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: Parsons New School of Design, New York

Study Programme at IT University: DDK (Digital design & communication)

Activity Abroad: Summer school, elective course in Graphic design (7,5 ECTS)

Exchange Period: semester (autumn/spring) __summer/autumn__ year ___2015____

Your stay abroad

Please describe your stay abroad:

I stayed one month in New York, with 3 weeks of summer school. Arriving a week before starting classes was a good idea - less stress, time to find and check-in at the International office beforehand, and buying supplies (note, however, that you don't need to get everything on the supply list provided beforehand. Even though it said so. We ended up spending money on things that we subsequently did not use in class).

The classes was from 9am to 4pm every day, and the homework took around 2-3 hours per day (on average and including some time spent during the weekends). So school took up most of the time on weekdays - if you want to have time to explore the city to its fullest, make sure you have extra time after summer school ends.

Overall the course was fun and creative, however the level a little lower than I had imagined. Most other students were 18-20 years old and the teaching was thereafter, meaning a little “hand-holding” and loose.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?
My motivation was partly to relieve my third semester and partly for the opportunity to learn from one of the best design schools in the world.

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?

My main takeaway was the training in the three Adobe programs (InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop - the two first, mostly). Other than that I learned about the creative process, the importance of typography and hierarchy in the composition.

Arranging your stay

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

The process of arrangements was fairly straightforward. I signed up for the summer school in December, and followed the steps of filling out forms and beginning the visa process in a quiet pace. I would recommend getting an overview of the total process early on, and setting a couple deadlines along the way.

Parsons’ international office was a bit slow in responding to our questions, so keep that in mind regarding e.g. language tests.

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

Parsons has a very detailed description of the visa application process, that I used very much. However, regarding the list of documents to bring to the embassy, I was not asked for much other documentation than the basics (incl. financial statements).

Even though we ended up getting an apartment otherwise, I would suggest AirBnB and Facebook groups such as “Danes in New York” etc. for accommodation.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

We were 7 people from ITU taking the same course, so we decided to live together. This makes it difficult to get an AirBnB apartment, but we found a private landlord through a friend-of-a-friend.
Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

It is almost obvious noting that New York is an expensive place to stay - accommodation, travel, groceries and just in general. In 2015 the dollar rate of exchange was particularly high, which made it even more pricey.

The course itself cost more than what the ‘SU stipendium’ covers for a danish course - without providing much better lectures.

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

I did not - other than this travel pool - mainly because the fact that most foundations do not give scholarships to trips under three months.

Recommendations for other students:

If you are just slightly experienced with the programs, take the advanced level (Graphic Design 2). The level is pretty basic - which is good for some - but you might get bored or not challenged enough.