

ERASMUS EXCHANGE SEMESTER: EXPERIENCE REPORT



Victoria Stein:

“While studying in Denmark I knew from the beginning that I want to go and study in Germany for some time. I had the idea because I already had some knowledge of German language which I wanted to improve. Overall, Germany is one of the biggest economies in Europe and living in a big city was a challenging experience. I took the chance to study in Wedel as an Erasmus exchange student. I can strongly state that the whole administrative process was very smooth and easy thanks to the effective work of both sides, sending and receiving institution.



I got to Germany in the beginning of August to already start to saddle in my new hometown. Also, I must mention that I moved to Germany with my boyfriend who is German, born and raised in Hamburg. This was a huge bonus point for me because I had a lot of help from him regarding all the paperwork and documents which I needed to issue. Additionally, it was easy for me to get an accommodation as well. All that above, I can say that my stay as an Erasmus student was a little bit different than it was for others.

Regarding study start activities, everything went great, tutors were very helpful with every situation and we had a lovely city tour. It is very important for tutors to be open-minded, active and caring – these characteristics describe exactly Jaime and Vincent who were there for me.

During my semester, I took the following courses: International Economics, International service Strategies, Business & Commercial English, Marketing and Business management case study. Comparing to my home university, the studies were much more theoretical. Also, for my big surprise, the courses International Economics and International Service Strategies were taught completely in English just because of me. I must admit it was kind of pressuring and I didn't feel completely welcomed

every day by the other students, which I completely understand. No negative comments to the teacher – Mr. Giersch was great and I have great respect for him teaching in English because of me. He was a great help in my studies.

I am living in Schenefeld, which is quite far from Wedel so it was a bit difficult for me to take part from school activities. I felt a little bit left out because of that but it was my decision to not live in Wedel. Although, I got a good part-time job which lets me practice my German skills a lot. Overall, I met a lot of people from different nationalities, from FH Wedel and from my work which was my goal in the beginning as well. Wedel itself is very lovely city.

In the end, I would like to thank everybody that made my Erasmus experience happen and helped me through the experience. All teachers were great and welcoming.

For next Erasmus exchange students, I would recommend living near the university to take part in all the activities that are going on, relax and travel around the country. This is the time to explore new things. To learn a new language as well, it is very beneficial while living in another country, especially in Germany. It is essential to know the basic phrases and words, otherwise it can be hard to come by.”

Bao Tam:

1 First days on exchange

“I was lucky enough to have my family friends come from Düsseldorf to Hamburg Airport and pick me up. I had two big luggage’s and a full backpack which would have been difficult to travel with in the public transport. They gave me a lot of food, cooking ingredients, cooking equipment, a bike and different cloths. Those things were very useful for me and I used them almost every day to the day I left.



The first thoughts and days of the exchange were not very good; I was not very happy of the town I was living in, the university I was attending and the student apartment. That then changed later. After I attended a few classes in the university, the tutors showed me around the town and I got to know people better in the dormitory, I started to getting used to the life and I started to enjoy my time in the exchange.

2 Studentenwohnheim – student dormitory

I lived in a student dormitory in Wedel, a kilometre from the university I was attending during my exchange. My first thoughts on the dormitory was not very good, on the first look the apartment looked very messy and that I could not get along with the people in the dormitory.

But after a while when you get to know people better and German people better, you realize that they are very helpful and friendly. Living in the dormitory turned out to be very fun, having people and friends to do activities every day are one of the strongest points in the dormitory.

3 Living and expenses

The food expenses and general expenses in Germany are cheaper compared to Finland, the food, the public transportation to Hamburg is cheap.

The dormitory will usually already have cooking equipment which you will share with your flatmates and the apartment room will be already furnished. The dormitory has washing machine and a dryer which must be paid with coins and the dryer wires will be available.

3.1 Transportation

A ticket to travel from Wedel to Hamburg and spend the whole day in Hamburg would cost about 7 euros. In addition to possibilities to even cheaper group tickets, if you are going with your friends.

The university is right next to the student apartment so there is no need to pay for transportation.

4 German people

German people are much more open and friendly compared to Finnish people, but there is still a stern reserved Northern European culture behaviour among the people.

Like most northern European countries, they need a little time to get used to and get warm to new people, but in that aspect, they are much more friendlier and warm quicker and easier compared to Finnish people. Also, German people like cars and beer.

5 Wedel

Wedel is a nice town outside Hamburg, not big enough to be a city but big enough to have few food chains, few clothing chains, restaurants and bars.

The town has a beautiful river Elbe running by it and like most of northern European countries, looks better in the summer. The river is nice and calming and one of the nicest things I have seen. Wedel in my opinion is the perfect middle ground between a municipality in Finland and a City. A small, quiet town but still enough life and services to seem vivid.

6 Hamburg

Hamburg is one of the biggest cities in Germany. Big city filled with all kinds of life, restaurants, shopping and classic buildings, nightlife in Reeperbahn to nice culture rich buildings in central Hamburg. There will be also a lot of bars and shopping malls and food places of all sorts.

7 Weather

If you want to get away from -20 snowy Finland but still enjoy the cool rainy North European weather, North Germany is perfect for that. It might rain time to time, but nothing compared to Finnish weather.

8 The university

There are not a lot of courses available in English, but the courses that are available are very specialized in computer science, a specialization maybe not very fitting for a business information technology student such as myself, but if you have the interest, it is not hard to learn about these courses.

The idea of exchange is to do something different anyway, so if you have even a slight interest in these subjects, you will enjoy your time here.”

Accommodation:

Probably one of the most important points is your accommodation. It is really important that you start looking for one before arriving here in Wedel.

Normally there are two options to choose from: You can either live in Hamburg, where you have to take the public transport (20 min – 1h) to arrive at the University of Applied Science Wedel, or you live in Wedel, where it takes normally 5-15 min to arrive to the university. Both options have their pros and cons: If you choose to live in Hamburg, your options to have a “student life” are better than in Wedel, simply because it is a bigger city with a big university. On the other hand, if you choose to take the accommodation in Wedel you have the proximity to the university and you will soon realize that it is a really small town with a small community. Both options are great for students, depending on what you prefer.

If you choose to live in Wedel, here are a great option we have picked for you:

Studentenwohnheim Wedel (probably the cheapest and most common option):

<http://www.studentenwerk.sh/en/accommodation/dormitories/wedel/wohnanlage-tinsdaler-weg.html>

