

PARTH MEHTA

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Host University:

DHBW Stuttgart - International Business

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Home University:

K. J. Somaiya College of Engineering, India

**Mechanical Engineering, Bachelor of
Technology**

I, Parth Mehta, am a student of the K. J. Somaiya College of Engineering, Mumbai, India. My current field of study is Mechanical Engineering. I am automobile enthusiast and the German automobile industry has always fascinated me. Stuttgart being the home of automotive giants such as Daimler and Porsche seemed a very attractive destination to complete an abroad semester.

I became aware of DHBW Stuttgart back in 2016 when I first visited the Formula Student Germany competition. DHBW Stuttgart was one the leading teams there. I distinctly remember gingerly walking to their pits to have a look at the car unsure of how I would be received by the team members. But, I was warmly welcomed by them and they enthusiastically spoke to us about their car. It was a great learning experience for my colleagues and me and we returned with a wealth of knowledge. The team even offered to help us if we needed. This showcased two things, firstly, the University has the resources and the infrastructure to provide such facilities and secondly, that the University culture was one of sharing and collaboration. I was not only impressed with the car but also the way the team conducted itself, their extremely organised way of working and their preparedness for any eventuality. Hence when I learnt about the international Study Programme at DHBW Stuttgart, I decided to grab the opportunity at all costs.

Having a family background in business, I decided to push myself out of the engineering comfort zone and study International Business during my semester at the DHBW Stuttgart. This would give me an educational insight into business studies and help me connect to my family roots.

Because of my early fascination with Germany, I had already started learning the “Deutsch Sprache” before the exchange program. I was well versed with basic conversational German and could get through regular small talk. I had been to Germany twice (Frankfurt and Karlsruhe) already before for over 15 days each time and this gave me minor insights into the German lifestyle and culture. But ofcourse,

studying for over 4 months and being a tourist for 15 days have vast differences. For example, being an Indian, we need a different category of visa to study in Germany, which takes over a 40 days to process. And that's where I messed up a little bit and arrived late into the program. But, during my wait for the visa, I was exposed to the highly supportive side of the staff at the International Office of DHBW Stuttgart. They were very prompt to help me out with any necessary documents. Danke!

Also, the students were informed very well in advance regarding accommodation and transportation. So it really wasn't much trouble to find a hostel room. And of course, the Buddy program plays a very vital role in settling down here for the first few days. Nico S., my buddy, helped me out with all the formalities: opening a bank account, WiFi registration, buying a semester ticket as well as even buying a winter blanket! It's advantageous to have a local help you sort out stuff.

Amongst Indian students, German universities are well known for their education system. And surely, my expectations were met during my studies at the DHBW Stuttgart. What actually stands out is the unique learning experience that DHBW Stuttgart offers to students: the cooperative study program. Being an international student we didn't have the cooperative study program, but this is no where close to the form of studies we have back home. Secondly, back home we have a fixed timetable through out the semester with periodic written exams (usually during the last two weeks of the semester), unlike that during my study here we studied 2 or 3 subjects simultaneously and once the lectures were completed we had the test. Also, out of the 7 credit courses I took only 3 had written tests. One was a simulation game, 1 presentation and 2 course paper submissions. This ensured that I did a lot of external research to gain credits through the presentation and course papers.

To be honest, when I had come here I had very little knowledge of cooking and back in India I was highly dependent on aid for my daily chores as well. Being a

vegetarian its pretty difficult to get food at restaurants, though the vegan lifestyle trend is booming. So I took up the task of making Indian dishes at home and who knew that I would be bonding with classmates from various backgrounds over Indian curry! Soon, we had dinners where everyone used to cook food from their home country. It was interesting to learn about different cultures just by their taste of delicacies. Thankfully, this experience has transformed me into a highly independent and self responsible person.

Also, because of the mutual football craze that my buddy and I shared, we went to spectate the biggest game of the German football league (Bundesliga). This game was being played between Borussia Dortmund and FC Bayern Munich. Not exaggerating, but it is the best sporting experience I have ever had till date.

During the semester Buddies organised a lot of activities for the international students. These activities ranged from visiting some tourist spots or enjoying a day at the amusement park, making Christmas cookies or hiking through the Black forest. And it was during these activities that we transcended the cultural boundaries. This program brought a lot of different cultures together banishing the stereotypes I used to hold.

To prospective Indian students my only tip would be to apply for the visa as early as possible! And to the rest: let off your inhibitions and embrace the German culture! You'll surely having a great time studying at DHBW Stuttgart.

I'd like to thank DHBW Stuttgart and K. J. Somaiya College of Engineering for this opportunity. Also, I am highly grateful to the international office and Nico for all the help before and during my stay in Stuttgart. If needed feel free to contact me for handy tips during your stay in Stuttgart! I am now completing almost 4 months in Stuttgart surviving on bretzels and coffee through a rainy winter! Cheers!