



EXCHANGE SEMESTER REPORT

HOST UNIVERSITY: DHBW UNIVERSITY STUTTGART
HOME UNIVERSITY: K.J. SOMAIYA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
FIELD OF STUDY: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
NUMBER OF SEMESTERS: 1
PERIOD OF TIME: 5 MONTHS

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I would also like to express my gratitude to Ms. Dorte Süchting, Ms. Asita Rostam, and Ms. Sarina Mollenhauer of DHBW International Office for their exceptional support. A big thank you to all the faculties who went out of their way to adapt the digital way of teaching. Would specially mention Dr. Zeina Matar and Prof. Anita Pongratz who were always very patient to guide me through the subjects I chose and all the queries I had at different point of time. And last but not the least, my official German buddy, Cedric Dunsch for being a great friend, and guide to the German way of living.

I would like to thank Baden-Wurttemberg Foundation for providing a generous amount of scholarship which covered my stay in Germany and for the intercultural exchange support they provided.

Preparation of the stay (language, culture, formalities)

I started learning the German language months before coming to Germany. I used the Duolingo language learning app. I also started watching videos about Germany on YouTube. The videos gave me some idea about the cultural nuances, how people behave in situations, what is acceptable and what is not.

For example, in Germany, when you go to a restaurant with your friends, everyone orders their own meal which is not shared by the whole group (like India) and then it is understood that everyone will pay for what they have ordered. The waiter will ask if you want separate billing or combined billing. I didn't know cooking before, but I knew that I will not get Indian vegetarian options in Germany easily. So, my mother taught me to cook Indian food. I brought Indian spices with me.



I bought winter clothes like jackets, woollen socks, woollen caps which would work in minus 5 degrees temperatures in months of March-April. I also kept all the basic necessary medicines which I may need in Germany. This was especially important because many medicines which are available over the counter in India are available only with a prescription in Germany.

There was a lot of paper work to be done. Formalities regarding enrollment at DHBW, accommodation, insurance, semester SVV ticket, opening of a blocked account, visa formalities, etc. At the same time, there were some formalities at KJSIM also like

coordinating with the examination department for credit transfer and taking permission from administration.

My buddy Cedric Dunsch was very supportive in my preparation and actively answered my queries on WhatsApp. Upon my arrival, he came to receive me on Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof (Main Station). He already has taken the keys of my zimmer(room) from the housemaster so that I don't have any problems.



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

In the first week, I was surprised to see that to open a bank account in Germany; one has to first take an appointment by visiting the bank. Another surprising thing was how strictly rules were followed by people in Germany. Even if no one is watching, people follow simple rules like stopping the car on the red light even if the road is completely empty. Such a thing will never be seen in India. Another surprising thing was that I have to pay Radio/TV tax, even if I don't use it.

The German buddies organized various activities for us. We visited Mercedes-Benz Museum. It covered history of not only cars but also Germany. Our buddies also organized "pub crawl", something very common in Europe, for all of us internationals. It was an awesome experience, getting to know the international students and playing games.

I had also signed up for the DHBW Hoshulesports which could give me access to play various sports, I engaged myself in badminton and football and truly enjoyed playing with other Germans. In fact, I was learning German on the football field and interacting with others as I was the only non-German speaker out there.

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

The DHBW university was spread out in the city of Stuttgart. The induction was conducted smoothly and we were guided by the international office on the Do's and Don'ts in Germany.

We were also taught German as a part of our curriculum and I was particularly interested in that as learning different cultures and languages was very interesting for me.

The lectures were completely different from the Indian standards. For the first time I learnt financial analysis through a game in the business simulation class. We were mixed up with the Germans and the French in the class for better cultural interaction.



INTERNSHIP AT SIEMENS

I was extremely grateful to get this International corporate stint at Siemens Erlangen, Germany. I worked in the Digital Industries Software department with the engineers and supported them in their work.

I came across a lot of corporate culture differences during my time at Siemens. Employees regularly took bridge holidays and had fixed working hours.

The managers were extremely understanding were also friendly to take me to lunch post work.

I had a great experience with Siemens and ever more grateful to have this international stint during my semester abroad.

Participation in conferences and workshops

I participated in the annual conference of the Baden-Wurttemberg stipendium foundation which involved mental strengthening workshops and memory building exercises.

I also went to the Stuttgart Finance trade fair to see the various finance startups and business ideas within Europe to give me insights on the general business contexts.

Hands-on tips for future exchange students

Learn German: I would advise them to learn some basic German before coming because even if the lectures are in English, many things in daily life are in German. For example, products in supermarket are all available in German, train announcements are in German and not everyone here speaks English. So, it will help if you come prepared.

Punctuality is a virtue: Germans stress on punctuality, planning and structure. It is considered as rude if you are not on time. Punctuality and planning are some things, that I admire and I assimilated in my daily life. Even for my informal meetings, I have started to plan. I sometime joke and ask friends to reach on “German time “that means be on time.

Explore opportunities: The exchange semester is not only to travel various countries. Try building connections with corporates and professors. Try looking out for internships beforehand so that one could have international stints in the CV to boost career prospects.

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

I must say that if one can do an exchange semester then one must have no second thoughts about it. This experience has made me independent and confident. I made new friends across borders and had a great time with them. The International Internship had breath of fresh air into my corporate world understanding in a panoramic way. I also learnt new languages and cultures and European history as well.

I truly thank destiny and its characters in my life for this wonderful opportunity.