

Questionnaire Study Abroad/Exchange

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

I had the chance on spending my 5th semester at Duale-Hochschule Baden-Wurttemberg(DHBW) in Stuttgart.

The semester started on the 1st of September 2016 and ended on the 30th of January 2017.

2. What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I am currently studying a profession bachelor degree on Business Economics and Information Technology.

3. What classes did you take during your semester abroad?

Please briefly explain what each class was about.

Computer Vision – This course is made to understand the fundamentals of computer vision using image sensors to collect and interpret data to generate an action as a result. This courses uses any object-orientated coding language and put image processing into practise.

General Management Simulation Game – This simulation course strikes over 3 days and is about assuming a role of a manager of a company running over a few years whilst competing against other companies. For every simulation year in the company the managers receives an annual report, which they had to go through and make decisions in all parts of the business process like staff, production, advertisement, R & D, finance and accounting etc.

Genetic Algorithms – This course uses a theory of succession in biology (*evolutionary*) in order to calculate and create the best possible solution within an acceptable time frame. This courses uses java as a coding language.

Intercultural Negotiation Training – This course aim is to improve the understanding in handling business with foreign cultures. A wide range of small situations arise which are intended to simulate the daily life in international organization and enable students to act in intercultural encounters. the course provide a set of negotiation skills, tactics and cultural understanding to ensure the best negotiated outcome possible.

IT Security – This course focuses on bringing awareness of cyber security. The history of Cryptography, IT security concepts and newly threats are all topics that are touched upon in this course.

The Financial Market in Germany – This lecture provides an overview of the most common investments as a basis for the further discussions and analysis. Shares, bonds investment funds and technical analysis are a few of the content touch upon including a trip to the Stuttgart Stock Exchange.

The Contemporary Political and Economic System of the EU – This course is about understanding of the European Union. The course content consists of historical overview, institutions, the European parliament the European commission, the council of the European Union, the European central bank structure, the policy of the ECB etc.

German Intensive Course (attended) - 3 weeks of intensive German depending on the level of language knowledge the student has.

Academic Experience

1. How helpful was the receiving school in the process of choosing classes and settling you in?

The school was very helpful in helping me settling in. They had provided us a “buddy” through their “buddy program” who were all members of the universities international club. This was to allow each international student to have a German student to guide, inform and take them places throughout the semester so we could learn and understand the culture and behaviors of the German People.

Even though we choose our courses before coming to Stuttgart we had the chance to change them completely in the first month of our stay. Even if we regretted not picking a course after the end of the first month, the staff were usually open to allowing us to join. The teachers were usually open for us sit and listen to what they teach. We had the option to be able to ask the coordinator to write it in our “Transcript of records” if we have attended the whole course.

2. What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?

I found that “intercultural negotiation training”, “General simulation game” and “Computer vision” was the most rewarding courses. Because in intercultural negotiation training, we got informed about new as well as old negotiation styles we had seen in action but have never really been to put a word to them. As a result I have become more cautious of how “The Negotiation Game” is played out. As an extra thing to say about this course is that it is an opportunity to spend with the international students and learn how to work with different cultures.

If you are like me and have been studying a HHX in college or some sort of a business administration course, then I would say that the general simulation game was really rewarding. It takes up what I had learned in business college, simulate it in a game competing against other companies(teams). This was rewarding in a way of seeing different people sales tactics and understand the annual report even more.

“Computer Vision” was a tough but a very rewarding course. I have learned how to program in an entirely new way, in KEA I only learn to program application etc. But this course has broadened my horizon of coding and made me think of new ways to see what coding can do.

3. What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant

or least valuable to you? Why?

The least inspiring course would be “The Contemporary Political and Economic system of the EU” and “Genetic Algorithm”.

It was rewarding listening to whole history of the European Union and their acts, but this course really goes in debt and I literally got every single detail about the European Union which is not that exciting in my opinion.

“Genetic Algorithm” was rewarding but also one of the least rewarding courses. It left me questioning when in my lifetime am I ever going to use these algorithms when I finally graduate and get a job. The course was inspiring to play with but I don’t see where it is helpful for a Business student.

4. What classes would you advise other KEA students going to

the receiving school to choose or not to choose?

If you are business minded I would advise you to pick “intercultural negotiation training”, “General simulation game” and “The financial market in Germany”. All these courses will plant a seed in to your mind that will help you blossom later in the future.

If you are IT minded I would advise you to pick “Computer vision”, “IT security” and “genetic algorithm”. “computer vision” and “Genetic algorithm” are programming courses that broaden your coding experience and view. “IT security” informs you about the treats of it which are out there and what to keep in mind when we are talking about IT.

If you are looking to challenge yourself and you don't like history, then I would advise you not to pick “the Contemporary Political and Economic system of the EU”. As long as you have been to college or just followed up in your history class and understood the basics of what the European Union does or have been doing, then you are basically fine, there no need to listen about what happened from 1945 – 2017 in details.

Cultural/Personal Experience

1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being

abroad?

a. How helpful was the receiving school in this process

One of the most challenging part of being abroad is the language barrier towards the older generation who aren't able to speak English. I didn't learn any German In preschool or college so picking a whole new language takes time and energy.

The school were very helpful in regards to provide language courses that I could pay for. It is possible to reach a B1 level in German whilst I'm here for 6 months, but juggling with 6- 8 English speaking courses to reach 30 ects points made me do my German at home.

Another challenge you might have to accept is the timetable of the different courses. Classes are not from 9 – 14 o'clock as in KEA. At DHBW some of my courses were in the afternoon courses or even in evening. Since I had these 7 courses there were days where I was in school from 9 – 20 o'clock and only had little time to go from faculty to faculty. I had challenge of having classes on Saturdays as well, but this is not normal for Germans, that is just because i was an international student.

The last challenge I would say I had culturally, is that every shop and supermarket are closed on Sunday. This was certainly something I had to get used to the first 2 – 4 weeks I was staying here.

2. What was the best cultural/personal experience during your

studies abroad?

Confidence, independence, and becoming who I really am, are the 3 aspects I have noticed myself really grow in! Student exchange has impacted me greatly, as I have become a lot more open to new things and a world bigger than just my comfort zone. I always thought that when I had a problem back home, that was hard, but here, having something go wrong, feels 100 times worse. You still have the support from your newly made friends, but you don't have the comfort of what you've always known. Instead, you need to think of new ways to overcome these things. I've found that student exchange has been a life changing experience that has made me realize I can do so much more than I ever thought was possible. To give you and example. Stuttgart is very central place if you have the time for travel. In this short period of time I have been to Zurich(Switzerland), Prague(Czech Republic), Salzburg (Austria) and many area around Germany. Some of the best experiences I have had is traveling to these places alone as well as with friends, and tasting a lot of different kind of Beer.

3. What advice would you give other KEA students going to

study abroad at the receiving school?

My advice would be take as few courses as possible, build up a network with the people and try to see the world as much as possible alone as well as with the people you are with. Keep and open mind!

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

a. What did KEA help you with?

b. What help did you receive from your school abroad.

My international coordinator "Durita" at KEA was helpful due to my late choice of studying abroad. She could contact the receiving school abroad and give me information I needed to deliver. So basically, the application process was smooth, I had to be patient about the process.

The only real challenge I had with the receiving school was the passport picture which must be exactly their requirements, but that shouldn't really be a problem.

2. Did you have any practical difficulties settling down in at your destination?

a. How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

Since the receiving school had this buddy program, it was easy to settle down. My German buddy had already received my key for the accommodation days before my arrival, so when I came it was smooth.

If I must nag about something, then I would say that my flat mate and I had some difficulties contacting the landlord of the accommodation place. The landlords here govern several areas of Stuttgart so they might only be in our area for an hour tops and even if we complained about something in the accommodation that is not right then it could take 1 – 2 months before even seeing any changes.

3. Where did you live?

a. Was it difficult to find accommodation?

b. Was it expensive?

I lived at a place called Rieckestrasse 17, in Stuttgart. This accommodation was a flat with 3 rooms with shared toilet and kitchen. I paid around 300 euro every month living here, which is not that expensive since I was getting SU. I really recommend this place since I have heard what other international students have been through. Some accommodations provide flats which have 5 -6 rooms with shared toilet and kitchen, or even worse flats with 18 rooms with shared toilet and kitchen. Both places are a bit cheaper (e.g. 250 euro) to live in.

Finding an accommodation is not that hard, they have a portal for that. I will recommend that as soon as you know you are going to Stuttgart and gotten your letter of acceptance the don't hesitate apply as quickly as possible to get your first wishes for a accommodation place.

4. What kind of expenses did you have in general?

a. Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

My rent, food and TV-license (something the flat must pay even though you don't have a TV) as a general. Other than that, it's just activities such as traveling, drinking a new beer, enjoyment with the people etc.

I spend what I budgeted but I would say that if you really want to budget yourself then don't go to the central and buy your stuff. Seek out the smaller cities, they are a lot cheaper.