

Personal report/2023

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Home University: Copenhagen School of Design and Technology (KEA)

Field of study (DHBW): International Study Programme / International Business.

Degree intended (KEA): Business Economics and Information Technology.

Number of semesters: 1 semester. Summer 2023 Period: 1st September - December.

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Study in the host country (university, courses, internships, lectures, university system, aspects of comparison, etc.

After getting approval from DHBW, I applied for a visa because I'm not a European or Danish citizen living in Denmark. I contacted the German embassy to schedule my visa application and prepared the required documents.

At the same time, I looked for a place to stay and applied through Studierendenwerk. It took about a month to receive a housing offer.

I had some general knowledge about Germany's political situation and history. Extensive preparation was optional; I ensured all my important documents, like the European Health Card and passport, were in order. I also found accommodation and scheduled a meeting with the janitor to get my keys on the first day.

In short, you only need a little preparation before going to Stuttgart for a semester. Ensure your paperwork is in order, find a place to stay, and arrange to get your keys when you arrive.

Stay in the host country (personal experiences and impressions, extracurricular activities, transfer chances).

The highlight of the exchange semester was meeting new people from around the world and forming numerous friendships. Right from my initial days in Stuttgart, I connected with many individuals, and it was incredibly enriching to learn from their diverse perspectives. We enjoyed fantastic experiences, exploring the city, going out, and joining various parties. The camaraderie and shared adventures made my exchange experience truly memorable and rewarding.

There have been no significant cultural challenges since I lived in Denmark, and many things work almost the same way.

In public places like supermarkets and public transport, sometimes it's hard to speak English. Even if they understand English, some people in Germany will prefer to respond in German, which is hard for beginners to understand and communicate. I called Deutsche Bahn (DB); when I needed help, nobody could speak English with me and help me solve the problem.

Living in a culturally diverse dorm offered a unique perspective, fostering connections with people from various backgrounds. My roommate provided valuable assistance in navigating local amenities. We shared enjoyable moments, discussing diverse topics and tasting delicious food. This cultural exchange enriched my experience, offering a supportive community and quick resolutions to shared challenges.

I had a fantastic time living in Stuttgart during the semester. The dorm I stayed in at Heilmannstraße had a great location and a decent price, although the conditions could have been better. It was a shock sharing toilets and showers since I'm not used to living in a dorm. However, I quickly adapted and didn't let it change my overall experience.

The initial week in Germany involved intro activities like visiting the Porsche Museum, touring the TV tower, and a fantastic pub crawl on Friday. As advice for the first week, I

suggest inviting other fellow students for a beer or dinner to get to know each other faster and build friendships. The activities organized by the International Office are a good start, but you might find it helpful to reach out on your own. Getting closer to people from certain countries can be challenging, but don't let that discourage you. That's the magic of an exchange—people are different, and getting to know them is an incredible experience.

DHBW Stuttgart Experience: Classes, Exams, and Adaptation.

Compared to my university in Copenhagen, DHBW is much larger, with multiple buildings in different addresses. There were no significant difficulties in participating in the classes and following the teaching. All the professors were kind and provided help when needed. The system was like my university in Copenhagen, which was a plus, so I didn't spend much energy on it initially.

I had classes starting from 9 AM til 4 PM, some days with only one course, while on other days, I had lessons from 9 AM to 9 PM, with only a one or 2-hour lunch break. The day started with a physical class at DHBW, then after 4 PM, the online course was created until 9 PM some days.

Some classes were challenging due to the amount of information packed into 2 or 3 hours, and we had homework, especially for information technology and service management. The teachers were all very accommodating, aiming to provide us with the most crucial and practical information. They knew we were exchange students and sometimes overlooked conflicts, like having two courses simultaneously.

Most of my exams were a combination of multiple-choice and case studies lasting 1 hour, with various questions. This format differed from what I was used to at the Copenhagen School of Design and Technology (KEA). At KEA, each semester, we write a report about a given problem handled by a company. Then, after submitting the essay, we had one oral exam and presentation for all subjects in a semester in one exam. Fortunately, we did

three exams before the end of the exam week. German language class and intercultural training German exams were right after the courses ended. In September, we were already done with two exams. A few weeks later, we wrote an essay for international management, so we didn't have an exam for this subject.

Practical Advice.

Make friends, engage in conversations, go out, explore, and savor every moment. This semester offers a unique opportunity to experience life in a different country, connect with people from diverse backgrounds and continents, appreciate exciting lectures, and indulge in travel adventures since Stuttgart is conveniently located for short European trips. The initial days might be challenging, especially if it's your first solo move to a new place. Take it one step at a time, participate in organized activities, and gradually discover what an incredible experience awaits you. Attend your classes regularly; while professors may understand occasional absences, consistent attendance makes exam preparation more manageable. Embrace this opportunity, and you'll soon realize how fortunate you are.

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

I had a mix of emotions throughout my semester in Stuttgart. Still, when it came time to leave, I felt genuinely sad, indicating that it was a fantastic experience overall. I am content with the classes I chose; they were mostly beneficial, and I appreciated the professors at DHBW and all the people I encountered during my stay. The Volksfest was the best party I've ever attended, creating memories that will linger forever. The friendships I formed in Germany are the most valuable outcome of my exchange, and I am thankful for that. Embrace the experience, stay open-minded, and I wish you an excellent stay in Stuttgart!