

**Ella Kusch**

**San Diego State University**

**International Business**

**Winter 23/24**

I agree to the publication of this report on the RIO website for future incoming students.

## **PREPARATIONS FOR THE STAY ABROAD**

At my home university, I study International Business - Western Europe and German. Because of my major, I knew I would be studying abroad in Germany during my seventh semester. About a year before I went abroad, I had multiple Zoom meetings with my home university study abroad coordinator, where she explained the application process and the preparation process. I also was in contact with the study abroad coordinator in Reutlingen, who answered all of the questions that arose along the way. Both were very useful sources of information and supported me during this time of preparation.

The application itself was straightforward and I completed it over the course of a few months. The application consisted of a statement of purpose, projected course planning list, contact information, language experience/interaction, and disclosures/waivers. The most important part of this application is the statement of purpose, as you really want to personalize your response so that both the home university and host university understand your intent to study abroad.

I specifically wrote about why I was keen on studying in Germany, what I had done to prepare myself for studying abroad, and how studying abroad would affect my future. My reasoning was that ESB within Reutlingen University is a fantastic business school with some of the top ratings in Germany, I was eager to boost my German language skills, and gain an understanding of the country where I would like to potentially work, all while getting a noteworthy education. I had prepared for this by talking to other students who had studied abroad in different countries, taken German courses, utilized Duolingo for daily linguistic practice, and did a bit of research about Reutlingen and Baden-Württemberg.

## **STUDYING IN MY HOST COUNTRY**

After I received my acceptance letter from Reutlingen University (Hochschule Reutlingen), I started preparing for the upcoming semester. I had to pre-register for classes, which were provided to me in a rough list by my home and university. After I had submitted which classes seemed interesting to me, I was provided with a larger list of courses by my host university, and I then decided to switch a few courses around. The process was quite simple and the pamphlet of all the course descriptions was super helpful in providing me with exactly what each course would consist of. I got the courses I wanted to take approved by my home and host universities and made sure the credits would be transferable in the end.

When I arrived at Reutlingen University, there were many introductory events, university-organized activities, and student-led activities. Before school started, the exchange students met each other and were introduced to the university by the study-abroad coordinators. The coordinators helped us with questions we had and facilitated us getting our resident permits.

We also were given a tour of the school by some student “Buddies,” who were older semester students. We kept in contact with these buddies for the first week or so, as we got adjusted. As the semester went on, I attended many student-organized parties and events and even to a ski trip in Switzerland. I enjoyed the time spent with my classmates and friends that I made, as my home university is very large, so not everyone is as close and friendly as the students are here.

As for academic differences and similarities between Hochschule Reutlingen and San Diego State University, there are certainly a few. Here, I had smaller classes that were seminar-style, in which participation was expected. I was assigned very little homework but had to participate in many group projects and presentations. Furthermore, my courses presented numerous case studies and real-world scenarios that required analysis and problem-solving to devise appropriate solutions. At my home university, the classes are more lecture-style and less interactive. Students are expected to take notes and then learn more material at home. And, we are assigned large sums of homework each week, with only a few presentations. Overall, I think Hochschule Reutlingen is more collaborative than my home University.

## **STAYING IN YOUR HOST COUNTRY**

My time abroad has been truly incredible. I would enthusiastically participate in a study abroad program countless times and strongly urge everyone to embark on such a journey at least once in their lifetime. Arriving in Germany during the winter semester allowed me to witness the transition of seasons, from the warmth and lush green landscapes of summer to the vibrant fall foliage, culminating in the serene white blanket of snow enveloping Reutlingen. The experience of observing these natural transformations was nothing short of beautiful.

While Reutlingen may not be a sprawling metropolis, the surrounding area offers a plethora of activities. Within the city itself, there are numerous scenic walks you can enjoy, the weekly market in the city center boasts many amazing stands, a variety of tasty restaurants to try, the Freibad (public pool/waterpark) to go to in the summer months, and I recommend going to a Reutlingen football match at least once. Additionally, neighboring towns offer opportunities to explore diverse markets, engage in shopping, and indulge in sightseeing. Stuttgart is also about an hour away, which has many great places to explore, such as the Porsche Museum and the Wasen in the fall. Conveniently, the bus and train system, accessible with the semester ticket, the Deutschland ticket, or individual fares, facilitates easy travel to all these locations.

During my time abroad, I had the chance to explore various German cities and other countries. Upon my arrival in Germany, I joined two fellow SDSU students for a tour of Frankfurt, using the opportunity to walk around and immerse myself in the country's atmosphere. Exploring München on two occasions, once for Oktoberfest and another to stay with a school friend, provided me with enriching experiences that I hope to repeat. A visit to Berlin allowed me to

meet a previously unknown cousin, explore numerous museums, witness iconic landmarks, and indulge in the vibrant techno club scene. Given Germany's central location, I seized the opportunity to venture into neighboring countries, including the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, and Qatar, each offering unforgettable experiences.

## **PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS**

If you plan to visit Reutlingen, in addition to the aforementioned recommendations, it's essential to explore the Christmas market, engage in workouts at McFit, either reside in or visit the Aquarium apartment complex at Pestalozzistraße 41, and embark on a hike to the summit of Achalm. The Christmas market offers a fantastic opportunity to savor various traditional German foods and drinks, including the delicious Glühwein (mulled wine) while admiring the handcrafted items created by vendors. For fitness enthusiasts or those looking to start a workout routine, obtaining a membership at McFit is highly recommended, with its diverse range of machines and numerous fitness classes. Aquarium, where I lived, provides a great setting for meeting new international and German students within a shared apartment (WG). Lastly, hiking to the top of Achalm was a personal highlight, as it offered a panoramic view of Reutlingen from the vantage point of an old castle ruin.

## **PERSONAL CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, studying abroad in Reutlingen has been a remarkable chapter in my academic journey, leaving an indelible mark on my personal and professional growth. My expectations have been met, as I didn't know I could experience so much while attending ESB. I would rate my experience as an eight out of ten, as I could've done more sightseeing and done a better job at potentially establishing a career for myself. One day, I strive to come back to Germany and work or make a life for myself. The exposure to diverse academic approaches, cultural immersion, and exploration of new places have collectively shaped an experience that I will cherish for a lifetime.

Santiago, Pedro, and I when we first arrived in Frankfurt in September.



Me and my cousin when we met for the first time in Berlin.



My friends and I in front of a portion of the Berlin Wall.



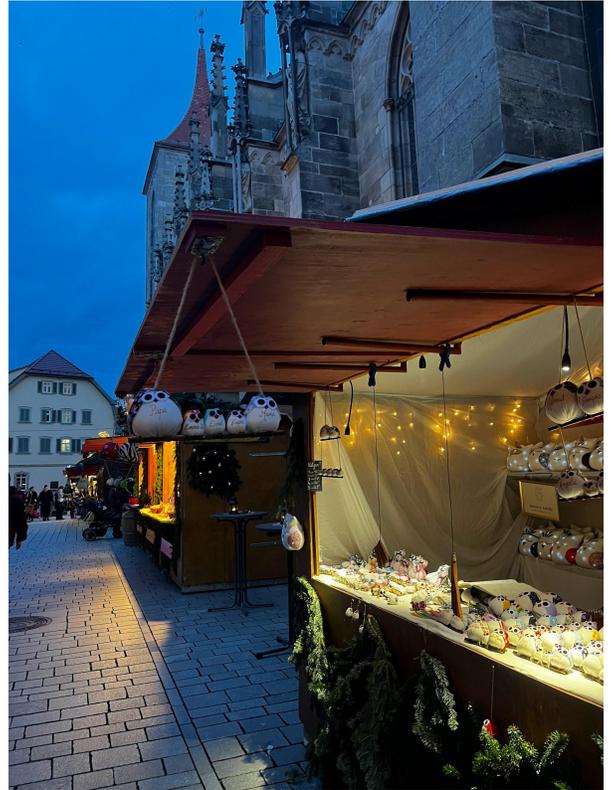
My trip to Qatar with Santiago Garin and Pedro Garin, who are also studying abroad here in Reutlingen. We went to see the Formula 1 race.



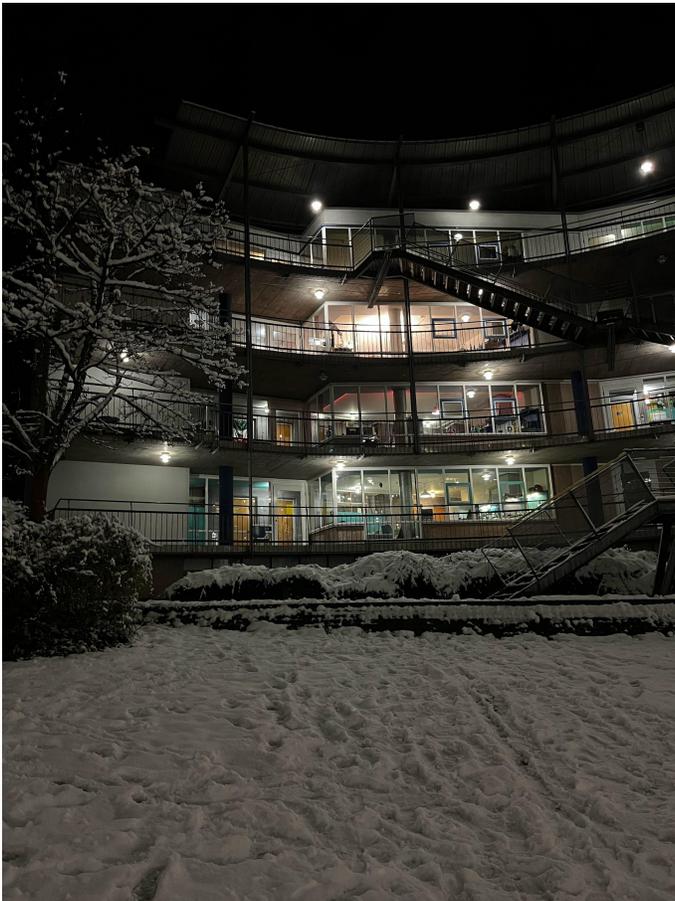
My cousin and his friends that I stayed with and visited in the Netherlands.



The Christmas market in Reutlingen.



Aquarium when it snowed at the beginning of December.



Some of my friends and I in Tübingen.



A class trip I went to in September by the Walchensee.



My friends and I on a school ski trip to Davos, Switzerland.

