

Host University
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Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: WHU - Otto Beisheim School of Management

Exchange term (including the duration): Summer program, 06.05.2025-21.05.2025

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Exchange Experience

WHU is located in a small town on the western side of Germany called Vallendar. It lies right by the Rhine River, offering beautiful scenery and views, as well as great spots for spontaneous picnics. The town itself has an old-fashioned charm, with each building looking distinct from the others. The abundance of trees, bushes, and greenery embedded throughout the town makes simply walking through it a wonderful experience.

On the other side of the Rhine River is a city called Koblenz. Aside from being a historic site and a beautiful place to visit, it offers a wide range of entertainment options for anyone looking to enjoy themselves with friends. These attractions include bars, pubs, restaurants, and even the option to take a cruise along the Rhine or ride a cable car over the river for amazing views.

Germany is relatively large—at least by Israeli standards, I would assume. Throughout the program, we had the opportunity to travel to several German cities, such as Frankfurt and Cologne, as well as various small towns, each one more picturesque than the last.

Located in Vallendar, WHU is the leading school of management in Germany and is highly ranked and esteemed across Europe. The campus, like the rest of Vallendar, has a unique structure and offers a very enjoyable learning environment. It is located quite close to the student accommodations provided by the program (about a 5–8-minute walk). The university staff are kind and caring, and in my experience, we never lacked anything.

The program covered various aspects of doing business in Europe. Topics included the European Capital Market, the role of family businesses in Germany, entrepreneurship, and competition in the European market. Most classes followed the structure of a morning lecture, followed by group work on a case, and concluded with a review session where each group presented its findings and engaged in discussion.

We also had several company visits, including:

1. The ECB (European Central Bank) – We were introduced to its core missions and challenges, such as maintaining stable inflation in the EU while fostering healthy economic growth.
2. Werit – A family-owned business that manufactures and reconditions plastic products. We participated in a panel with the CEO and three members of the owner family, who are still actively involved in the company.
3. Deutsche Bank – One of Germany's leading banks with a strong international presence. We discussed topics such as investment banking and Mergers & Acquisitions - fascinating subjects, at least for an MBA student.

Almost every day featured a different professor. All were highly professional and knowledgeable, and they delivered fun and engaging sessions - no class felt the same as the last.

We participated in various extracurricular activities, including a team-building session on the day of arrival, a boat trip to Koblenz followed by a guided tour, a visit to Burg Eltz Castle, a party at a club in Koblenz, and a vineyard walk with wine tasting.

Overall, the program offered a range of unique social activities while also giving us ample free time to explore the town and surrounding region at our own pace. Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) were completely free, offering great opportunities to travel and experience more of the country. For example, we spent our first weekend in Cologne and the second taking a bus to Luxembourg, which turned out to be surprisingly close.

This program was an amazing opportunity to meet MBA students from a wide range of countries and business schools. Besides expanding my social network, it allowed me to learn firsthand about the state of affairs, politics, policies, histories, and traditions of many different cultures in a short period of time.

One of my favorite aspects of the exchange program was simply the time we had to spend together—discussing, learning, and bonding.

The experience also gave me a meaningful introduction to the business environment in Germany and Europe, offering insights into what makes the European market both attractive and challenging.

The accommodation provided by the university was well-equipped (laundry facilities, bedding, microwave, hot plate, plates, glasses, silverware, etc.) and located a short 5–8-minute walk from campus. However, you do need to bring (or purchase locally) items like food, spices, soap, shampoo, etc.

Israeli passport holders do not need a visa to travel to Germany for short stays, including this program.

Although Vallendar is somewhat remote, transportation is easily accessible. There are buses to nearby cities and a local train station. The university provides a bus pass for free travel within the Vallendar-Koblenz area. However, this pass doesn't extend beyond that region. Since transportation in Germany can be costly, I highly recommend purchasing the Deutschland-Ticket, which offers unlimited travel (excluding ICE trains) across Germany for €58.

There are plenty of insurance options available - nothing extravagant is necessary.

Accommodation for the full duration of the program cost around €470, which I found to be a very reasonable price considering the quality of the room. Food expenses are additional - the program typically only provides lunch, so students are responsible for breakfast and dinner.

There are several affordable spots in Vallendar for breakfast and coffee. For dinner, there are some great restaurants - ironically, the best ones we visited were Italian. There's even a Michelin-starred restaurant that offers seasonal Mediterranean cuisine, though we didn't get the chance to visit it.

If you prefer cooking, the accommodation is well-equipped for that, and grocery prices are generally quite reasonable.

Vallendar has a few small bars. We often went to Herzog Von Nassau, which offered great hospitality, good prices, and even a bowling alley. For more variety, Koblenz has many bars, clubs, and restaurants, including a fantastic ramen and sushi place we enjoyed.

Learning how business is done in a different region, specifically Europe, gave me a fresh perspective on topics I've encountered during the MBA program at Collier. I felt this impact clearly in my first class after returning.

I also gained new insights into investment banking and found it compelling enough to explore further during my studies at TAU.

Finally, since I rarely speak English on a daily basis, this was a valuable experience for me to spend entire days and weeks communicating solely in English. This will undoubtedly help in both my academic journey and future professional life.

On a personal note, I happened to be the only Israeli student in the program, and I'm actually very thankful for that. It meant I had no one to rely on for familiarity, which pushed me to network and make meaningful connections with students from all over the world.

- **Tips**

1. Buy the Deutschland-Ticket upon arrival - it can save you a lot on travel.
2. Consider visiting neighboring countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, or Luxembourg. FlixBus offers convenient and affordable travel options.
3. Download the DB Navigator app to help navigate German transportation.
4. Stay open-minded and ready to engage - meeting new people from all over the world is one of the best parts of the experience.
5. Check the weather forecast before traveling - Germany can be warmer than expected.
6. Bring a hat and sunglasses - you'll likely spend a lot of time outdoors.























