

Study abroad report

**Host institution: DHBW- Duale Hochschule Baden-
Württemberg**

**Contact person at DHBW: Claudia Kubotsch-
Claudia.Kubotsch@dhbw-stuttgart.de**

5th semester, September-February 2018

A. Introduction

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

During my 5th semester of studies I chose to have an exchange semester at DHBW- Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg in Stuttgart, Germany.

The semester started 1st of September 2017 and ended 23rd of February 2018.



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

I am studying the bachelor Business Economics and Information Technology.

3. What classes did you take during your semester abroad? Please briefly explain what each class was about.

- i) *Finance and Investment* with prof. Flad: The best, the hardest and the most rewarding class I ever took. We started with 2 classes of 3 hours, twice a week for 3 weeks and before exam we had 2 more classes where we finished the curriculum and had a recap. For this class accounting and economics knowledge are really needed to better understand but the teacher is really nice and willing to explain the theory you forgot or might not know. The class is mainly about the finances of a company and what/how to check if an investment is worth. Lots of maths are included, a calculator is needed and expect a big load of homeworks but not too much reading. The professor has a talk before starting the class so we can recap what we learned in the previous session and then we always checked the homework and continued with teaching. The exam was hard, lots of problems and theory but it was the best feeling when I saw the grade and

knew that what I learned in that class will really help me. I advise you to take this class, is a challenge and the good thing is that you have it during the first 3 weeks, before all the other classes start.

- ii) *German Language Intensive course* with Tricos School: During the introduction week we had a german test to check our level and place us in 2 different classes. DHBW offered us to take an intensive german course worth hundreds of euros for free. Most of us registered for the classes, which were 3 weeks long, from 9.00 to 16.00 o'clock. I am glad I took it but don't expect a big outcome, it was nice just because you learn some words, phrases that might help you in some social encounters. KEA did not accept the credits for this course so it was just my choice to take it even if it did not help me with the total number of credits.
- iii) *Intercultural Negotiation Training* with prof. Matar: This was the second best class because the teacher is a sweet lady with lots of experience in culture and negotiations and her classes were with almost no theory and mostly real life cases, games, discussions. Almost all the exchange students participated in this class and it was offered only for us, over 6 full days of teaching, from 09.00 to 16.15. The best part was the fact that this course was also like a team building for us because we did not know each other that well at that point of our semester abroad so I advise you to take it.
- iv) *The financial market in Germany* with prof. Furkert: a pretty easy class, with natural and day to day discussion about crypto-currencies, financial markets, stock exchange, investments and current situation of different countries. I enjoyed it but I cannot say I learned a lot, we just touched some interesting points and did not dig deeper into it. The problem was that the teacher was pretty disorganized but he tried his best.
- v) *Programming I- Java* with prof. Dyson: I chose this class really late in the semester because one of my other classes got cancelled and I was happy to study some programming in a new language which was Java. I liked it, it was easy and useful.
- vi) *German Culture and Communication Styles* with prof. Rudac: I am not sure what feelings I have about this course but do not take it if you think it's boring to listen for 3 hours to definitions of culture. Mainly theories about culture and some German history facts so we can make the connections with today's German culture. The exam was to write a 10 pages report which was fairly easy.
- vii) *International Social Media Marketing and Digital Storytelling* prof. Langner and prof. Barsa: Lots of theories, lots of youtube commercials watched during class and no group work or discussions but we had a trip to Mercedes Benz Museum to talk about digital storytelling. The teachers were inexperienced and really nervous so I cannot say I was happy after this class, maybe also because I don't really like marketing.
- viii) *Empirical Research Project* with prof. Osterle: An easy class with a really nice teacher where we learned how to conduct market research, how to implement surveys and analyse the statistics of the results. The course was based on working on a project and we all liked it, it was something new and interesting.
- ix) *General Management Simulation Game* with prof Bartschat, Hoffmann and Johner: It was a 3 days training which started with some team-building games for the first 2 days which were really nice and the third day was only about decision making in a company from the high management point of view. It was interesting and a good simulation.

B. Academic Experience

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

Really helpful, willing to always help and open to any matters you might want to discuss. We chose our classes long time before the semester started, after the process of applying but when we got there most of us had to change some things because some classes were in the same days and timeframe, some of them got cancelled because not enough students registered for it so it was a bit stressing at the beginning but keeping contact with Anne and the study counselor Mr. Wensert helped me set a good schedule.

DHBW paired us with a buddy, a German student who had to take care of us and be willing to answer our questions if we had any. It was nice to know that I have someone I could ask anything but they did not help us that much. We went out once with them and that was it. But for any questions, the International Office is fast to answer and helpful.

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

The most rewarding classes for me were Finance with Mr. Flad and Intercultural Negotiation with Mrs. Matar. Like I explained before, Finance was a really challenging class with lots of useful information, details about how the investment department works in a company, how to check if a stock has a fair price and many other theories. The negotiation class was also really rewarding because it brought to attention many aspects of culture, communication and negotiations that you might not have thought of before. I liked it a lot also because the classes were really active and the teacher a sweet person.

3. What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?

I can say that German culture and Communication Styles was pretty boring and not that useful, it is really vague, we listened to millions of definitions, we had to read at home 2 books about how to deal with Germans in business and then make a resume of them in class. I do not advise you taking this class or Employability skills, taught by the same professor.

Another class that was not that valuable for me was International Social Media Marketing and Digital Storytelling. I did not feel challenged, there was no interaction from the teachers' side and all the knowledge they tried to share with us was pretty basic.

4. What classes would you advise other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?

I would advise you to take Finance and Investment, Intercultural Negotiation Training and a class of programming, like Java or what they can offer you during your semester.

I already mentioned the classes I did not like, such as German Culture and Communication Styles and International Social Media Marketing and Digital Storytelling. Even if I did not enjoy them a lot, they weren't that bad and if you need some extra credits then they are good enough but you will not learn much during these two classes.

C. Cultural/Personal Experience

1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

Being used with danish people who are willing to speak to you English in almost any circumstances, it was a bit of a change when I had to deal with many Germans that did not know or speak English. This problem did not occur at the university but you should know some words that you can use in public spaces, in the bus, restaurant, etc. The german classes were a good help in this matter.

Compared to our school in Copenhagen, DHBW is much bigger and with many buildings for different fields of studies. The system is pretty similar with what I was used in the first 2.5 years of my studies but the schedule was a shock. I had classes from 9, some days only one class or other days from 9-21.00 only with 1 or 2h lunch break. This only happened to me and a few other exchange students because I had to take 8 courses in order to have 30 credits to transfer to KEA. Besides these really long days sometimes we even had classes on Saturday morning, from 9 to 13.00 or 16.00. It did not happen really often but it is annoying when you need to go to school after a Friday night out.

The dorm I was given had a really good location and price (Johannesstrasse 90) but the conditions were not excelent. Being used with living in a dorm here in Denmark, it was a shock to share the toilets and showers but I did not let that change my opinion and I adapted fast to it. If you think this will be a big inconvenience for you, try to find a dorm that offers rooms with private bathrooms or rent an apartment if you can afford it.

Another cultural aspect that you should remeber when moving anywhere in Germany is the fact that all the supermarkets, shopping centers or any other small shops are closed on Sunday. I like planning my meals and doing groceries ahead so this was not such a bad thing for me but almost all the international students were starving on Sunday.

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

The best experience was meeting so many people from lots of really different countries and continents. At the beginning of the semester everyone was shy but I made a few friends from the first days and after a few weeks, when we started more of the classes, we were a big group of friends always getting together for dinners, parties or even travelling around Stuttgart. I am studying in the international class at KEA but at DHBW it was way different because we were just a few students from Europe in our group and most of them were from South Korea, Canada, Mexico, Jordan and some other countries. The fact that I made a lot of friends from all over the world and got to know some things about their culture really made me grateful for this semester abroad.



Canstatter Volksfest is the name for the Oktoberfest organised in Stuttgart and some say that is even better than the original one from Munich so try not to miss it! Go and check the amusement park, the food trucks, the gingerbread, the beers and everything you might find there. It is such a cool place and most of the students go and party there more than one time. I was there for 2 nights and it was the best party I ever joined, you cannot even imagine how crazy, fun and different it is. Germans know how to drink, party and eat so prepare for many fun nights.



3. What advice would you give other KEA students going to study abroad at the receiving school?

Make friends. Talk. Go out. Explore. Enjoy. This semester is your chance to get to know how is to live in a different country than yours, get to know people from different countries and even continents, to enjoy the lectures because most of them are good and to travel because Stuttgart is a great location from where you can make it to a lot of countries in a short bus/train ride or flight. At the beginning it will be hard, especially if this is the first time when you move alone to a new place. Take it easy, join the activities and with time you will realize what a great experience it is and how lucky you are. Don't miss too many classes, the professors will accept if you ask to leave once or twice but it's better if you go to all the classes because it will be easier to read for the exams.

Don't move with many suitcases because Germany is cheaper than Denmark and you will want to buy lots of things from there. When you get to your dorm you will notice that there is no bedding, so you need to go buy pillow, duvet, sheets etc. but do not go to IKEA because is far and not cheaper than if you will go buy all those things from Primark for example. You will also need an internet router, if you want to bring it for home or just remember to go buy it in the first day, for example from Saturn. If you apply for a dorm, do your best to contact the janitor to get your keys because they are only 1/2 hours in the dorm and this is the only option to receive your keys. When you receive the classes schedules it is a good thing to start planning where you want to travel during the semester and synchronize with the others so that you can maybe go together.



D. Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?
 - a. What did KEA help you with?

I decided long time before the deadline that I want to go abroad for my 5th semester so I just contacted Anne to ask about the process of applying. It was not hard, you just have to organise all your papers and decide the top 3 schools where you would like to go. This was the hardest part because I did not find too many feedback reports but I was lucky because we had 3 girls from DHBW in our class at KEA during the 4th semester and they convinced me into it.

KEA helped me with information and sending the documents for the Erasmus money, explained me how to fill the forms on Mobility and put me in contact with DHBW, after I got accepted.

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

They helped me with choosing the courses and we always kept in touch if a class got cancelled and what I can choose instead. They also answered my questions about dorms, how and where to send the money and stuff related.

DHBW and the International Office also helped us by organizing group activities, during the semester. We visited the Mercedes Benz museum, had a potluck dinner, went to the TV tower, ice skating, , minigolf, movie night and a few others.



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

I had no problems when I arrived, one of the buddies was waiting for me at the airport so it was easy to get to my dorm and get the key from my janitor.

It was difficult in the first day to go buy everything I needed for my room such as pillows, router etc. but I enjoyed it a lot and I was really excited for moving.

3. Where did you live?

Around may I applied at Studentenwerk for a room, I chose a cheap one (230 euros) but with a really good location, 10 minutes from the city center and also really close to all the university's buildings, on Johannesstraße 90. The only problem was that I did not have a personal toilet with shower and we were 14 people on that floor, sharing the bathroom. The facilities were good so if you are ok with these things you should choose this dorm because of its location and the good area around.

4. What kind of expenses did you have in general? Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I spend a lot more than what I planned and that was because we were eating out often, going to parties, travelling, going shopping etc. When you see that a country is much cheaper than Denmark you tend to buy even more things because of the low price but in the end I spent just as I would do in Denmark in an usual month. It is expensive to be an exchange student, have fun and travel in the same time but is definitely worth it!

