

GIP EXPERIENCE REPORT

Introduction

I, Preksha Panchamia, of batch 2017-20 had been given the opportunity to go for the Global Immersion Program, 2019 to Europe. After the interview process, I had been selected to go to DHBW, Ravensburg in Germany. The exchange was for a period of 3 months. Weeks before the exchange, I had a lot of paperwork to do. My much awaited adventure of the exchange started on 26th of March, 2019 when my flight took off for Europe from Mumbai.

Personal Aims

My main personal aim with respect to the exchange was to gain experience of studying abroad and also to gauge if I should pursue my further studies abroad or not. I also wanted to learn about the economy and the education system of a developed country like Germany. One of my other aims was to build a global network by meeting new people from different countries during the exchange.

Arrival and Orientation

My journey to Ravensburg was a rather long one. Ravensburg is a small town situated in the south of the southern federal state of Baden-Württemberg. The town does not have an airport thus I flew from Mumbai to Munich. I covered the three hour distance from Munich to Ravensburg by a Flixbus. I arrived at Ravensburg in the afternoon. I was picked up by Mr. Thomas Schieber, who is the Director of International Programs at the host university. He dropped me off at my accommodation. I was shown around the apartment by Mrs. Ingela Lundin, who is the International relation coordinator at the university. The next day of arrival was also kept for arrival of other students. The orientation event was held on the next day. We were introduced to all the staff members of the international office and were given guidelines about our stay in Ravensburg. We were also given information about how our course schedules, assessments and the grading procedures would be carried out. And of course, the orientation presented us with a chance to interact with all the other students who had come for the program.

Information about the University

My host university was DHBW, Ravensburg. DHBW stands for Duale Hochschule Baden Württemberg; which has been translated to the State Cooperative University of Baden Württemberg. The university has its presence in various cities across the state. In Ravensburg itself it has six campuses of which our lecture were mostly held in three of the campuses. Each campus is dedicated to a particular field of study like International business, hotel management, design etc. The courses offered to us were of different field of study and hence our classes took place in different buildings. At the university we were given the opportunity to study under professors from different fields and even different countries such as Germany, Switzerland and USA.

The university follows a very unique system for their full time student – which is the ‘Dual’ system of education also known as ‘Job Integrated Learning’. Under this system, the students at the university affiliate themselves with a corporate organisation. For one semester they study at the college like any other students, and for the next semester they work at the company that they are associated with.

Course Information

At DHBW we were offered courses from different majors. Most of our classes lasted from a period of two hours to eight hours. A few of our classes were limited to only the international group of students; and a few of them were along with the German students. I had opted for the following courses:

1. Management: International Finance & Accounting
2. International Business: Principles of International Business Models & Operations
3. International Law: Comparative Legal Systems
4. Economics: Economic Policy
5. Intercultural Management: Cultural-specific aspects of Germany
6. Methods and Social Skills: Project Management
7. Methods and Social Skills: Workshop Academic Research and Writing
8. Hospitality Management: Tourism Management
9. Hospitality Management: Hotel Management
10. Media and Communication Management: Crisis communication
11. German for Beginners A1.1 Part 1

Accommodation

The accommodation was provided to us by the college itself. All the international students lived in shared apartments. We each had our individual rooms. The bathroom and kitchen were common. Each apartment housed four to five students. The kitchen was equipped with all the necessary utensils and electronics used for preparing food but the food was to be bought by us. The electric stove in their kitchen was something new for me. Each room in the house had a thermostat so it was never too cold for us. There was a common laundry room with washing machines and a dryer for everyone in the building to use.

I shared my apartment with three other girls. My flatmates were from Catalonia, Taiwan and India. It was an interesting experience living with them and we spent a lot of great times together.

Ravensburg

Ravensburg is located in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg in the south of Germany. It is famously known as the 'City of Gates & Towers' as it has a lot of gates and towers which have been standing for a few centuries now because the city remained unaffected during the world wars. It was a small and quaint town. The college campuses were located in the city centre. We lived 3km away from there. Thankfully, the college had provided us with bus passes for students which we used to commute to college every day. The city had a proper railway station and bus station but did not have an airport. All other facilities were easily available to us. The nearest supermarket was less than a kilometre away from our house and there was one also located near our university. The weather when I had arrived in Ravensburg was below 10 degrees Celsius. By the time I was leaving Ravensburg, it had reached 28 degrees Celsius.

Travel

Travelling was a major part of my exchange experience. The travelling experience was very good. The location of Germany itself gave us an advantage and thus helped us to travel to variety of places. My travel companions for the all the trip were my friends I made during my exchange. The places we travelled to were Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Paris, Rome and many more places in Germany itself. I was able to learn a lot about the different cultures and places. I was able to see things that I've only seen in movies before. I also learnt how to travel alone and handle problematic situations abroad.

Conclusion

I would like to thank the Symbiosis International University to provide me with such a great opportunity. I am glad that I went for the three month exchange and came back a much stronger person. It was both challenging and interesting to live in a foreign country for 3 months without my family. But my stay was made very comfortable and enjoyable thanks to the friends that I made there and the staff from the international office of the university. This exchange has overall helped me to regain my confidence and has given me the courage to explore new and challenging thing in my life. The whole exchange was all that I expected and much more and I am grateful to have received a chance to be a part of it.





