IT University Travel Report

Host University: Boston University
Study Program at IT University: Global Business Informatics
Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Study abroad

Courses studied abroad:
• Business Strategy
• Operation Management
• Business in a Changing Society
• International Business Management

Exchange Period: Autumn 2015

Your stay abroad
What was it like to study at [the university] (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?
The level of teaching at the undergraduate courses was not as high as the one at ITU, they lacked the philosophical, critical and reflective approach that is prominent at here. It is short and straightforward, however the workload can in periods be very intense, mainly up to midterms and finals. The different academic level and workload varied a lot from course to course.
The grading at BU works different than how we are used to at ITU. It is done continuously throughout the semester, and your final grade is constituted by a bunch of weighted factors (e.g. participation 20%, assignments 20%, presentations 20%, midterm 20%, final examination 20%), which meant that the finals weren’t as nerve wrecking as at ITU, as 80% of your grade was already decided at that point. This meant that in order to get a good grade, one had to continuously put in an above average effort throughout the year, which if you consider the academic level, wasn’t that challenging.

The social life at BU is quite good, there a lots of exchange students from all over the world. However, after the first introduction week, there are no real arrangements that allow you to socialize, even their BU-Buddy program was a disaster, as it first took initiative after 1 month. I lived on-campus in a dormitory for all MET exchange students, which also included access to the dining halls. This gave an great opportunity to meet new people and keep contact with those you’ve already met, as you were living and dinning with the people you also had class with. Living at a dorm and having an open and engaging mindset definitely played a key part in gaining a huge network at BU, which will result in a lot of new great friends and unquestionably take the exchange-experience to a whole new level.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?
I have always been an adventurous person and never stepped away from a challenge or opportunity to grow. An exchange semester at Boston University suited all of these three traits, and equally provided an opportunity to break away from the slightly trivial everyday that I’ve slowly slid into, after 2 years of studying. It gave a break and huge boost to my morale, recharging my batteries and re-kindling my academic ambitions. I established cross-cultural friendships, extended my professional network, explored new areas of USA, and acquired new tangible competencies for my future career and study life.

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?
First of all, living in an extremely international environment, in a country where the native langue is English, greatly improved my English language proficiency, and made extremely comfortable speaking the language, as I was doing nothing else for 5 months straight.
Going abroad is a great way of growing as a person. There are several challenges you have to pass, both during the preparation and during the actual stay. More important, I met many new people and had a
great time. Throughout the stay I acquired tangible knowledge, tools and techniques taught in the common tongue of the business world. I cannot understate the value of getting a totally different perspective on academia, and this have matured my way of thinking.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:
There are several things you need to sort of before going abroad.
- Sign up for and take the TOEFL test
- Write a motivational letter and apply to go to BU though the International Office at ITU
- Find classes and get them pre approved
- Get financial bank statement
- Apply for enrolment at BU - Incl. class choice AND if wanted, fitness classes.
- If accepted -> get I-20 from BU
- Get a student F-1 visa
- Apply for the governmental exchange grant (udlandsstipendium)
- Apply for other grants
- Choose between off or on-campus living and start looking for accommodation.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?
- International Office at ITU
- Previous ITU students that have gone to BU
- Local friend
- Boston University’s off campus housing portal
- Kristen Molter, Senior Program Administrator at BU’s Metropolitan College

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?
I used BU’s on-campus housing, so it was pretty straightforward.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?
- ITU Travel Pool
- Dansk Tennis Fond
- Nordea fonden

Recommendations for other students:
- If you can manage to share a room with a stranger, get on-campus housing, it increased my social network tenfold and thus made the stay way better.
- Don’t buy the unlimited card for the T, it sucks. BU has their own shuttle that drives around on campus, and if you want to go to the city, you can either walk, bike or take an Uber.
- Get a bike. Even though the city is no where near as bike friendly as Copenhagen, it is still one of the most bike friendly cities in the US. With a bike I could get anywhere in Boston faster than the T, faster than an Uber in rush-hour and I just granted an enormous amount of freedom not having to rely on the BU shuttle to get to class.
- There is no need for an American bank account, unless your renter etc. specifically requires it. I had no trouble using my Visa Dankort for my whole stay in Boston and during my travelling.
- Don’t get all the required immunizations in DK, it will cost you a lot and they are included in you BU health insurance. They have a couple of day during the first weeks were you can get the shots for free.
- TRAVEL! As a MET you always have Fridays off, and you can plan your classes so you have Monday or Thursdays off aswell. This gives you a 4-day weekend, which is the perfect amount of
time to explore the surroundings and the US in general. NY and Washington are a short bus ride away (4-6 hours), and domestic flights are really cheap as well. So find some friends and travel around.

- Speak with people who already went there, they will happily give you a lot of tips and insight in how you can get the most out of your stay.
- Just do it, all of my fellow students and I had a blast.