long time. The friendships I developed in Germany are the best thing that came out of my exchange and I am grateful for this. Enjoy the experience and be open. Wish you a great stay in Stuttgart!