

Personal Report

Name: Sofie Mørch Junget

Country: Denmark

Contact data: Sofie_junget@hotmail.com

Home university: Denmark's Technical University (DTU)

Field of study (DHBW): Business Administration

Degree intended (DTU): Global Business Engineering

Number of semesters. 1 semester. Summer 2020

Period: 29th February to 30th of July

Preparations & things to be aware of:

Before arriving in Stuttgart, as a European student, I had to apply for Erasmus Scholarship which required most of my time. I highly recommend everyone to start applying as quickly as possible. Also make sure to check that your health insurance covers the requirements stated by Erasmus. The application process to DHBW was much easier and the corresponds from the school was quick and always helpful. DHBW accepted my OLS-language test which meant I did not have to pay for a language test like TOELF test etc. The OLS-language test will be provided free by Erasmus. However, make sure to check this information with DHBW beforehand. You will receive an email with information on how to sign up for dorms and you will most likely, like me, receive a dorm approximately 1-2 months before departure. Regarding things like transportation card (207 EURO for whole semester), Wi-Fi at the dorm (7 Euros per month), how to wash your clothes, and other practical things, you will receive all that information from the school or the dorm too, so you feel very taken care of, from the day you arrive. One major aspect about going to South Germany is the language barrier. I highly recommend that you learn some basic German before coming or to sign up for the offered German course. I often come across that individuals do not speak English and that can be troublesome if you order food, got questions, or want some clothes in another size. I was personally a bit worried regarding the formalities and how to speaks to professors since it is very loose in Denmark and you can call everyone by their names. Luckily, the professors and workers at the school are very understanding towards this and you can feel free to call them by their name or whatever that is comfortable for you. In general, if you are reading this and coming from a Northern European country, the cultural part will not be that problematic because it is quite similar. Germans are perhaps a bit more direct. Let us say you want to reject someone, make sure to tell them you are not interested directly, or they do not take this a no and keep trying. Also, when you go to class, it is better to be 10 minutes earlier than 10 minutes late. This come from the aspect that Germans like to be on time. The professors prefer starting the class exactly as planned, so try to arrive on time. Well besides that, I had no issues. Lastly remember that it is totally normal that the police drop by when you hold party. People will often call on you if you are too noisy. Once a roommate even called on my friends and me. They will just take the name and leave again, so do not worry about it. A rule is that you did not have a proper party if the police do not show up.

Study in the host country (personal experience):

This exchange semester took place on the same time as Corona broke loose all over the world. Europe was hit severely during March, April, May and then in July things started to look better here in Germany. There were numerous restrictions and our semester start got pushed some time until decisions were made regarding the semester. We only got to do the intro week together and I got to go to the German academy three times, before we were told to stay home. It was ultimately decided that the entire semester would take place online as a mix between zoom meetings and self-study. Also, all the exams got changed into reports, so suddenly I got a massive number of pages to write, to pass. Despite all the difficulties, DHBW must have went through because of the situation, the online platform worked well, and technique issues were rarely present. The professors were always quick to answer emails and you never felt alone despite everything took place online. I enjoyed all the courses and felt like I learned so much taking them. I think it was because big papers were required and you naturally spend a lot more time reading and finding various sources while preparing for them, than you do when you just read a textbook and take an exam based on that. At my home university, I rarely have any papers and instead have oral or written exams lasting like 4-6 hours, so at first it was hard for me to write so many reports. Yet under normal circumstances, I heard that DHBW also have more written and oral exams as well. This case was special.

Unfortunately, only spending a short time together with the other classmates, it was hard at first to develop strong friendships. However, corona helped, bringing us together and we started to bond with each other over the unfair and sad situation we were stuck in. Sadly, almost all the Korean students in our class decided to return to Korea shortly after everything shut down, so I felt blue for some time. Around that time, things also got really uncomfortable at my dorm, with people not taking the situation seriously, bringing people over, not paying on agreed things and not sticking to our house rules, so I decided to leave my dorm at Heilmannstrasse 4.A and move into my friend's apartment. Most of my classmates had great experiences living there but for me, who lived alone for 4 years before coming here, I guess it was hard to adjust to sharing that space with others. It is quite expensive to rent a room in Stuttgart unless you got some connections, so living in the dorm will be the cheapest choice. Despite corona made us feel isolated, took away opportunities and killed our precious exchange time, I felt like some positive things came

out of it. I for instant regained my love for reading books. I got myself a kindle and through that I spent a lot of my free time reading everything that sounded interesting. I also learned how to spend my time more productively, to sit down and study without distraction and because of all the papers, I improved my writing so much. Most importantly, I learned how to cope with boredom, loneliness and how to keep myself feeling positive. Overall, this exchange was a massive growth for me, and I take away so many positive experiences. My favorite part is always meeting new people and my class was filled with people from various backgrounds. I am learning so much through those friendship and starting to really understand why people from for instant India behaves like they do. It is eye-opening. My personal evaluation of my stay at the host university and in the host, country is quite positive. I really enjoyed studying at the university and feel like we were always well taken care of. In the beginning, they planned a lot of activities for us, such as sightseeing, museum trip, pub crawl, language meeting etc. which as a bonus was mostly paid for by the school. I highly suggest that you participate in everything offered because it is a lot of fun and you get to meet various people since the German buddies also join these events. Regarding the professors, I can say that everyone was nice, welcoming, talented at their work and as I said before I learned more this semester than I did at any semester at my home university. It was nice not having to pay for any books either since all the materials for the courses was provided by the professors. On an unfortunately note, the university could not offer me a German course on the B level, so I had to give up the German course. I understand that it is difficult, to provide this since most of the students only have a beginner level in German but I still found it a bit disappointing since I really looked forward to improving my German skills. So, I suggest that you ask about this before going if you wish a higher level than A.1. On the other hand, corona really made it hard to really practice German so I could not achieve my language goals and instead just focused on my courses. This is solely on me though. The city of Stuttgart has many things and activities to offer. It provides rich opportunities for shopping, eating out, partying and warm weather doing spring and summer time! They still need to work on their ice coffee though. My favorite place to hang out with friends is still Schloss Platz. Stuttgart also have the perfect location if you want to travel inside and outside of Germany. There are purely some beautiful German cities close by like Heidelberg, Munich, and Konstanz. In the next part, I will suggest some of the must go places.

Hands-on tips

- When traveling around in the Baden-Württemberg region, always travel with more people and regional day tickets to save money. A great app for this is: DB Navigator. Remember not to look at the ICE trains, because there cannot be taken when you are going with the regional day ticket.
- Remember that supermarkets and shops are not open on Sundays and holidays.
- It is always better to try speaking with your broken German than English when you go to restaurants, shops etc. because people will treat you more friendly.
- GoAsia is a huge supermarket for Asian products. It is in the centrum too.

Favorite places/things

- Vintage Markt is the best and coziest vintage shop in Stuttgart. They even sell coffee.
- My favorite coffee place is called Tabara and here, I got the best ice coffee, I had in Stuttgart (only sell during summertime though).
- My favorite place to grab a cheap cocktail is called Mauritius. Only 5 euros per drink during happy hours and their beach theme is very appealing.
- Best restaurant for German food is called Paulander am alten Postplatz.
- Favorite location in Stuttgart besides Schlossplatz is Teehaus im Weissenburgpark. The view is beautiful and perfect for enjoying a beer.
- Old Bridge provides the best ice cream in Stuttgart but also to the more expensive side.
- ALATURKA – Das Stuttgarter original provide the best kebab in Stuttgart. Around lunch time the line of people waiting will go outside the shop even.
- My preferred supermarket is REWE. Despite considered one of the more expensive options, they got a bigger variety of products and their donuts are so good.
- I discovered the sweet and delicious drink called Hugo after coming here, so I highly recommend you try it, if you never have.

- Places in Germany close to Stuttgart that you MUST visiting is: Esslingen, Ludwigsburg, Metzingen (if you love shopping!), Friedrichshafen, Konstanz and Heidelberg (one of the most beautiful places).
- The app called Meetup is a great way to meet new people in Stuttgart.