

BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG-STIPENDIUM FOR STUDENTS

PERSONAL REPORT

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Home University: Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila

Host University: DHBW

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Synopsis

My name is Abraham Ramses García Villarreal, I'm 23 years old and I come from Saltillo, city in Coahuila, Mexico. I'm an automotive engineering student at UA de C (Univiersidad Autónoma de Coahuila) and my study abroad was in Stuttgart, Baden Wurttemberg, I took four courses in DHBW (Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg), 3 courses in the international business area and an intensive German course. Start learning the German language was one of my objectives on my study abroad, so my intensive course was perfect for accomplishing that. I also wanted to meet new people and visit different cities in Europe, that's why making my study aboard in Stuttgart was the best decision I could have taken.

I lived in the city center at a student's dormitory building from Studierendenwerck Stuttgart; this was also an opportunity to meet new people and practice foreign languages. The beginning of the study abroad was a little bit difficult, getting to know the city, transportation and a different culture, but everyone in DHBW and Baden-Wurttemberg-STIPENDIUM made it a lot easier with their very warm welcome, helped and fun activities. After all the help everything was great until the end of my stay thanks to them, all my expectations were surpass.

Preparation prior the stay abroad

The study abroad preparation started six months before the trip to Germany, in my home university "Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila" (UA de C). The first step consisted on completing the requirements for the mobility program including, taking the TOEFL test, completing half of the study program credits, then I had to choose the ideal university and country for me which is DHWB in Stuttgart, Germany.

Once I completed the home university process, I started the host university application which was a lot easier because some of the documents needed, were the same as the ones in UA de C. The only problem I had was with a blurry picture for my student card but it was solved quickly.

After sending all the documents needed, I received the letter of acceptance. The host university staff was very helpful also very kind for offering me a Baden-Württemberg-Stipendium scholarship application, it was very easy to complete and it really helped me economically to complete the mobility program, also to accelerate the visa process which can be very tough some times.

Studying in the host country

Personally, I was very excited about traveling to Germany and I was ready to meet new people and confront any situation so the only thing left was learning German. I tried to take German classes in my home university before but a very tight school schedule made it impossible but the German intensive course and self study made it easier once I spend some time in Germany.

I really think I wouldn't have done it without all the help that I got in both universities they helped me in the whole process before and after my arrival to Germany. The only thing I would suggest to my home university is to improve organization.

The first week was very useful, the host university members explained everything that we needed to know about the university and main things about the city just like transportation, registration and insurance.

Choosing my courses was easy but the ones in Mexico were different to the automotive engineering program in Germany so I picked courses in the business area, anyways, the process was fast thanks to the collaboration between both universities.

At the beginning the schedule was tough because the system is different and classes take a lot of time compared to Mexico but after the first month it turned more relaxing. Also the examination was very confusing, normally in my home university we have partial exams and the final exam is just after finishing the course and in DHWB I had some weeks before the exam but it helped me to have enough time to study

On the other hand, all the activities planned by students and other members of the DHWB were perfect to meet people from all over the world which was one of my main objectives, most of the people used English for communicating so I didn't practice too much German but still I improved my English skills and different cultures knowledge.

The activities were also very fun and helped to get some distraction after a tough school week, we got to know different cities, local food and common activities of people in Stuttgart like bowling, hiking, going to clubs and local bars among other things.

Stay in the host country

The life in Germany is completely different to Mexico, first of all, transportation is mainly by bus, metro and walking. The life in the city where I live in Mexico is more calmed so there is no metro and is easier and faster moving by car along the city, adapting to the metro was easy, it is expensive but is always on time, clean and is not very crowded as other countries metro.

For me, German culture is very straight and organized, maybe a little cold for Mexican people but it really helps because everything is on the scheduled time, people respect the streets and infrastructure of the city and the best of all, they respect people of all different cultures. Stuttgart is a city full of cars and it turns the city noisy but drivers are very skilled and respectful. Sometimes was

difficult to communicate with the German language but most of the people speaks English which made it much easier.

If there is one thing that I really missed, was food, local bread is delicious but there is not a lot of variety of food to try, at least not cheap. I saw a lot of green areas in Germany and it was incredible for having picnic or go hiking.

Network of the Baden-Württemberg-Stipendium

Applicating for the scholarship also helped me to meet new people who also got the application for the scholarship, there were meetings every few weeks to get along with the other scholarship holders, normally in a cafe we spoke with each other and share our experiences. Two friends from Mexico were also scholarship holders and we helped each other to break the ice with other people, it was difficult to attend to some of the meetings because we had different schedules in school but anyway we made some plans extra from the meeting, it was a great experience to make this trip, definitely, I will repeat it.

Handy tips for future scholarship holders

- Try to practice the host country language before your trip.
- Organize your money.
- Organize your time, enjoy every moment, have fun but don't forget school.
- Get to know people of different countries and different cultures.