



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: Reykjavik University

Study Programme at IT University: Software Design

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad: Software Project Management, Advanced Topics in AI, Natural Language Processing and Applied Data Science

Exchange Period: semester (autumn/spring) autumn year 2022

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: _____50489403, amgv@itu.dk

Your stay abroad

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

As a Software Design master student, there were not than many courses to choose between. Fortunately, the courses had a high quality, and the teachers were good. I developed personal relationships with many of the teachers because the classes were small and the relationships between students and teachers are very relaxed. At Reykjavik University (RU) they take good care of their master students, for example we had access to the computer science department where you can get free coffee and can get assigned your own desk at the department next to PhD students and researchers. This was really cool and I ended up spending a lot of time at the department. On the contrary, the teachers can be a little unorganized at times. For example, some assignments were not uploaded until one or two weeks before the deadline, and especially in one course they changed how we were graded multiple times.

The academic level of the classes was high, but I also believe they were generous with the grading. At ITU, my grades have been varying a lot, everything from 02 to 10. In Iceland I only got grades corresponding to 10 or 12 with the same amount of effort. Also, at ITU I was studying at 75 %, at RU I was studying at 100 %. Also, the grades are not only based on your exam, often it was 40 % exam and the rest came from assignments during

the semester. In each of my courses, there were 4-5 bigger assignments.

The social life at campus was okay, there are no bars on campus so the student organizations would arrange parties elsewhere. If you wanted to engage, there were plenty of opportunities. A hurdle to engage was that a lot of the communication both online and in person were in Icelandic, which did not make you feel welcome as an international student. However, when I showed up to parties, the Icelanders were very friendly and eager to engage with internationals as well.

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

My motivation was to become more independent and travel more. I would say that my exchange fulfilled both goals.

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 definitely got more independent just from figuring out the logistics of moving to a new country and having no one to fix things for me. Academically, I also gained many things. For example, I will collaborate with a researcher from one of my courses to try to publish an article about AI and sustainability this spring.

Arranging your stay

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

It is expensive to stay in Iceland so I spend a considerably amount of time applying for grants. I began this process before I was accepted at Reykjavik University (RU). During the spring semester I had to attend a few online meetings and complete a small survey at RU. I also applied for student housing in the beginning of May and was assigned an apartment straight away. Most of my time was spend applying for preapproval and looking at courses, since I both had to apply for the preapproval and individual specialization.

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

I asked another student who had been at RU the semester before and talked to Eva Maria Steensig Hauerslev whenever I had questions.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

I was lucky to get assigned student housing right next to the university because I applied early. The rent was a little expensive, around 6400 DKK a month, but the facilities were excellent. I had my own one-bedroom apartment with a kitchen, bathroom and lots of storage space. At the end of the hall we had a big common room with another kitchen, a dining table, a giant couch and TV, another toilet and two big balconies. There was a huge wash-house in the basement where you could use the washing machines and dryers "for free" as well as more storage. In Iceland you can also apply for housing benefits and I believe you can get almost 2000 DKK a month, which makes a huge difference. The rules around the housing benefits are similar to Denmark; you have to have your own kitchen. It was a little complicated to apply for the benefit, so I never got around to doing it which I regret now.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

Remember to apply for housing benefits: <https://island.is/en/housing-benefits>

It is very expensive to eat out and buy groceries, so bring lots of savings. It is also expensive to travel on the weekends because you most often need to rent a car, accommodations are also expensive, I think the cheapest is around 300 DKK pr person pr night.

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

I got the highest rate from Erasmus and a 10000 DKK scholarship from both Knud Højgaard and the Lemvig Mueller grant, and also used some of my savings. You could definitely have been more frugal than me, I ate out a lot.

Recommendations for other students: