

PERSONAL REPORT

Name: Ainhoa Ye Xu

Contact Information: ainhoa.ye@gmail.com

Home University: Universidad del País Vasco - Escuela de Ingeniería de Bilbao
UPV/EHU

Host University: DHBW Stuttgart

Field of study: International Business

Degree intended: Industrial Management

Number of semesters: 2

Period: 1st September 2021 to 31st July 2022

Introduction

In this report I will talk about my second exchange semester at DHBW in Stuttgart which was as fantastic as the first one. Before I start getting into the details, I would like to give some background information about myself.

I am a student from Bilbao (Spain) and I am currently finishing my last year of my Bachelor's Degree. I am studying Industrial Management Engineering which is a mix of the technical and business world. I enjoy participating in different activities because thanks to them I learn and meet new people from different backgrounds and cultures.

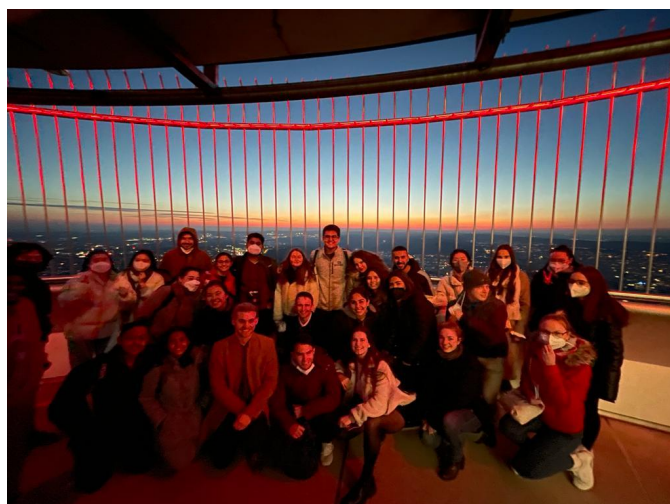
Preparation of the stay

As I arrived in September in Stuttgart, I did not need to prepare anything regarding accommodation. I had a contract for a whole academic year for a rented room at a student dormitory. I was very happy with the location and my other two flatmates so I decided not to move to another place.

First days in Stuttgart

The first days of the summer semester starting in March, we had a great Welcoming Week. There I had the chance to meet the new Erasmus students.

What I really liked about DHBW was the buddy program. Our buddies organized group activities in order to meet each other and we also visited many places in Stuttgart like the Fernsehturm where you have a panoramic view of the city, but make sure that it is not a foggy day. We had the chance to meet all the new incomings and we enjoyed a beautiful sunset together.



My Erasmus classmates and our buddies in the Fernsehturm

There were many other fun activities during the welcoming week such as having dinner at a traditional German restaurant, where we got to try many of the Swabian specialties. All the members at DHBW Stuttgart were very kind and helpful and the International Office solved numerous doubts I had fast and effectively.

Study in host university

The classes at DHBW were all in English, dynamic and easy to follow.

The teachers were all very welcoming and nice, they always asked about our wellbeing and how our stay in Stuttgart was going and in case you had any doubt they were available and friendly to give you a hand.

The timetable was shared with us very early which enabled us to organize our time. All the necessary information was in that excel, the location of the class, the exams...etc.

I took the intensive German course in March. It was 6 weeks long, 3h per day and it took place at a Language School near Hauptbahnhof, the train station, so it was easy to get there.

The courses I had chosen started in May and what I found most different compared to my home university was that at DHBW we had just one week of the same class all day from 9:00-12:00 and after lunch from 1300-16:00. On the other hand, in Spain we have a course throughout the whole semester and classes from 8:00-11:00 for different subjects.

Extracurricular activities

The best of DHBW was the wide variety of sport courses that help you maintain an active lifestyle and that you could join for free. I tried indoor Hockey, Bauch Beine Po and Ultimate Frisbee. It was great because I met German students while I did physical activity and they took place in places which were easy to get to by public transport.

I also played tennis with a couple of Erasmus students in the tennis club in Bad Cannstatt and in Vaihingen in the Campus of University of Stuttgart. If you are a sporty person, you will definitely be very happy with the great variety of activities you can do. There are several gyms around the city with good prices and I signed up to one near the dormitory in the beginning of the first semester and I continued to go during the summer semester.

If you are a music fan then you will definitely not be disappointed in Stuttgart. There are many street artists and there are also many concerts and plays. If you enjoy classical music you can listen to a concert of the Philharmonic of Stuttgart for only 7€ and you can enter for free to the general rehearsal.

Hands on tips

If you want to get around Stuttgart the best option is to buy the Studiticket which is 209€ for 6 months and it includes bus, U-bahn, S-Bahn and regional trains. However, you also have free transport after 6pm and on weekends with the student card of DHBW, so you should check which option suits you best.

In addition, Deutsche-Bahn released a special promotion where the tickets were only 9€ per month in June, July and August and you could travel all around Germany.

You also have many discounts for being a student, for example, in second hand shops which are quite common and have a lot of useful things for an excellent price.

One of my favourite plans was organizing grills with friends and later spending the evening together. If you enjoy sunsets, I suggest you go to Killesberg Park or Grabkapelle auf dem Württemberg where all the vineyards are.

A very typical bar for young people is MataHari in Hans im Glück, there is a good atmosphere and it is usually full of people. There you can enjoy having some beers with friends. Another place where you can spend time together and relax, while enjoying the views is Schlossplatz. Also, it's in the city centre so you can go shopping in Königstraße, there are so many shops Primark, Zalando, TKmax, Snipes... if that is not enough you can go to the Outlet in Metzingen too, which is around 40 minutes by train from Stuttgart.

In addition, there are many street markets and festivals in summer. Every week there are new activities which makes the city bustling and exciting to be in. If the weather is good there are many outdoor swimming pools with great services and for only 2.70€ with your student card. Hiking and going to the Bodensee to swim in Lake Konstanz is a very popular plan, especially during the hot season. It is a great way to enjoy nature with friends.

Finally, Stuttgart is very well connected to other German cities like Munich, Hamburg, Berlin, Köln, Frankfurt.... I highly recommend visiting Esslingen, Tübingen, Heilderberg, Ludwigsburg and Ulm during your stay, as well as the neighbouring countries such as France, Austria, Switzerland, Poland...etc.

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

I had the amazing opportunity to write my Bachelor Thesis at Mercedes-Benz AG from February until July. I am very happy and grateful for the experience as I got to experience another part of German culture. It was a bit challenging in the beginning because there are many buildings and everything was in German. However, my supervisor as well as the team were friendly, welcoming and they always lended me a hand whenever I needed it.

I also enjoyed many of the benefits of being part of this company. There were several activities to meet new colleagues as well as the team. There were team building outings, weekly meetings to speak to other students or interns and sport events to promote a healthy

lifestyle. Moreover, there were also interesting conferences and discounts especially for the Mercedes Benz museum and tours to see the factory. There was also a *Sommerfest* organized which was very fun.

All in all, it was an amazing experience and I have learned so much from it. I have grown both academically and personally speaking, I have met so many people from different cultures and backgrounds and I have also been able to learn and practice German. In addition, there were fewer restrictions due to the pandemic and the weather got much better. It was warmer, sunnier and there was light all day long, so many outdoor activities were organized in Stuttgart including international festivals, music festivals and concerts, barbecues, summer feasts...etc. I can not thank DHBW-Stuttgart enough for this incredible experience.

