Greetings from Germany!

I am a 4th year business student concentrating in International business and Marketing. I went on exchange to Germany in the fall term 2014. I chose University of Mannheim because of its reputation and as a business-preferred partner University from SFU.

Planning an exchange study from SFU is not complicated. There are guidelines to follow and there are not as many things to prepare as you might expect. I think to choose the course is the most consuming time during my exchange planning. However, as a business student, there are course databases, which make it easier to choose what courses to take for your university choice. Furthermore, I opened a bank account in Germany to make my daily transaction easier using a debit card. It is also a good idea to have some cash in your wallet to buy some snacks (bratwurst or pretzel) because some stores do not have the debit card machine.

I arrived in Germany two weeks before my orientation days. I flew to Frankfurt from Vancouver, and Mannheim city is located only 30 minutes away from Frankfurt using ICE train (German fast train). Furthermore, I lived in the dormitory called Studenten Ludwig Frank (or Ulmenweg) as most of the student there usually called it. It is a bit far from the city because it took me 20 minutes by bus to reach the university. However, the place is really nice because it is not noisy as it usually is if located in the city. In addition, one cool thing about Mannheim city is that the city address is based on letter (A1, B1, C2, …). There are no street address in the city and its easy to find the address if you walk around in the city. The city is not big as in Vancouver, but it still nice because it’s quite a modern city design compare to other small cities in Germany.

Furthermore, the course registration is a little bit confusing. The course required the student to register online with their platform (ILIAS), however you have to wait until the course start and you might not get the class that you want if the class is full. If the class is full, you will be selected randomly in their system, so you might have to prepare other courses to take. The grading system in the business school usually consists of final exam and presentation (mostly for marketing courses). For finance or other subjects, there might be midterm or not surprising sometimes it is only based on 100% final exam.

Germany is a pretty huge country in Europe if you travel around in there. You can use train or drive to other cities in Germany or to neighbor countries such as France, Netherlands, Switzerland, etc. The German fast train (ICE) is an easy way to travel, but it is a bit expensive. Another ways to find a reasonable price ticket are to take the regional train and if you plan ahead your travel day (and sometimes during night or early morning time). Moreover, the weather during the fall season is pretty much the same as in Vancouver (with less rain). There are a lot to see in Europe, depending on your budget the most attracting places to go within Germany are Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich. Outside from Germany, if you like the old town city, go to Prague (Czech Republic). If you like to see the Mountain View, Switzerland is a great option. However, everything is more expensive in Switzerland than in Germany. In addition, there are
some cool places to visit near Mannheim such as Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Würzburg, and Stuttgart. In Stuttgart, there are Porsche and Mercedez-Benz museum.

In the fall term 2014, there were approximately 700 exchange student with almost 500 of them were business exchange student. There is a student organization (VISUM) that organized all the events for the exchange students. They have events almost every week from the beginning of the semester until 3 weeks before the exam begins. Therefore, do attend their events and do not worry because they organize cool events such as semester party, pub-crawl, international dinner, etc. It is a great opportunity for you to meet with new friends and enjoy the best of your exchange experience.

After my exchange study in Germany, I can feel the difference of studying abroad and studying in Canada. I feel less pressure when study abroad because I have the opportunity to travel while studying. It is your responsibility to keep up with your study and travel time together. Prepare ahead your trip and get out of your comfort zone to get the best out of your exchange experience. In conclude, study abroad is awesome! Be open-minded and enjoy your one of the last time experience of studying in other countries.

Some Nice Photos:
1. Mannheim Palace (School)
2. Cafeteria (School)
3. Ice Hockey Game (Entertainment)
4. Heidelberg Trip with Friends (Travel)

5. Bern-Switzerland (Travel outside Germany)