



## **IT University Travel Report**

*By Tone Rasmussen*

### **Host University:**

Reykjavik University

### **Study Programme at IT University :**

Digital Innovation and Management

### **Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:**

Erasmus, exchange agreement

### **Courses studied abroad:**

Advanced Topics in Emerging Technologies  
Change management and leadership  
Sustainable Leadership  
Sustainable Tourism Development and Innovation

### **Exchange Period:**

3. semester, Summer and Autumn, 2020.

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

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## **Your stay abroad**

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

Due to covid-19 a lot of things were changed. All my courses were executed online, and I have never met any of my co-students in real life. Reykjavik University (RU) wants to conduct a lot of class-room teaching with participation and group work. In the offline world, I think this could have been amazing to try, but through Zoom it was poorly structured. I have no doubt that the university will adapt better to online teaching. All lectures were recorded and could be viewed at any time which made it easy to follow the courses despite quarantine or isolation. My four courses were very different in terms of academic level. I think this is because there are quite a few professors from outside RU, for instance Canadian and American. Common for all the courses I have participated in, is the grading being based across several activities and not only a final oral or written exam. The English level among professors and co-students is high.

I was very happy with my choice of courses – despite one (Change...). I think the courses provided me with new knowledge and challenged me with perspectives within the subjects. It is not easy to

choose courses through the website of the University. In the end the International Coordinator provided me with a list I could choose from (and even there I got allowed to choose something not on the list). She, Verity Sharp, is very helpful, fast responding and kind.

Campus is placed very beautiful at the shore of a bay and close to a small forest. I went swimming often before or after going to the university. I've gone there to have a steady wifi and nice reading spots which I think they provide. There is a cheap canteen and a coffeebar (neither have been running in my time).

The social life has been limited and I can only speak from the group work that I have been involved in. I only have experienced students to be interested in you and good at asking to you and your life. I bet having a beer with them in real life would have been fun.

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

When I applied in October 2019, Covid-19 were not a thing said to influential. But it was not before mid-June that my study abroad was confirmed, and I bought the tickets to go to Iceland in July. My expectation was to experience Iceland both as a country full of natural wonders but also as small-community country with a mysterious culture. In terms of academia, I expected the University to be progressive on its subjects of sustainability and business oriented on the same time. I would argue that their Computer Science department are pretty strong, and they have a really cool virtual reality lab (never gone there because of Covid-19). I was ready to be involved in the local handball club, I bought a regular-pass to the swimming pool, applied for volunteer job in the Red Cross and at the many music- and filmfestivals going on in the country.

Of course Covid-19 didn't make it easy. I would argue that all social happenings have been cancelled what of course have affected my relation to people in Iceland. That said I have travelled all of Iceland but still have a long bucketlist. It is truly one of the most magnificent places I've ever been. It is easy to travel, both hitchhiking, by car or bus. Yes, Iceland is incredibly expensive, and I have used my savings to support my stay. I did a bit of workaway in my holiday on a farm, which I can only recommend since this was also one of my few interactions with the local.

**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 learned what the Icelandic saying 'petta reddast' . Instead of being angry, sad and frustrated over the many cancelled things, challenges and limitations I tried to accept and work with the situation. I took one day at the time and enjoyed the small things around me. I have learned a lot about the Icelandic culture and how it is to be a country where 2/3 of the population lives in one place. Of course, the travels, especially the hikes, have given me unique experiences in nature that I'll never forget.

Academically I've learned how to obtain knowledge in an online setting and for instance participate despite the screen-barrier. I have also learned how to collaborate better in teams and present online for the class. Some of the knowledge have felt very easily accessible and as if it was nothing new, but then it has been supported by a syllabus I haven't been familiar with.

In my future studies I will bring this understanding of different culture and types of learning that I have experience one-to-one in this period. Since the subjects where a part of my specialization there is no doubt that I will continue broadening up the subject of sustainability in order to zoom in when doing my thesis soon.

**Arranging your stay**

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

Oh boy... where to start? Let's say that we take Covid-19 out of this story to be fair. First, I selected the partner universities within Europa, since I knew, I wouldn't go too far away from Denmark. Then I scrutinized the available courses for autumn 2019 at each university (since 2020 was of course not ready yet). I chose the university that had most courses of my interest since these would make my individual specialization. Then I applied through ITU, got the spot and started the contact with Reykjavik University. If there was a course without description or alike, I contacted the International Coordinator who helped me out. It was also through her, that I applied for courses on RU which I had applied pre-approval for at ITU. Everything worked out very well. I applied for Erasmus and other grants by information I got from RU on expected expenses.

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

The International coordinator at RU, Verity Sharp, was really good. Of course, the International Coordinator at ITU also supported me very well. Facebook is your path to everything in Iceland, so I'll definitely recommend going into groups like 'Danskere der bor i Iceland'.

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

The University offers studios, but I thought they were too expensive, so I joined different Facebook groups and used my network of Icelandic friends living in Denmark. I found a room in a house 20 minutes from Downtown.

## **Expenses and Financing**

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

I didn't use a single krona on books which I had expected. Everything was provided by the professors or available online.

Transport around Iceland and in Reykjavik is really expensive, so in order to bring that down I bought a bike. Transport is still one of my biggest expenses.

Food is also very expensive compared to Denmark which is the biggest expense I have. Especially if you want to try some of the local food, dine or just buy organic.

Lastly the accommodation is also above Copenhagen (believe it or not). The University offered a studio near the university for approximately 5300 DKR. I think that is very expensive when you have to share kitchen and shower with 12 others.

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

I did apply for a lot but got a few. I will recommend the Woman in Technology scholarship by Zonta (if you are a woman).

**Recommendations for other students:**

Go to Iceland! My only wish is to go back because I saw so much potential (that wasn't released because of Covid-19.). Everything is possible because it is such a small community, and the University is eager to help you.