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: Nova Information Management School

Study Programme at IT University: BSc Global Business Informatics

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange semester with partner university

Courses studied abroad: Organizations Behavior, Data Analysis, Artificial Intelligence, Computation I, Personal Development II, Market Research

Exchange Period: September 2022 – January 2023

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: hoho@itu.dk

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at Nova Information Management School (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?
Overall, the academic level felt lower than at ITU. However, it also depended a lot on the course. For instance, the topics taught in the courses Data Analysis and Artificial Intelligence are topics that I was not used to from GBI, and it therefore required a bigger effort for me to understand the content in these courses. Especially, I can highly recommend the course Data Analysis since it was a very well-structured course, interesting and useful topics, and was taught by highly skilled teachers. I experienced in most courses that if you had any questions to the teachers, they were always happy to answer them. Some teachers were engaging the students more, for instance asking us questions, than other teachers. The teachers were also always happy to stay after the lecture and talk to us students and answer our questions. As an Erasmus student, I felt appreciated, and I felt that both the teachers and the local students

were curious in hearing about our background and our home university. In regard to the atmosphere in the lectures, I would say that it seemed more normal for the students to talk to each other as the teacher was speaking, which is one rather big cultural difference compared to the teaching environment at ITU. The atmosphere thereby seemed more relaxed in both the lectures and during the exams compared to ITU. In regard to the exams, some courses had mid-term exams during October apart from the final exam in January. In some courses, we also had projects to make which became a part of our evaluation together with our final exam. All exams were written exams which could range from being multiple choice questions to open questions, and the written exams varied between 40 minutes and 2 hours in duration. They were mostly answered by hand and were mostly closed book exams. I had no oral exams in my courses except from some class presentations in some courses.

The nationalities of the students at Nova were a good mix of other Erasmus students and Portuguese students. Most of the students were Portuguese. The Erasmus students came mostly from various countries in Europe, but there were also students from outside Europe. It was therefore a good opportunity to meet other students from other countries. At the introduction day which was held a few days before semester start, we were presented with a couple of Nova students who had taken the responsibility to arrange events for us Erasmus students which was very nice! They made events such as dinners, escape room, parties at the university, or a walking tour in the city. Apart from that, I can highly recommend the company called Erasmus Life Lisboa. They arrange various types of events for Erasmus students in Lisbon, and you can join their events and trips by signing up for their membership. It is a very good opportunity to meet other people!

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?
My motivation for studying abroad was to learn about another culture and how being a student in another country would be like. It was also a motivation for me that I would get to know and work with people from different cultures, thereby obtaining a better knowledge about how to work with people from various cultures. Of course, it was also a trigger for me that I would be able to live in a warmer country for a few months and have a lot of memorable experiences and meeting new friends. Overall, I would say that my stay in Lisbon met the expectations I had. I met a lot of nice people and also ones that I will meet again in the near future. I also learned some cultural differences between the nationalities I met and how they can be managed in the best way when collaborating.

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?
Academically, I gained a lot of new knowledge within especially data analysis and algorithms used in artificial intelligence. I believe it can contribute to my future career since they are skills which are highly relevant today and will continue to be in the future, I believe. They can also contribute to my future studies since I am thinking to continue on a Master's degree where these topics are more in focus. My experiences of working with people from different cultures and seeing how an education environment is in a different country can also become useful for my future career since I might encounter the same in a future job.
Personally, I have broadened my network of friends and got to know a lot of new people. I have also managed to deal with challenges in terms of solving the puzzle of finding what courses I

could take at Nova since the courses had to fit my pre-approval without overlaps between them.

Arranging your stay

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

As I got confirmed by ITU that I was nominated to go to Lisbon, it took a few months before I heard from Nova. During the summer, Nova contacted me by mail and guided me how to apply for an exchange semester on their application platform. For that, I needed to upload a few documents, e.g. a copy of the blue EU health insurance card valid for the whole period of studies. I also had to choose which courses I wanted to take at Nova. Therefore, I had previously been looking at the courses that Nova IMS offered which are available on their webpage. I had to consider both the ones that SAP had pre-approved that I could take in order to replace my courses at ITU and the ones that caught my interest. Meanwhile, I started to search for accommodation in Lisbon. After the application process, I got accepted by Nova and they later sent me some emails with various information such as an introduction day which would take place a few days before semester start. As the semester started, me and my fellow students had to change the courses we had originally planned to study since some of them were overlapping each other which Nova did not accept. Also, some courses had changed their number of ECTS points. Since the schedule of their courses was not visible until a few days before semester start, this rearrangement of our courses was done 1-2 weeks after semester start. This experience was a little stressful since we were concerned that we would not find courses that would fit. In the end, we ended up fixing the puzzle after SAP pre-approving a few more courses for us, and we found courses that did not overlap. It was our experience that all students found a good solution in the end, and Nova was flexible with changing our enrollment in the various courses even though the semester had already started.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?
I found a few Facebook groups which had been made for Erasmus students going to Lisbon. Here, I tried to connect with a few people already and to start my journey of finding accommodation. In terms of accommodation, one has to be a bit cautious since I heard of some people being scammed by hosts not being honest. For instance, I read about people losing their deposit that they paid for an apartment.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?
First, I tried to find a room in a shared apartment since that would be the cheapest option. There were several sites for that such as Idealista. But the demand of apartments in Lisbon was very high in Summer 2022, so after 1-2 months' search without success, I found a student residence called Nido which I ended up booking around one month before my arrival. Nido was more expensive than I had originally thought I would pay for accommodation, but it seemed like an honest, new, and clean place.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

As mentioned, my accommodation was a bit more expensive than I had originally planned, so I ended up paying 780 euros per month for accommodation. But this was in a totally newly built place with gym, study room, laundry room, ping pong and fusbal game. Apart from that, me and my friends ate out in restaurants quite often. Sometimes, I also cooked at home since it would be too expensive in the end to eat out every day. Moreover, we did a few trips to other cities such as Porto, Nazaré, Obidos, and Coimbra. Surfing is also a popular activity in Lisbon which I did a couple of times. One's expenses therefore depend a lot on how active you are and how many activities you plan to make. Luckily, most people can bring their SU when studying in Lisbon, and one can apply for additional scholarships.

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

Personally, I did not do a big effort in applying for scholarships before my exchange semester. I applied for a few when I had arrived to Lisbon, but they were not accepted. Before my arrival, I had applied for ITU Travel pool and Lemvigh Müller Fonden which ITU cooperates with. Moreover, I also received the EU Erasmus grant which was paid out by my Erasmus coordinator at ITU.

Recommendations for other students:

Start applying for various scholarships good time in advance, perhaps already in the Spring, if you consider that you would need financial support for your stay. Start reading about the courses that Nova offers a few months before your arrival, so that you have an idea about the content of the different courses. This will help you if you need to rearrange your enrollment in the courses upon semester start, as I had to do. If you have a small interest in data analysis, I can highly recommend the course called Data Analysis since this is the most well-structured and interesting course I had. You also do an interesting data analysis project with other group members which you present to the other students in the end. Also, Market Research was one of my favorite courses since I learned about how to construct questionnaires and plan surveys, which I see as knowledge that can become useful in the future. A big plus was also the teacher who was very kind and seemed to care a lot about us students.