



## 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, as long as you cover the information asked for below. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not. Remember that the report will be made available on the intranet.*

**Host University:** Information Management school of Universidade Nova de Lisboa (NOVA IMS)

**Study Programme at IT University:** Global Business Informatics (GBI)

**Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:** Exchange agreement

### Courses studied abroad:

1. Data Analysis
2. Artificial Intelligence
3. Market Research
4. Organizations behavior
5. Personal Development
6. Computation I

**Exchange Period:** semester (autumn/spring) Autumn 2022

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: [clao@itu.dk](mailto:clao@itu.dk)

## Your stay abroad

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

### Academic

In my opinion, I believe that the academic level at NOVA IMS is in general lower than ITU. First of all, there are no readings/course material to prepare outside classes. You just show up and the whole curriculum is presented to you via PowerPoint slides. You use the PowerPoint slides as study-material for exams/tests and for writing reports.

Your grades are also evaluated differently compared to ITU. It's cumulative throughout the semester. You have several projects, presentations, smaller tests, and in some courses mandatory attendance etc. that count between 5-40% of your total grade. I had mixed feelings about this

system as there were a lot of small things to do and deadlines to constantly meet throughout the semester. On the other hand, it made you feel more relaxed at the final exams in January, as you knew they only counted between 40-50% of your final grade.

For anyone choosing NOVA IMS in the future, I would recommend Data Analysis (2<sup>nd</sup> year students) and Market Research (3<sup>rd</sup> year students) as really good courses to do. They were the ones with the best structure and interesting material. Also, students in Portugal start university at a very young age (17 or 18 years old) so be prepared for a lot of chit-chat in class and the feeling of being back in the early years of high-school again. Therefore, my best advice would be to apply for courses mainly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

### Social

I met the best group of people at NOVA IMS. We were a mixture of four students from ITU, some from Germany and Poland, and we hung out and travelled together throughout the entire semester. The university has a small group of Portuguese students who are responsible for us Erasmus students in the beginning of the semester. They were very friendly to introduce us to the school, each other and social events (where I met my good friends), and then they hosted a few events here and there throughout the semester (escape room, dinners, football games).

The university also has a lot of sport teams that you in the beginning of the semester can learn a lot about – they have tons of activities to do. My ITU-friends and I all did weekly badminton very close to the school and it was really nice to meet some Portuguese students and have fun with a sport.

There is also an organization called Erasmus Life Lisboa (university does not take part of any of this). This is a really great organization that facilitates lots of trips and activities several days a week throughout the entire semester. I'm almost certain that every exchange student in Lisbon is part of this. You have to buy an Erasmus Card (15-20EUR) which is your ID. Then you can book whatever event you want where you have to pay a fee for the event. My friend group and I e.g. went to a quiz night (I can really recommend!) for 3EUR and they had free beer for the first 2 hours. It was so much fun and we met a lot of new people. I also went on a day-trip to an island called Berlengas with 50-60 other exchange students. Here I paid 50EUR where transportation and guide was included. So, the fee all depends on the activities and trips you want to do – but definitely go ahead and buy the Erasmus Life Lisboa Card! It can be daring to go alone as I did to Berlengas, but you will for certain meet so many new and friendly people who are just as excited for the experience as you. We also went to karaoke nights, boat parties and free walking tours!

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

I come from a very international family where everyone has lived abroad for several years and is eager to explore new cultures. Therefore, I have always been drawn to establishing international friends and connections, exploring cities and establishing an every-day life abroad.

My stay definitely met my expectations. I have met so many international friends and learnt a lot about the Portuguese culture and every-day life as well as my exchange friends' cultures. I will for sure be living much more abroad in my future.

### **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?**

#### Personally

I travelled to Portugal 3 weeks prior to university start where I took a Portuguese language course. This was very challenging and at times, I felt it could be a bit lonely not yet having established a true daily-rhythm. It was tough in the beginning, but then I spend my time visiting almost every museum in town and walking endlessly around Lisbon's areas, which made me well acquainted with the city. As soon as the semester started, where I spent time with my ITU-friends and met the other international students, it didn't feel challenging or lonely anymore. I had so much fun with my

friend-group and I loved establishing my routines and hobbies. As fun as exchange is, it is also important to be aware of the lonely and challenging periods too!

### Academically

I chose to study at NOVA IMS to expand my technical toolbox, as they had more technical courses than GBI offers.

I had a course called Data Analysis. This was a fantastic course and introduced me to so much more mathematical and technical methods. It even contributed to my interest in using data-analysis methods for my bachelor! Additionally I took a course in Artificial Intelligence, which introduced me to a lot more technical stuff about algorithms too.

## **Arranging your stay**

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

After getting the news of going to Lisbon on exchange, I started in spring of 2022 to plan my autumn semester. Here I quickly decided on an accommodation and to spend some of my holiday in Lisbon before the semester started. I have already been to Portugal a couple of times before, so I already knew Lisbon and the country on a touristy-level. Therefore, I decided to book a Portuguese language course. Besides planning my accommodation and language-course, I also prioritized to write applications for several scholarships, which I highly recommend you do as well.

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

- I got in contact with Portuguese students who messaged me about Nido Campo Pequeno, which turned out to be the place where I booked my accommodation.
- The organization Erasmus Life Lisboa has a good network and can also help with accommodation. I met several people in Lisbon who got help through their organization.
- 'Idealista' is also a website where you can find apartments. However, I have heard good and bad stories about this website. You have to be very fast in booking the rooms right away.
- Facebook groups. However, like any other big city be aware of the scams...
- Airbnb is also a solution if you contact the owners and ask for a good deal – one of my friends did this in early spring.

### **How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?**

I was very lucky to have met some Portuguese students who were abroad at ITU in the spring of 2022 who told me about "Nido Campo Pequeno"

(<https://www.nidoliving.com/en/portugal/lisbon/nido-campo-pequeno/>). A newly build student accommodation that opened in August 2022. I immediately decided to go ahead and book a room with a shared kitchen (8 people in total who share a kitchen, this is very common in Lisbon) and this was the best decision I made. I paid 630 EUR (around 4700kr) a month, which is a great price in terms of location and what the accommodation includes. Some of my friends paid more than me and their apartments were very old, moldy and cold without any of the cool features that Nido provides.

Nido is not only brand new and clean, it also has its own gym (with a weekly PT!), washing-machines, study area, shared common area with nice sofas, table tennis, tv's, and even a cinema you can rent with your friends if you want to watch a movie or football match! Nido also allows you to have guests staying for free (up to 5 days I believe). The beds are big enough to fit 2 people, so you can bring your partner or a good friend during your stay to show them around Lisbon. I did this myself and it was so easy to arrange!

On top of this, they have incredibly friendly staff and once in a while they serve cake, fruit and coffee in the reception. Nido has several locations in Europe and has won prizes for being one of the best student accommodations - so I highly recommend this! ☺

## **Expenses and Financing**

### **Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad**

Buying groceries, dining out and buying alcohol is very affordable in Portugal. However, the housing/accommodation situation is the same as in Copenhagen. The monthly expenses has sky rocketed. Before I left, I was told that you pay 300-500 EUR per month, but in reality, you pay at least 600 EUR for a decent place where you share apartment/kitchen with 5-8 people. Besides this, my other expenses included:

- 4x Flight tickets (flew to DK during Christmas)
- Trips/Experiences with friends (rent of car, Airbnb)
- Gym (same price as in DK)
- Shopping now and then 😊

I didn't buy a monthly public transportation card (I walked to uni) or a Portuguese sim-card, but my friends did.

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

Yes, I applied for scholarships and can only recommend that you do it as well. Yes, you do spend some time on writing applications and it can feel stressful, but it is really worth it in order for you to just relax doing your semester and not worry about spending too much money on experiences.

I applied for Lemvig Müller, ITU's travel pool and STIBOFONDET, where I got all of them. On top of this, when going abroad in the EU you get an Erasmus grant.

## **Recommendations for other students:**

If possible, try to ask ITU's Erasmus office and ask if there are any people from your exchange-university who are visiting ITU in the current period you are making your plans. I did this and met up with three Portuguese students where I asked them about the courses, areas to live in the city, culture etc. I exchanged contact details with them, and this really helped my planning and opportunity to make international friends!

Otherwise, I would really recommend students going on exchange. You get to know yourself in a different way, expand your network and have fun exploring another country's culture and daily life.