

EXCHANGE REPORT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM, GERMANY

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MAJOR: MARKETING

SCROLL TO BOTTOM FOR PICTURES!



CHOOSING YOUR HOST

Why did you choose your host institution and country?

I chose Germany because I wanted to have a fun time, meet a lot of new people, drink often and be in a hub for traveling. The pros were that it was definitely a hub, I had a ton of options for flights and buses that were very cheap (with Ryanair and Flixbus). Another pro is that I stayed in the residence which was so easy and fun to meet new people. Another pro about Mannheim is that it isn't a huge city, so it was a nice change to be somewhere quaint in comparison to Montreal. Some cons are that the city isn't the most beautiful (in the summer it is much nicer though), it isn't a known city so friends may want to meet you in Frankfurt instead, and that German is a very difficult language to learn or pick up on.

What were the semester dates at your host institution? How are the semesters called and split? What are the main holidays and breaks?

The semester was called the Spring semester, with school being from February 10th to June 9th (including exams). We had a fantastic Easter break from April 6th to April 17th which would've been a great opportunity to travel. Also, because exam period began only end of May, we wouldn't have had to really worry about studying for finals just yet.

What facilities were available at the school (library, gym, etc) and did you pay extra fees to be able to use them?

The school was super organized and had a large amount of options for amenities and facilities. There were a few libraries and study spaces that look a lot like Concordia's, 4 gym's that were spread out around the city and many different cafes and restaurants affiliated with the school. Library and study spaces are free to use (they even have a part of the website where you can see how many seats are available per library), and gym's require memberships that are decently priced.

How easy/difficult was it to match courses with your Concordia courses? Do you have any specific suggestions for future students?

It was pretty easy to match courses with Concordia courses. It is a business school so it is definitely easiest to match courses like COMM 215, 210, 222, 223, 224, 305 and 308. Also, they offered a few Marketing courses and have a ton of BTM and FINA classes that you could match. A suggestion I would say is to make sure you look at the ECTS per course, since to be a full time student you need a total of 24 ECTS, and classes range from 3, 4, 5 or 6 ECTS each, so you don't want to be overwhelmed taking so many courses.

What can students expect out of the classes they will be attending? How difficult were the courses? What was the grading/evaluation system like?

The courses are decently demanding. I found that the courses were more difficult than JMSB classes mostly because it's a very prestigious economics school, so they integrate a lot of math, even in all marketing courses. Also they split their courses into 2 (lectures and exercises). During the lectures the teacher goes over the content and slides and during exercises the TA's do practice problems and answer questions. Since the courses are all 100% finals, I reeeeaallllyyy suggest you read the content and go to exercise classes. The

lectures aren't so important and the exercise classes are only 1h30 a week, so it's really manageable to stay on top of things. The grading system is from 1 to 5, 1 being the higher score. It's weird at first but you get used to it. JMSB students must maintain a C, and that's a 4 in their grading scheme. Also something to keep in mind, when you're doing math problems they use a decimal as we use a comma for larger numbers. Ex: "350 000" might be written as "350.000".

What were the immigration procedures and requirements for your host country? Did you need a visa (please mention your citizenship)? How much did the visa cost? Are there any special options available to Canadians/Quebecers?

I'm Canadian. So this part is a good amount of paperwork, it's a bit of a pain but it's totally do-able. You DO NOT NEED A VISA, but you DO NEED a RESIDENT'S PERMIT. This is really confusing to so many people. So you don't need to apply to get a Visa to leave beforehand, you can apply for a resident's permit at the K7 (an office) once you get to Mannheim. First you need to register with the city (at K7), then you need to schedule an appointment to get a resident's permit (and have all necessary documents), and then you'll receive this permit. Make the appointment ASAP at the office once you get there, and don't be shocked if it's only given to you 2-3 months later. You also need to register at the foreigner's office once you arrive, as an international student. Then you're good to go!

How much (approximately) should students budget monthly for the following: housing, local transportation, food, health insurance, going out, travel to and from the host country as well as within?

Living in Mannheim is so cheap!! Groceries would cost me 15 euros a week, housing was 350 euros a month, their busses and trains are free on weekend and after 5pm, I didn't get health insurance but I think its 100 euros a month, going out beers are 3 euros and drink 4 euros approximately. Traveling to and from countries is where you will want to save your money for, I stayed in Hostels never more than \$50 CAD per night, and airfare was between \$50 and \$200 per flight depending on where you choose to go. **For going out, this city is WILD. The school hosts outdoor DJ parties literally within the campus. There are also soooooo many bars, and so many different types, and they're all fun and walking distance from each other. In the summer people will hangout along the water and barbecue, play sports and drink. It gets to be 25 Celsius by March and April and it's just so nice.

HOUSING

Where did you live while you were on exchange?

I lived in a student residence, at Hafenstrasse 41. My residence was on the water, at the edge of the city and was packed with mostly exchange students, and some locals. I think really liked my residence because so many internationals were living there (there are 4 buildings connected), which have 2 party rooms in between them. I had my own room which was very clean and had everything I needed. I had 4 roommates in my flat, with 2 bathrooms, I had a single bed and 2 armoires to put my clothes, and we all had mini kitchens with a hotplate and fridge, inside our rooms. (I attached pictures). I was really happy with my decision to be in a

residence because it meant I didn't have to walk home alone after going out, I made friends really quickly and it was a 20 minute walk to school (and basically everywhere else in the city center too).

How difficult was it to find housing? Did the host school assist you with the housing process?

Apparently it's very hard to find housing on your own in Mannheim. I saw a few of my friend's apartments and they're honestly not that nice for the extra work. So unless a single mattress really bothers you, I'd suggest going for the student residences! There are 3 or 4 different options that you can choose from (with a strict registration time slot and on a first come, first serve basis) but I got my first choice, and the other options are all decent!

Do you have any suggestions on good places for students to look for housing? Do you have any suggestions for locations in the city students might want to live?

This is the student residence website: <https://www.stw-ma.de/en/Housing/Student+Accommodations.html>

- Am Verbindungskanal, Hafenstrasse 35-45 is where I was :) It's a bit on the outskirts of the city center, but it's actually in the area where all the bars are, so I found it the best location. There are busses every 4 minutes that run by too if you're not comfortable walking.

- Wohnhaus B7 is also a decent option! They have living room and kitchens which is nice, but there are less students in these.

- Carl-Zuckermayer-strasse is another option for international students. I never visited this one but it's near a jail which apparently is really creepy, so watch out.

- The last option is Wohnhaus G7. This one has a gym and yoga studio attached to it and is also a decent option, but I didn't get to visit it.

You can decide on whether you want to share a room or have one to yourself, and if you want an apartment to yourself or to have 3-5 roommates.

SETTLING IN

What orientation activities were there for incoming exchange students? If possible, please provide a brief summary of what your first week was like.

The orientation activities consist of a first week with tours and academic presentations to give you info about registering for classes, exams and general information about the school. I went to most of them and they were well done, so I suggest you attend as well. None of them are long (1-2h a day), and the tour is SUPER useful since the palace is massive.

VISUM (which is the international committee at the school) organizes 2-3 bar nights per week that are pretty fun! They will have drink deals and themes so you can go and get to know all the international students. Even if they're on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, I suggest you go out these days and travel on weekends. After that VISUM will also host quite a few day trips that are really well-priced and run by students like brewery visits, wine tours, trip to Dresden, the castles and more.

Are there any non-academic related formalities to be taken care of upon arrival?

Upon arrival make sure you take the first week to register at the K7 and as an International student at L2. You can see on University of Mannheim's website section for international students all of the documents you'll need, and I really suggest you print and fill them all out at home ahead of time and have them categorized for where you'll need what. You also need to go get your student ID card printed at the Schloss (main building of the school), and take your picture for it with the app (just a selfie does the job).

What are the school related formalities to be taken care of upon arrival?

All you have to do is register for your courses (only upon arrival) and make sure they add up to 24 ECTS, and that the Concordia Student Exchange Association has accepted these courses. After a month you'll also have to register separately for your final exams, but you'll get plenty of email reminders for that. You'll also receive a school email that you use to sign into the school's wifi, and if you can't figure it out there are booths like at JMSB where they will help you.

Where and how did you set up a bank account? How did you go about activating a cell phone?

I opened a Tangerine bank account when I was in Montreal before leaving - best decision ever. Tangerine is affiliated with DeutscheBahn, a popular bank in Germany and there is one near school that you can take out money without any charges (yessss). Activating your cell phone plan is complicated if you want to be cheap. If you only want to pay 10 euros a month and have 5 GB of data and text, you can go to Aldi and buy a pre-paid card, but you'll have to go to a post office and confirm your identity (along with a ton of other complicated steps) to get it to work.

The easier option which is 15 euros a month for 3GB of data, is to go to one of the many stores that are like Telus or Bell (called 02, Telekom, etc) and get them to give you a SIM card without any set-up!

Do you have any travel tips, information about must-see places, or tips on places to go out for students attending your host school?

Since I went home after 6 weeks of being in Mannheim :(I didn't get to travel as much as I wanted to. But here are my suggestions: go to all of the VISUM trips, they're student run so you know they're fun and they always choose cool places. Use Flixbus to go to places that are 3-6h bus ride for soo cheap (I went to Strasbourg, the Netherlands and was planning to do Geneva also). You can also take the train using the DB Navigator app and go through most of Germany and Switzerland.

For going out, I didn't get to explore as much as I wanted to, but international students often go to Barrios (for drink deals), SOHO (for dancing - which is 2 min from Hafenstrasse res), L5 for coffee and Monday drinks, and residence parties any other time.

Did you encounter much culture shock during your exchange? Is there anything that Concordia students studying in your host country should be aware of?

I didn't encounter a lot of culture shock during my exchange, other than the fact that German is a really difficult language. Mannheim is a really cute city and everyone I met was super fun and nice, especially the Germans. The school is also pretty prestigious, so dress nice to class (not sweats).

FINAL THOUGHTS

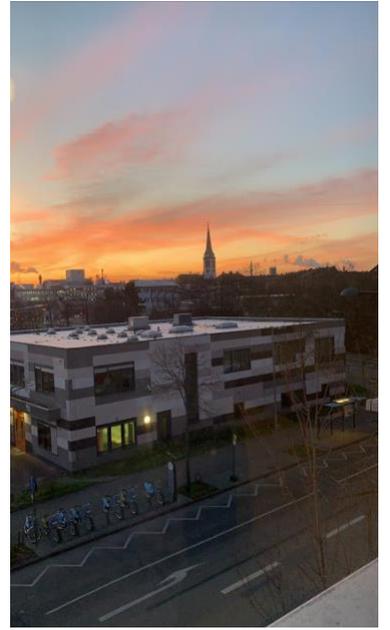
How has your exchange affected you in your academic and personal life?

This exchange made me realize that we can't plan and control everything in life. The Coronavirus literally sent me home after spending a month and a half in Germany. I was just getting settled in, just met a bunch of super nice friends and we had just made huge travel plans to do Spain, Italy, Morocco and Greece, so I was super sad to head home. I also was so mentally prepared to leave Montreal for 6 months to travel with new friends and that got taken away from me. On a more positive note, it made me realize that I absolutely need adventure and excitement in my life, and that we have to take every chance we're given or we'll have regrets.

Do you have any further advice for future exchange students or any other comments you would like to add?

On my way to Germany, I was flying from Montreal with Air Canada and they made a huge deal about me not having a Visa before leaving, and almost didn't let me on the flight. This was completely their mistake, but I didn't have the paperwork on hand saying that my University confirmed I didn't need the Visa. So just do yourself a favor and print that out in case :). Also, feel free to message me on Facebook if you have any questions about the University of Mannheim, because it's honestly SO GREAT.

MANNHEIM, GERMANY



WEEKEND TRAVELS



HAFENSTRASSE 41 ROOM

