

[FINLAND] – [Laurea]

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¹ To update the agenda just click right on your moose

I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

That was the best experience I've ever had. I had a lot of apprehensions, it was my first earsmus... but honestly, once I got there, those fears were gone. I don't regret anything. If I could go back in time, I would choose Laurea University of Applied Sciences over and over again.

GRADE : [6/5]

=> 0 (I do not recommend this semester abroad to my best friend) – 5 (I totally recommend this semester to my best friend)

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

I didn't need a visa as I am French, and that Finland is part of the European union.

2. The flight

My classes in Finland were starting on January 7th. I booked a flight from Toulouse about 6 weeks in advance, with a connexion in Munich.

Toulouse - Munich

Munich – Helsinki.

I arrived on January 5th, it was enough to get ready and see around before the classes start. The flight (one-way) was about 300 euros, with one big suitcase and two small bags.

3. My luggage

Going to Finland at that time of the year is super cold, the day I arrived it was -22 °C !!! Freaking cold. I think the coldest I experienced there was -25, but the average during the winter time was -15°C. Anyway, it's still really cold, it's also snowing a lot, and the streets are slippery so pack a good pair of winter shoes (boots, après-skis), a good coat, beanie, gloves, everything. Don't forget also some "normal" clothes as the weather gets warmer around May, even though it will probably not go beyond 20°C, even at the end of your exchange. The thing I wish I brought is flip flops ! You'll do a lot of saunas there, outdoors, and for that flip flops are really handy.

4. Bank account

I didn't have to do anything special about that. I kept my bank, LCL, and I just paid a monthly subscription of about 2 euros "City Explorer" to use my card abroad without any additional fees.

5. Insurance

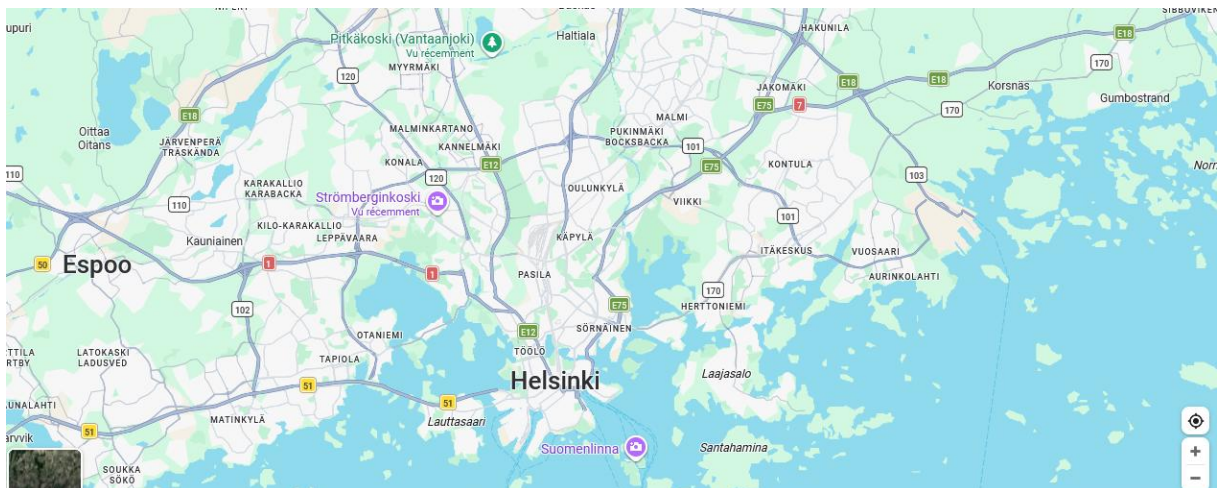
I subscribed to Allianz Travel.

B. Housing

1. Where to live

There is no "bad place" to live in Finland. Transportation is super convenient... It depends mainly on where you will study I would say. But actually, I would recommend the place where I lived. In my opinion, this is the best place to be : Pasila. It's one train station away from the city center (5 minutes), you're super close to all the attractions/events that will be organized, the building is great, and close to a giant mall with everything (mall of Tripla), where is also the train station. I was studying in Hyvinkää, which is 40 minutes away from Pasila by train (quite far), but I had to go on campus only twice a week, which made it very manageable.

I would not recommend living on the Espoo side, I mean, it's prettier and you have a lot more nature, but you would be far from everything. So it depends on what you prefer. But every place is fine.



2. Find a flat or a room

When your application to Laurea is validated, they will send you instructions if you want them to help you find an apartment. They collaborate with HOAS, an organism who helps students find a place. You should just apply when they email you about it, it's quite simple and I was provided with an apartment super fast. You just have to apply as soon as possible (according to the deadlines you'll be given) to be sure to have one. [Online services - Hoas](#)

3. Cost

When you apply to HOAS, you can choose between a shared apartment or a studio. You will also select your budget, so they can see where it's better to provide you a place. Usually I would say the housing goes from 400 to 800 euros. Shared apartment is the most budget-friendly option, and also the best way to make new friends and getting you out of your comfort zone. I applied for a shared apartment and I was sharing it with 5 other girls, for 477 euros per month, in Pasila.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

Nothing special, everything will be explained to you, we had an introduction day, and our classes started one week later. Basically you often have a paper to have stamped by the host university to prove you started your semester there.

B. Information on the university

1. Class

I was sent to the Hyvinkää campus, as I was told by the studies coordinator that it would suit better my desire to learn-by-practice. Hyvinkää offers a learning based approach, it means that you don't have classes but "projects", so you work for a company with a team and you're supervised and helped by a lecturer/teacher. Plus that, you also have some online assignments to do, some modules to complete, and also an essay to hand in, it's the same process for every project. It's interesting, versatile, and teaches you a lot more than lectures in my opinion. I took two projects, 15 ECTS each :

- *Digital marketing and sales project : super interesting project, my favorite, we worked in a super good team with also finnish students. Taught us a lot.*
- *Service design and sustainability project : interesting as well, but not as stimulating as the first one, not sure I would take it again, but it was still fine.*

2. Organization of the Class

The teachers were great and nice, the rhythm of the classes was twice a week (meetings on campus) but it required a lot of personal work.

3. List of courses and recommendation

I thought it was a lot more chill than at MOMA, less classes, less pressure, but still work to do. The projects were super interesting and I like how it works, you really feel like you're actually doing something, And it changes from the usual, gives you a purpose, a real experience, and satisfaction of the work done.

4. Exam

No exam. But final presentations, feedback, grade from the CEO, from the lecturer, from the teammates.

IV. When I live there

A. Safety

It's super safe in general. No worries about coming back home alone at night time. However you should be careful because of some junkies and homeless people in Pasila, but they are usually harmless.

B. Phone and Internet

No issues with that. I was paying 5 euros a month to have 20G abroad. And for Wifi you have to buy a router and a RJ cable and it'll work perfectly.

C. Events

There are Whatsapp and Telegram groups that will tell you everything about it. You'll also have to download Kide.app, you'll be able to buy tickets for the events via this app.

D. Sports

You can do sports with groups in the city. I don't know the exact procedure. Some buildings have free gyms, but it depends. You also have gyms at the uni. Otherwise you can pay a subscription and just go to the mall. You can also go country-skiing, swimming, hiking, running. There are some good spots for that.

E. Eating

Restaurants are quite expensive in Finland. But you can eat for 3 euros at the university. Also, some buffets offer student prices, like the Asian buffet in Pasila, Luckiesfun. You should check in details for more info but I know they do that.

F. Go to the university : bus, car, bike

My uni was in Hyvinkää, so, quite far from Pasila, 45 minutes. I had to take the train, but it was OK (only twice a week).

G. Travels

You should definitely go to Estonia, two hours of ferry and cheap price. Tallinn is a beautiful medieval city and you can buy alcohol for way less expensive than in Finland (taxes). I also had time to travel to other beautiful places, like Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden (I also recommend going to Stockholm by ferry !)... and overall, I recommend travelling across Finland ! Turku, Tampere, Saimaa, Lapland... this country is so beautiful.

H. Any other information you would have liked to know about

Nothing special, I discovered and learnt many things here, but nothing especially I wish I had known before.

V. After your semester abroad

A. What are you planning do to?

I'm applying for a Master in International Marketing.

B. Did you apply for master?

We'll know the answer soon.

Don't hesitate to contact me for any questions I'll be happy to help !