



IT University Travel Report

Dear Student, this is a template – the aim is to inspire other students who may wish to follow in your footsteps. You are free to give your report the shape you want and to go beyond the questions. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not.

Note that by filling in and sending the report you automatically consent to publishing it on ITU student.

Host university: Aalto School of Art Design and Architecture

Study Programme at IT University: KDDIT

Exchange agreement or Free mover: Erasmus +

Courses studied abroad: I was part of the New Media major and took most of my courses within their catalogue, including computational art and design, new media art and culture, physical computing, visual programming, collaborative and participatory techniques for design and technology tools and the human agency.

Period studying abroad: semester autumn 2024

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here:

ellensengen@gmail.com _____

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at the university (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

The courses have a high academic niveau, as well as a high pace, but it was not very challenging, so I enjoyed the learning experience. There is generally less reading and more doing (depending on the courses), and a lot of freedom in terms of what to make or do within your courses. The absolutely best part of the uni is the workshops. They have incredibly many well equipped areas for all kinds of different work, all open to students. You are encouraged to make use of them to make your projects great. To mention a few, there are wood working workshops, mechatronics, knitting, ceramics, glass blowing, laser cutting and the best 3D printing workshop in the eu. Also the canteens (there are a lot of them) are amazing, each with their own menu and a set price of 2,95 euro per meal.

My biggest challenge was to get the learning agreement in order, as there is no guarantee that you get into the courses you plan for, and you don't know the schedule beforehand. The semester is also divided in two or three periods, with their own run of courses, so it complicates the planning a little bit.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

I wanted more hands-on experience, in combination with more artsy endeavors, which I very much got. I also completely fell in love with Helsinki as a city, and Otaniemi the campus area. The friendly (but very Finnish) atmosphere combined with the forward thinking and cool culture made me feel so at home.

Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

I have improved greatly in my programming skills, but also in creative thinking. I am much more capable of planning and putting to life my own projects now, no matter how 'out there' they may seem. I also got a lot of useful theoretical inspiration for my thesis out of the courses, and most importantly got very inspired to continue my academic journey. I'd say my casual and professional English, and general communication skills, have improved a lot. I got better at planning in combination with being flexible and spontaneous. I feel a lot more fit for future travels and living abroad after this stay in Helsinki.

As for my personal growth, there was a lot of it. I made a lot of friends while there. The ones that stayed closest to me, I met during the first week of orientation. It was easy to meet new people, and to join new activities. I got to spend a lot of time in nature, so I learned a lot about local mushroom picking and orientation, outdoor swimming and of course sauna. I got to plan and execute a lot of great trips and see a lot of the country. I joined a reading club, as well as a shit movie club, and got into rock climbing. I feel very happy and inspired, and look forward to bringing my experience

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:

I applied for housing with HOAS and was lucky to eventually get a studio room. I couldn't move in in time for the orientation week, so I opted to spend a week at a hostel. I wanted to do green travel, but it was hard to do from my hometown and too expensive. I got a public transport card, and everything was smooth from there

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?

The Aalto website and the ITU exchange coordinator. When I arrived, the tutors at Aalto were also super helpful

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

Online application. I initially got rejected, but sent them an email and they happened to get an opening.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

I paid 460 euro in rent, and 40 euro for a HSL (public transport) card. I bought lunch at school every day, and sometimes dinner too, for 2,95e. Other than some food and necessities, the rest of my money went to spare time activities.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

No I didn't.

Recommendations for other students: