My name is Amanda Silaib Tofic, I am 23 years old and I was granted a DAAD Scholarship from October 2020 until February 2021. Through this report, I would like to share a little bit of my story as a Brazilian exchange student in Germany at Hochschule Offenburg.

The very first step was to take part in the selection process from my Univesity's, UFABC, international office. I applied for three countries: Germany, Japan and Sweden. I got the nomination for Offenburg in August 2019. After that, a few people from HS Offenburg got in touch with me in order to help me with the details prior my stay and also the step-by-step after arriving in Germany.

A student from the Master Program was assigned to be my buddy. She was very kind and helped me with the official procedures that I had to do in order to start my life in Offenburg: bank account opening, visa application, registration at the city's foreigner office, SIM card aquisition in order to have a European number, health insurence acceptance. This is one of the best things the University could have offered me, it is not easy to adapt to a whole different culture, language and society, and also the buddy became a close friend of mine and she showed me beautiful places around and a bit of her culture.

I lived the first month in the Sankt Martin student residence alone, but we were five students in the same flat. Two collegues from my home University, a guy from Spain and another from Germany. At first I was afraid of not getting along and also living with boys, but I could not have asked for a better place to live. We are very close and always help each other out. Actually this is general to all the intenational students, we became a family.

The first contact I had with the University itself was during the orientation week. People from the International Office gave several workshops on how to, for example, enroll in courses, make your learning agreement, get in touch with professors, how to use Moodle platform for online classes. Also we had a introduction to Germany and the Ortenau region. By the end of the week, we had a hiking trip to Hoheshorn with all the international students and also people from the office, and a wine tour in Offenburg.

Because of the world's situation, mostly of my classes were held online. I took two courses where there were experimental procedures, so I had the opportunity to go to a laboratory at the Hochschule and get in touch with my class and professors. The online experience was not all bad, the University and the Professors had a good infrastructure to support online classes, and therefore this have not affected strongly our learning.

Since I am from a tropical country, I was not used to the cold weather at all. December was a beautiful month, with the Christmas decoration and Market, and the first experience with snow all together. A wonderful period where I could learn and live other countries' Christmas and New year's traditions. It certainly makes you fall in love with the exchange program even more.

During my semester, I could visit several breathtaking places around Offenburg and Berlin. My friends and my boyfriend love to travel and to go hiking, so it makes everything even more fun. I went to Gegenbach, Durbach, Altenheim, Hausach, Oppenau, Lahr, Achern, Berlin, Potsdam, Freiburg. All places where you can connect with the Nature, yourself and, of course, Germany.

Being granted the DAAD scholarship allowed me to experience all of this, even with the coronavirus pandemic. I am glad that I could live in Germany and study at Hochschule Offenburg. For sure it will be a moment in my life that I will remember with great care. I hope other students from Brazil and other countries can embrance this opportunity as well.

My flatmates and me in the Wine tour

Hochschule Street

Gifizsee Offenburg on Fall

Hochschule Offeburg Roof

Me and my buddy at the first time I went to see snow

Durbach hills

Gegenbach most beautiful street

Me and my flatmates at the Chrsitmas Market

Lahr ruins

Hausach tower

Berlin

Potsdam Palace