



My name is Jada Wellen, I am a 3rd year Industrial Engineering student who was fortunate enough to be a part of the exchange programme to Germany through the Erasmus+ scholarship. I attended Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences in Munich for a semester.

I was born and raised in Sydenham as the eldest grandchild in my family. This meant that everything I had to do was the first out of all my cousins, first to graduate high school, first to get their drivers license and now first to visit a foreign country.

After receiving my letter of acceptance, I felt elated, proud, and anxious. Before any of these feelings could sink in, I was more preoccupied with the preparations for the journey ahead. Once it had settled, I had realised the gravity of what I had accomplished and how great of an opportunity I had. This was the first time that I would be flying internationally, living on my own, managing my own finances and being apart from my family for so long. When the realisation set in, I was excited all over again.

There were many differences and similarities that I experienced, the most common differences were that everyone stands on the right-hand-side on an escalator, no shoes are worn in-doors and recycling is taken seriously. I enjoyed the freedom that their transportation system gave me as it was easily accessible and reliable. People kept to themselves in public yet were surprising friendly when approached and I always felt safe. Outside of campus my days consisted of a lot of shopping, walking, and socialising. I made connections with people from all around the world and created memories that will last forever. I tried new things, from German cuisine in Berlin to touching snow for the first time in Austria. I got to explore and meet new people, new languages, new cultures and identified what made us similar and what divided us (like cutting a pizza with scissors).

The university had everything and more, my classes were interactive and easy to follow. I had access to 3D printers and attained knowledge on how to use them, I could experiment and test out the machines to my heart's content (as a future engineer, this was highly appealing). The lecturers would ask questions that triggered discussions about different processes or companies from different countries. I had numerous encounters with international and German students while on campus. They were all friendly, inquisitive, and helpful. The subjects I chose were more practical based and required presentations and reports, therefore I had more time for explorations and less stress for exams.

The majority of people spoke English but there were certain banks or restaurants where I experienced communication issues. PayPal, Tripicount and MVG were

useful applications that I used and relied on regularly. If there was one thing that I could change, it would have been to have not taken my Huawei cell phone. It caused me a lot of issues due to the recent Google restrictions. These problems seem trivial now and I am grateful for this opportunity and all that I have learnt.

This experience was truly once in a lifetime, and I am very appreciative to all the people that had a hand in guiding me through it. I feel as though I have grown as an individual and as a future engineer.

By Jada Wellen