



Alexa Alvarez Barboza

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Contact: alvarezalexa12@gmail.com

Home University: Tecnológico de Monterrey, México.
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After being a student for seven semesters at Tecnológico de Monterrey, I've learned quite a lot about my degree but as I gain more knowledge, I get aware that there are a lot more fields to explore and learn about, since I was in high school, I wanted to have an exchange semester in Germany since I had the opportunity in a summer program from my university to study the German language and Germany history in Berlin which I did some years ago.

Since then, I have really liked the country and all it has to offer, from its history, its culture, language, and industrialization, among others. I really had a good time back in Berlin. When I started my degree, I was constantly checking the exchange offer and how the process was. One advice from my home university is to go on an exchange after your first and a half year, so you are more into your degree and then you have the international experience, having this in mind I wanted to apply for my 5th semester that was in August 2020, and as you know; COVID happened.

Time went really fast and I had almost 2 years of online classes, of course, the exchange programs were canceled due to the worldwide situation and I had to wait until the situation overall was doing better. It was until August 2021 that the study abroad programs were back again, I saw in advance which opportunities in Germany I could apply to, according to the subjects that were a match to my degree syllabus, the number of credits to be assigned with each course and to and other requirements such as the English certificate as you have to have a certain TOEFL score, as the classes are held in English.

I started to filter my choices and as I said before, all of my options were in Germany, as I really wanted to improve my language skills, get into the German lifestyle, the location to travel around Europe, and have a great experience in a different country which was a dream some years ago when I first came. When I read about the offer of DHBW I saw the courses were a good match to my learning agreement and I did research about the city, which I was interested since the beginning because of the industrial sector and the two big automotive industries Porsche and Mercedes Benz,

which I'm interested in as I picture myself in the future working in one of these big companies, and I wanted to know how the lifestyle was.

Finally, around September after I applied to some Universities, I got assigned the opportunity at DHBW, I started to do research about everything and most importantly how to prepare for the Germany VISA paperwork that you have to have in mind that probably will take some time, all of the Host Uni requirements as well as my home Uni requirements.

The international Office was really helpful from day one while selecting the courses and guiding us to find accommodation, you have to apply to the student dormitories in Stuttgart (SWS), where you get assigned and it's a very simple process but you have to be very aware of the deadlines as you have to complete your submission in anticipation to have a guaranteed place, of course, there's the option to find a room by your own but in my experience (when I wanted a backup plan just if the SWS didn't have any rooms left) to find something available in the short period you have it's really difficult as the demand is really high. I got assigned to a great dormitory where I met friends from Brazil, Poland, Turkey, and Germany, the experience was amazing as you broaden your knowledge about different cultures and for sure you make new friends.

The whole process I have to say was excellent, the international office is willing to help the students and they are very supportive, they were always in touch with the exchange students until our last day of classes. During the welcome week, they are really helpful when you're still trying to figure out that you're not in your home country anymore and how to deal with it, I met new friends during this week and we were all from different countries, there's a lot of paper-work to be done regarding your registration, the services, some broadcasting fees, etc. but that was never a problem as everything was really well explained for us.

During the first month, I had the chance to study an intensive German course at a language school, the classes were very interactive with each of us and I improved the language as you are assigned to a different German level according to your past studies. After the intensive course, the other subjects began; I have to say that the

school system was very different than my home Uni because here the courses last for some weeks, or days depending on the ECTS and the syllabus of each one, so you have a very flexible schedule which allows you to do different activities which I took advantage of it and I could travel to some places around Europe and discover more about Germany. The classes overall were good, the professors held their classes with a passion so that made everything more interesting and they were open to listening to you if you had any question or comment about the course.

Something that was also really helpful for me was the buddy program from DHBW, they assign you a German student from the university who will help you if you have some trouble while figuring out your stay, your arrival, anything related to the uni and even to hang out with them, they also organized different group activities that I enjoyed a lot and I could meet more students, so we became friends and it was really fun to get to know more people, and to hang out in Stuttgart to know the sightseeing places it has.

If I have to give you some tips for your stay in Stuttgart it would be the following; Remember to take into consideration that everything is closed on Sundays! so prepare yourself in case you want to buy something and pro-tip if it's really urgent you can find some stores open in the main station.

Also, if you have to open a Bank Account, from my experience I used N26 Bank which was a very suitable option as you can easily do transfers within other members of the bank, you can also add money from your home country bank account and the app is very friendly to use and it takes no longer than a day to activate it.

Another good advice I have to tell you is that you have to be prepared for any unforeseen situations while traveling within all the DB trains in Germany and in the city with the transport, as sometimes something isn't working and you'll have to change your route completely and this will take time that probably you weren't expecting, it's easy once you get used to the S and U lines, for this download the app "VVS" this will become your solution when you want to go from A to B, also keep in mind that even though with your student ID you can use the transportation after 18

hrs. I would strongly recommend to buy the study ticket so you can use everything during the whole day.

And my last recommendation is to have fun! to risk yourself and explore new things remember you're not the only one who's in the same situation and everybody is open to get to know about everything! explore new places, there are a lot of great spots in Stuttgart to grab a snack and talk like Schlossgarden, Max-Eyth See, Schlossplatz, Santiago de Chile Platz and keep a track to the Cannstater Wasen there are a lot of events in there where you will have fun, see the sunset in Santiago de Chile's Platz, or visit Porsche & Mercedes-Benz Museums, ride scooters they are fun and travel as much as you can, you'll be impressed about the unique style of all the surrounding countries. Don't be afraid to get into the German culture for sure you'll love it, don't forget to try the local food and to get to know about your new classmates' culture, you won't regret anything about your experience abroad in such an amazing country that is Germany.

This experience was wonderful, I enjoyed a lot meeting the other exchange students, who after all of this time became excellent friends to me, Stuttgart overall is a beautiful city where you will have a lot of things to do, I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to study at DHBW and to stay in Germany, I'll remember this experience for the rest of my life with all the incredible moments and experiences I had, I recommend this program if you want to go out of your comfort zone and become a different person with amazing experiences to tell about and to learn from everyone as much as you can let others to know about your culture. It was great, and I hope I can get back to my host city soon.

P.S.

Here I attach some photos of my semester.

