



UU Report form - Erasmus 2018-2019

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> feliciaplum@hotmail.com
faculty/college	Social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Pedagogical Sciences in Utrecht, but Educational Sciences in Helsinki

destination city & country	Helsingfors, Finland
name university abroad	Helsingin Yliopisto/University of Helsinki
start date	28 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION

exchange application process

This was a bit difficult for me, because Helsinki was not in any of my three choices. Because the first three choices were all full, a second list was published with remaining places. Luckily for me, in the second round I got my first choice; Helsinki. I would recommend to begin early; it's not that much work to fill in the required documents, but keep an eye on the deadlines!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

International office was always there for me when I needed help. That was great, because I was unsure if I could even go on an exchange and they really supported me when I had questions about anything.

academic preparation

The study program at UU is much more difficult than in Finland, so I did not need to prepare more academically.

language preparation

I did not need any extra language preparation, because my English was already good enough before I left.

finances

It's nice that you get a grant of Erasmus, but this is certainly not enough to live from. I would recommend to save a lot of money, because everything in Finland is more expensive than in the Netherlands (especially alcohol). Also the rent is very expensive, for example I lived in a studio at Domus Academica, which was 600 euros per month. You probably also want to do some trips (Lapland for example), this is also quite expensive but definitely worth it!!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme changed a little bit when I arrived in Helsinki, so some people had to change their learning agreement, but a person from the University of Helsinki sent me an email when I was still in the Netherlands, saying that one course I picked, was deleted from the study program. This was nice, because I had enough time to change my learning agreement before I arrived in Helsinki. When something changed, for example course codes, you had to fill in the learning agreement again, with the right course codes and all the



signatures. This was a bit annoying, but necessary in order to get the second part of the grant, so if anything changes; contact UU directly to ask if you need to change something in your documents as well.

academic quality of education activities

You certainly have to do something during your exchange, but the courses I followed did not have any exams, only essays. In the beginning this was a bit difficult because I was not used to write essays in English, but you get used to this quite quickly. In Utrecht, I don't have much free time because I have to do so many things for school, but in Helsinki I had enough time to go on nice trips and to go out multiple times a week. Many deadlines were after the semester ended (so after December 21st), I would plan to get everything done before you leave, so you can avoid stressing last minute at Christmas time (if you're going the first semester). Some people I know planned so many activities the last weeks that they had to finish their assignments at home and they regretted this a lot.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There was always a contact person you could email if you had any questions or you could come to the Student Services at the Library, where you could ask everything about courses, to get signatures etc.

transfer of credits

I did not receive all my grades yet, but I expect that I passed all of my courses.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome programme was well organized, our group of Educational Sciences had five amazing tutors who helped us with everything and gave us recommendations about places to visit/eat/party etc during the whole semester (contact me if you want a list of things you can do in and around Helsinki). On the first day, there is a welcome fair where you have to do many mandatory things, but where you can also get lots of useful information about the city/gym/student organizations and the University.

accommodation

I lived at Domus Academica, which is a hostel during the Summer months and a student home from September 1st until the end of the second semester. I got this offer from Unihome a few weeks before I left and they said that this was the only offer I got. I accepted it, although it was really expensive (600 euros/month), because I heard it was really difficult to find something by yourself. When you arrive before September 1st, you can book a room at the Hostel Domus Academica and if you're lucky, you can keep that room for the rest of your exchange. I was really happy about the accomodation, it was very close to the city center and there was a cleaner who cleaned your room twice a month, changed you bed linen etc (partly because of this, it was so expensive). Many of my friends lived there as well, so that was really nice. Some people I met did not get an offer or refused it, and they found rooms far away from the city center, and they were really sad that they did not live at Domus Academica like the biggest part of the exchange students from the Faculty of Social Sciences did. However, if there is something wrong with your room (for example, everyone experienced difficulties with the wifi and in my room, one mirror was broken and the other one was missing), it takes a long time and many emails before they do something about it; I made a complaint on September 1st and they fixed it in November and after many people complained from August on, the problems with the wifi were partly fixed on December 14th. Other than that, the accomodation was very nice.

leisure & culture

Helsinki is not that big, so I would recommend to go on many trips (for example Tallinn, Porvoo, Turku) or with ESN on trips to Lapland (must see!) or Russia. I would book them early on in the semester so you have enough time to finish your assignments. The Finnish people did not really make a good impression to me, they are really introvert, but luckily all the Finns speak English very well and some Finns even talk to you (mostly in the saunas, make sure you visit as many saunas as you can, for example Sompaa Sauna). At the University, the Finns are



more open and willing to have a conversation with you.

suggestions/tips

- Go to café Regatta and try a cinnamon bun or a blueberry pie with vanilla sauce!! :)
- Go to Nuuksio and explore the nature in summer time, autumn and of course in the snow!
- Go to Seurasaari to feed the squirrels and birds
- Download the Aurora app for the Northern lights, we were lucky and saw it once in Helsinki and once in Vasatokka, Lapland; with the app you can see on which days the chance is the highest (Domus people, go to Hietaniemi beach, the place to see them!)
- If you get a room at Domus, make sure you pick much stuff from the first floor; the staff from the hostel stores all the stuff there a few days before September 1st from former exchange students or guests from the hostel, because sometimes you don't get that much stuff from Domus for your kitchen (I didn't even receive cutlery). So, I would ask the staff when they will place all the stuff there, so you are the first one to get plates, cutlery, cleaning soap etc for free!
- Last but not least; if you go to Helsinki from September till December, make sure you buy enough lights and candles and plan many trips in November, because that is the darkest month of the year (maybe you need some vitamine D pills as well).

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes! Finland is an amazing country with beautiful nature and many things to do! Definitely go to events organized by ESN, because then you get to meet more people and see new things.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Finnish is a hard language to learn, but with the words Kiitos and Kippis you will survive for sure ;) If you have any questions, feel free to contact me; feliciaplum@hotmail.com

UU Report form - Erasmus 2017-2018

faculty/college	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	29 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	22 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

In order to apply for an exchange I just followed the steps given on the UU website, which made the process quite easy. For me, making the decision where to go and after that getting all the required documents in order took some time, so the earlier you begin with these things the better.

counselling & support at Utrecht University



The general information evening about going abroad as well as the pre-departure meeting were well-organized and helpful. Also, the International Office always answered my e-mails with questions very quickly.

academic preparation

Additional academic preparation was not necessary for my host university.

language preparation

I did not do any language preparation because my English was already good enough. You don't need to speak Finnish as almost everyone you will meet in Finland speaks English very well.

finances

Living expenses in Helsinki are definitely higher than in Utrecht. Especially when you are interested in doing some trips while staying in Finland, I would recommend to save some money beforehand.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I had some struggles with signing up for courses, as did a lot of my fellow students. There aren't that many English courses and they often allow only a limited amount of students. So make sure to start signing up for courses as soon as possible. Also, be aware of the fact that the courses you see on their website while you're in the middle of your application process might not be taught anymore the next year, although there will probably be new interesting courses as well.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of the courses I took was similar to the UU in my opinion.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The staff and teachers at the University of Helsinki were all very friendly and approachable.

transfer of credits

I just received my last grade this week and am now waiting for the University of Helsinki to send it to me by mail, so I don't know yet how this will work out.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The University of Helsinki organizes an introduction week, to get to know the university, the city and other students. You will be placed in a tutor group with other exchange students, and your Finnish tutor will show you around and answer any questions you might still have. At the Welcome Fair, which you will visit together, you can sort out all of your administrative and organisational stuff at once, which is really nice (just keep in mind that as an exchange student you don't need to become a member of the HYY/Student Union to receive student discounts, this saves you quite some money).

accommodation

Most exchange students I knew either lived in a Hoas or a Unihome apartment. Rooms and studios in these buildings are only rented to international students, they are well-located and relatively cheap. So definitely take the offer if they give you one! If you get rejected you will have to search for a place to stay on the private market, which is often more expensive and further away from the city.

leisure & culture

There is plenty of things to do while staying in Helsinki! Although the city is quite expensive, there are ways to keep it affordable. Most museums have certain days on which they are free, just check out their websites. Sauna is great and often free too! Nightlife is expensive due to the high alcohol prices, but bars in Kallio are still



relatively affordable. A lot of Finns and international students also go to Tallinn by boat to buy cheap alcohol. Other fun trips you can easily make from Helsinki are Stockholm, Lapland, St. Petersburg and Moscow. But also don't forget Finland itself, as it has some beautiful cities (Porvoo, Tampere) and nature (lots of islands, Nuukio National park) too.

suggestions/tips

Become an ESN member for fun trips and activities with other international students. Also: buy a bike! Although it can be quite cold in winter, it is a good way to explore the city.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend going to Helsinki on exchange if you're interested in going to a city which is not that big, surrounded by nature, with excellent public transport, good education and lots of saunas.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't hesitate to contact me if you still have any questions about studying in Helsinki!



UU Report form - Erasmus 2016-2017

faculty/college	Faculty of social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	26 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

To start the exchange application process, you need to upload your CV and your motivation letter on Osiris. Also, you need to give a top three of your favorite destinations. It is important to do some research before filling in your top three. Some universities require for example a specific GPA or offer only specific subjects. On the internet you can also find the ratings of universities. These are all factors that may influence your decision. Then it is time to wait for your destination. As soon as you decide to go to the destination you received, the application at the receiving university starts. Just like the UU, they also request various documents. Besides, you need to book your ticket, search for a place to live there, sort out your finances (how are you going to afford your exchange?), rent your room in Utrecht, etc. Luckily the UU sends several online newsletters before you go with all the information on things you should not forget to do before leaving.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support that the International Office from the faculty of Social Sciences offers is very helpful. I had quite some questions and I sent them a lot of emails but they always replied soon and helped me wherever they could.

academic preparation

Concerning academic preparation, you need to do some research on the courses you would like to follow on the receiving university. If you've made a nice overview for yourself, you can fill in your learning agreement and upload that document on Osiris.

language preparation

Since Finnish people speak English very well and all the matters regarding university, such as lectures, exams, etcetera, are all in English, it is not necessary to learn the Finnish language. You do, however, need to be able to speak English on a sufficient level.

finances

Since Finland is not really an holiday destination, mostly businessmen go there. That is the reason why only expensive airline companies, such as KLM, provide flights to Helsinki (f.e. Ryanair, Transavia and Easyjet don't). So you need to keep in mind that your ticket will be probably over 200 euros (depends on when you book of course). Furthermore, life in Finland is more expensive than in the Netherlands. Think about groceries and especially alcohol. However, if you just decide to do your grocery shopping at the Lidl, it will not make such a big difference. Also, Finland is a social country and you'll notice this in the very cheap lunch that the university offers its students. I would really recommend you to do that. The food is good and the portions are big. Furthermore, public transport is cheap for students as well as an internet databundle for on your cell-phone.



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
The university of Helsinki offers many interesting courses. Not only the University of Helsinki, also the Swedish school of Social Sciences offers courses in English, which you can easily follow. At the University of Helsinki you subscribe for courses each period. This is different from the Universiteit Utrecht where you subscribe for one semester. At the beginning of your stay, you'll get explained how to subscribe for courses. However, it can happen that the courses you initially want to follow are not available anymore due to overlap or to the fact that they are simply not given anymore. This can be a bit confusing at first, but if you take your time to sort this out you'll manage for sure. If not, you can always ask your tutor to help you!
academic quality of education activities
The quality of education in Finland is very good. It is comparable to the quality of Dutch education. I had some Southern European friends there and they told me that it was rather difficult for them to cope with the expectations of the professor. For example, they were not used to reading articles before a seminar or actively participate in a discussion. Since we are used to these things in the Netherlands, you can easily handle the level of education.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The University of Helsinki is very helpful and friendly. As I already said, your tutor is the first person you can ask your questions to, but also professors and the International Office there is willing to help you at any time.
transfer of credits
The transfer of credits is very easy to arrange. You just email the University of Helsinki and ask them if they can send your transcript of records to your home University. As soon as the the Universiteit Utrecht received your transcript, they will translate your grades into Dutch grades and upload these in Osiris. Also, they send you a letter with the grades that you earned during your stay in Helsinki.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The first day that you are expected at the University, you will have a welcoming meeting in one of the University buildings. You'll receive some information and will be placed in a tutorgroup. The people in this tutorgroup will probably be the people that you will be seeing most of the time during your stay. Together with your group, you will visit the welcome fair, organized by the University of Helsinki for all exchange students. This is really helpful since you can sort out everything you need to do in once. However, there are many exchange students coming to Helsinki, so this day will mostly consist of standing and waiting in lines. The first week will consist of an orientation programme. This includes for example a tour around the city and a tour around the university in specific. Furthermore, it will mostly be meeting new people, having fun and going out! I would like to point out that the university's website is really helpful too. Here you can find all the information regarding your stay and if you still have questions, you can always ask the International Office of the University of Helsinki or the UU.
accommodation
The University of Helsinki offers student housing for which you can subscribe. However, the amount of exchange students is way bigger than the amount of places they offer. Therefore, I would advise you to subscribe early. Unfortunately, I did not get an offer for student housing provided by the University. At the moment, that can be quite stressful but in the end everybody finds a place to live. Some other student, who had studied in Helsinki too, recommended me to like several facebookgroups. On one of these facebookpages all the advertisements were in Finnish. However, I copy-pasted all the advertisements in Google translate and that way I achieved my desired result: I found a beautiful house that I could rent for the semester. If you don't hear anything from the University of Helsinki for some time, I would strongly recommend you to e-mail them,



since I was not informed that I didn't get an offer. The sooner you know that you've got to find a place to live yourself, the better.

leisure & culture

At first, the city of Helsinki could come across as colourless and dark. However, if you give it a fair chance you will soon find out that it has some beautiful places. The senatesquare with the great white cathedral is impressive and surely worth a visit. Throughout the city there are some interesting churches to visit too, such as the Rock Church, the Kallio Church and the Chapel of Silence, close to Kamppe. Also Suomenlinna, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a must see. This fortress, accessed by ferry from the Helsinki Market Square, has beautiful nature and lovely museums, cafes and restaurants. Don't forget to visit the beach with its beautiful sunsets.

Finland is famous for its saunas. You can find some really nice saunas in the city centre, such as Kaurilan sauna and Kotiharju sauna. The last one even provides washing ladies that scrub you. Besides, you can get massages and other treatments there. A recommendation after a long day of studying!

Next to sauna, Helsinki also has many karaokebars. Finns love karaoke! If you like to sing or if you like to listen to people singing, you should definitely check this out. My favourite karaoke place was Swengi.

suggestions/tips

Now I will list some things that I really enjoyed during my stay and that I would recommend if you visit Helsinki: Café Regatta is a very small cosy place near the beach, which is perfect for a cup of tea or hot chocolate and a korvapuusti, a traditional Finnish cinnamon roll. It is also very romantic and a good place for a date!

For dinner, I would recommend to visit the market halls. There are several ones in the city. I went several times to the Hietalahti Market, which is really nice and has very good fresh food. On top of that, it is affordable, which is quite extraordinary in Helsinki. On Saturday's they offer 'Tunes 'n Tasting', then a DJ provides the music in the hall. Further, Helsinki has many good sushi places. These places are relatively cheap, due to the city's location at the water.

Last but not least, Helsinki offers many possibilities to enjoy a relaxing swim. In the heart of the city, close to the harbour, you can find the Allas Sea Pool, boasting several saunas, swimming pools and a restaurant. I used to go to the Yrjönkatu Swimming Hall, which has the atmosphere of a Roman Bath.

If you have friends over or you are just looking for something fun to do with your friends, go to the website: www.visithelsinki.fi. Here you can find all the events and activities in Helsinki!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, I would recommend this University to others because it is a good university and the level of education is high. To follow courses here is informative and contributes certainly to your knowledge about your studies. The destination is also nice, because there is enough to do in Helsinki and its surrounding cities and it is something completely different. Only you should not have to high expectations about the city, since the city is not really beautiful.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I would advise you to take advantage of the fact that you are there and to see as much as possible, not only from Finland but also from surrounding countries! If you have the money and time, visit Lapland! Lapland is amazing and breathtakingly beautiful and you will love it for sure. Moreover, try to visit Stockholm and St. Petersburg. You will not regret it, i'll promise.



UU Report form - Erasmus 2016-2017

faculty/college	University of utrecht: faculty of social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	interdisciplinary social sciences
destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	31 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process
It was rather easy to apply. I got enough support from my home university and from the university of Helsinki
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Good!
academic preparation
Not a lot. I was in my third year of my bachelor so I already had a lot of knowledge about social sciences
language preparation
My skills of English were already good enough to go without preparation
finances
The erasmus scholarships, savings and i get money from the Dutch government to study still.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I did a lot of psychology classes. I Found that there were not a lot of classes in English and there were many classes with timetable conflicts.
academic quality of education activities
Good. They are open to help you anytime you need.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Good. They were friendly and responded quick./
transfer of credits
It was okay my university made some grades a bit lower then they were in Finland. I got a 5 (1 okay- 5 extremely good) and that was transferred to a 9 (1 really bad -10 extremely good) instead of a 10.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme



Good. We got tutors and came in an international tutor group and that was nice to get to know people
accommodation
It was okay. Not everybody got a room and if you didn't get one it was kind of hard to find a room by yourself.
leisure & culture
Nice. Finnish people are really friendly they seem kind of cold before you get to know them but they just need to get to know you.
suggestions/tips
Join students clubs on the university!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, The education was really good and it is a nice academic atmosphere around the university.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Save a lot of money. Finland is really expensive.



UU Report form - Erasmus 2015-2016

faculty/college	Social and behavioural sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Social sciences

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	14 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 05 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application takes some time and it's smart to start early if you know you want to go on an exchange. During the exchange and after there are also some things that you need to take care of. It's the easiest to know beforehand what things you need to do and have signed. This will make it a lot easier.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling and support from Utrecht were good. It would've been nice if it was a bit more clear what we needed to have signed and when the deadlines are etc. On the other hand when you needed to let anything sign or when you have any questions they would always answer quick.

academic preparation

I didn't do any kind of academic preparation for the exchange

language preparation

I didn't do any kind of language preparation, my english was already on a good enough level. If you like to learn some Finnish beforehand, the university of Helsinki offers a free online crash course in Finnish.

finances

If you decide to go to Finland it's smart to have some money saved because Finland is not the cheapest country to live in. I also did some trips to other countries and it's nice if you also have the money for that.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The biggest problem I faced with the study program is the fact that you will be placed in the department of social sciences as a psychology student. At the university of Utrecht social sciences and behavioural sciences are one department but in Helsinki they are separated into two departments. I do the track neuropsychology and would've liked to follow more courses in this area. But when you're in the department of social sciences you have to take half of the courses in this department, what is mainly about social psychology. And unfortunately was this not really my interest.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of the education in Finland is good. I have to say that it's a bit different than I was used to. The education is more seminar like and with smaller groups and they are a big fan of essays as exam form.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad



The counselling is good, if you have any questions the coordinator will always reply fast and otherwise you can always go to the main international exchange officer where you can walk in every weekday.

transfer of credits

I haven't done this yet because i'm still awaiting one grade.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome and orientation programme was nice. You will be put in a group with some other people and you will spend a whole day taking care of organisational stuff and getting to know each other in the meanwhile as well

accommodation

Most exchange students were living in a building from either HOAS or were living in DOMUS. I was living in a nice HOAS apartment with two flatmates 15 minutes from the city center. But most of the HOAS buildings are quite near to the city center.

leisure & culture

Finland is a nice country, try to visit some places like Turku, Tampere or Porvoo and definitely go on a trip to Lapland. It's also nice to visit some cities in neighbouring countries like Stockholm, Tallinn or St. Petersburg. Try some karaoke out in Finland it's very popular and of course the sauna! The nightlife is also nice there are many bars and clubs you can go to.

suggestions/tips

If you get the opportunity, try to take as many trips to different cities as possible. Definitely go to Lapland! And mainly just enjoy your time in Finland!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

In the end I really had a great time in Helsinki. The education is good and Helsinki itself is also really nice. For a capital city it's not that big but that's also has its charm. And for the cold, it is really manageable and not that bad. I was in Helsinki in the spring period so I didn't really experience the dark period, but I did experience the light period and that was really awesome. Just take into account that you have to take half of your courses in social sciences, That was the only downside for me.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you get the chance to go on an exchange do it! I really had an awesome period abroad!



UU Report form - Erasmus 2015-2016

faculty/college	Sociale Wetenschappen/ Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychologie/ Psychology

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	Universiteit van Helsinki/ Univeristy of Helsinki/ Yliopisto Helsingin
start date	26 / 08 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

It takes a lot of time and effort to understand exactly what you have to do and what is expected from you. In hindsight I probably should have started earlier, because the more you understand beforehand, the easier your exchange will be. During and after your exchange you will also have to make sure all documents are in order, so if you have prepared well enough from the start (when you actually have the time to do this!), you won't have to 'waste' precious time during your exchange on formalities.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

For me, the counselling and support could have definitely been better. There was still a lot of information that would have been very useful to know beforehand, for instance, how difficult it is to change your learning agreement. If you're dealing with a complex university system abroad, like me, it might be quite hard to find courses and therefore it might take you a while to arrange courses in such a way that they all match your interest, you have enough total credits, they don't overlap and they're all approved by the exam commission. Especially the last part hasn't got enough attention in my opinion. Bear in mind that you're going to be working with a completely different system and it takes time to fully understand it. To this day, it is still unclear to me if I made a mistake or that I didn't have any other choice, but neither my home university nor the university abroad were able to detect this 'mistake' and help me further. I ended up in the social sciences department, because in the Netherlands, psychology is part of this faculty. In Finland however, only social psychology is part of social sciences and since I was enrolled in this faculty I had to at least have 50% of my courses from this faculty. The exam commission in turn, thought many of my courses had to much overlap with the course social psychology in Utrecht! These kind of frustrating situations should be known to both the home university and the university abroad in my opinion, so in this field, there is room for improvement.

academic preparation

I didn't really prepare myself academically, because I had difficulties selecting courses, so I didn't know what to expect. In hindsight, if everything would've gone right, I wouldn't have prepared myself anyway, since if you do what you're told, everything is fairly straightforward.

language preparation

I myself didn't need any preparation, because my English level was good enough. If you are unsure about your English skills, you might want to take a course. It can also help to study a little Finnish already, if you're interested in learning the language, since it is quite hard. It is however not necessary, I passed my Finnish exam without prior knowledge of Finnish whatsoever.

finances

Make sure you have enough money saved, as Finland is a really expensive country and you'll most likely won't



be able to work during your stay there. There are also lots of really nice places to visit (see later on), but they will all cost you lots of money. If you don't want to miss out on the optimal Erasmus experience, be wise and make sure you have your finances sorted out before you leave!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

It is quite hard to find courses as I mentioned before, so make sure you sign in for the courses on time, so you won't get rejected for courses you might really need or just find really interesting. In my opinion, the offer is quite limited, so keep this in mind. Furthermore, the university system is a bit chaotic, so it will take some time and effort to get everything in order.

academic quality of education activities

I attended some courses that were really well organized and very interesting and where you get to know your teacher on a more personal basis, which I always find pleasant. Some courses that have limited spots open for students are more likely to be a bit more intense in the sense of (group) discussion, homework and final examination or essay. I also attended some courses where the teacher didn't really pay that much attention to his/ her students and the workload is minimal. Usually these are the courses that don't have limits to the number of students who can participate. There is also a possibility to take an exam without participating in a course. You will have to discuss what the literature will be and you will get the date, time and place where you can take the exam. If you prefer self study, this is a really nice benefit!

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international officer was really nice and really wants to help, but in some cases it was hard to understand what was expected of me and she couldn't really give me a clear answer. Nonetheless, if I sent her an email, she always responded quickly and was very willing to help me out.

transfer of credits

It took some times for the grades and credits to be registered in the university system, but I believe if you really need them to be registered sooner, you can always send an email to the teacher and they can easily fix the problem for you. For me, it wasn't a problem, because I decided to have the transcript of credits sent to me after I returned home.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome fare is a really nice way of making sure you get all the important stuff done. Your tutors will show and tell you everything you need to know and you will have the most important things sorted in one day. It is quite a tiring day, since a lot of international students all have to do the same things at the same places, so you have to wait in line a lot. Nonetheless, at the end of the day, you will be happy you sorted it all in once.

accommodation

It was really hard to find a place in Helsinki, so start on time with your search! If you will get rejected for the HOAS housing, your options are limited. HOAS is the student housing organisation and they will offer you either one room, take it or leave it, or nothing at all. I believe most HOAS housing options are in big buildings with other international students.

leisure & culture

Typical Finnish is their love for the sauna, so most likely if you get a room offer from HOAS, you will have access to a sauna as well. I would definitely recommend joining ESN, because they organize fun events and have nice student discounts. Another initiative is the Buddy Group, where you can mix and mingle not only with international students, but with Finnish people as well. You will most likely get an invitation through email



where you will have to write a short motivation letter and will then they will let you know if you've been accepted. Helsinki is also a nice hub for travelling. Stockholm, Lapland, St. Petersburg and Tallinn are the favorite places to visit. Since alcohol is quite expensive, not only the Finns themselves, but a lot of the international students travel to Tallinn, Estonia, to buy cheaper alcohol. Helsinki nightlife offers some nice clubs and bars, but they are scattered over many areas, so you will have to see for yourself which places you like.

suggestions/tips

See leisure & culture :)

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

It depends on your interests. If you prefer a bit more quiet and small place with beautiful nature, this is the right place for you! If you prefer to party day and night, Helsinki is most likely not the best choice for you. The education was average in my opinion, so if you are looking for a combination of all of this stuff (you like a little peace and quiet every once in a while, but also want to party every now and then and besides your free time do want to study and learn, but don't expect the highest quality education), Helsinki just might suit you like a glove!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

That will be all!