

# Finlande

## Laurea University of Applied Sciences

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## I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

*Even with the Covid-19 situation, I greatly enjoyed my time in Finland. I made wonderful friends, seen amazing thing and had an incredible time overall. I would definitely choose this university again if I had to go back in time. The country has a lot of places to discover and a lot of activities to offer, and the Student Association of Laurea's university is very efficient. They will organize a lot of events with students prices, and will always be there if you have any questions. The administration of the university is also really good and will be glad to help you if you have any issues.*

## II. Before the travel

### A. Preparation

#### 1. Visa

*No need for a Visa.*

#### 2. The flight

*I used Airfrance and Finnair as companies, and left from the airport of Marseille. I took my flight ticket as soon as my housing was confirmed, so around mid-november. Take a flight back at the beginning if it's cheaper for you, but you'll probably want to stay a bit longer at the end so don't rush your decision.*

#### 3. My luggage

Definitely take clothes against the cold (beanie, scarf, gloves are a MUST), even more so if you are planning to go to Lapland. Invest in a good winter jacket/shoes if you can, it will help you a lot. Even though the weather start getting hotter around late April/May, the first months are rough. Also bring moisturizing cream if you want your skin to survive the cold. For example in Lapland, when going out, I had a thermo Tshirt, a sweatshirt, an underjacket and my winter jacket for the top, thighs, pants, ski pants and winter socks for the bottom as well as scarf beanie and gloves, and sometimes I was still cold! In the city, just sweatshirt jacket should be fine, but when it's windy, don't hesitate to put thighs under your pants to keep you warm.

Bring a shirt for the fancy occasions, and a swimsuit if you want to go Sauna/Lake swimming (or do it naked like the Finnish way.)

#### 4. Bank account

*No, I had no issues with my French bank (LCL)*

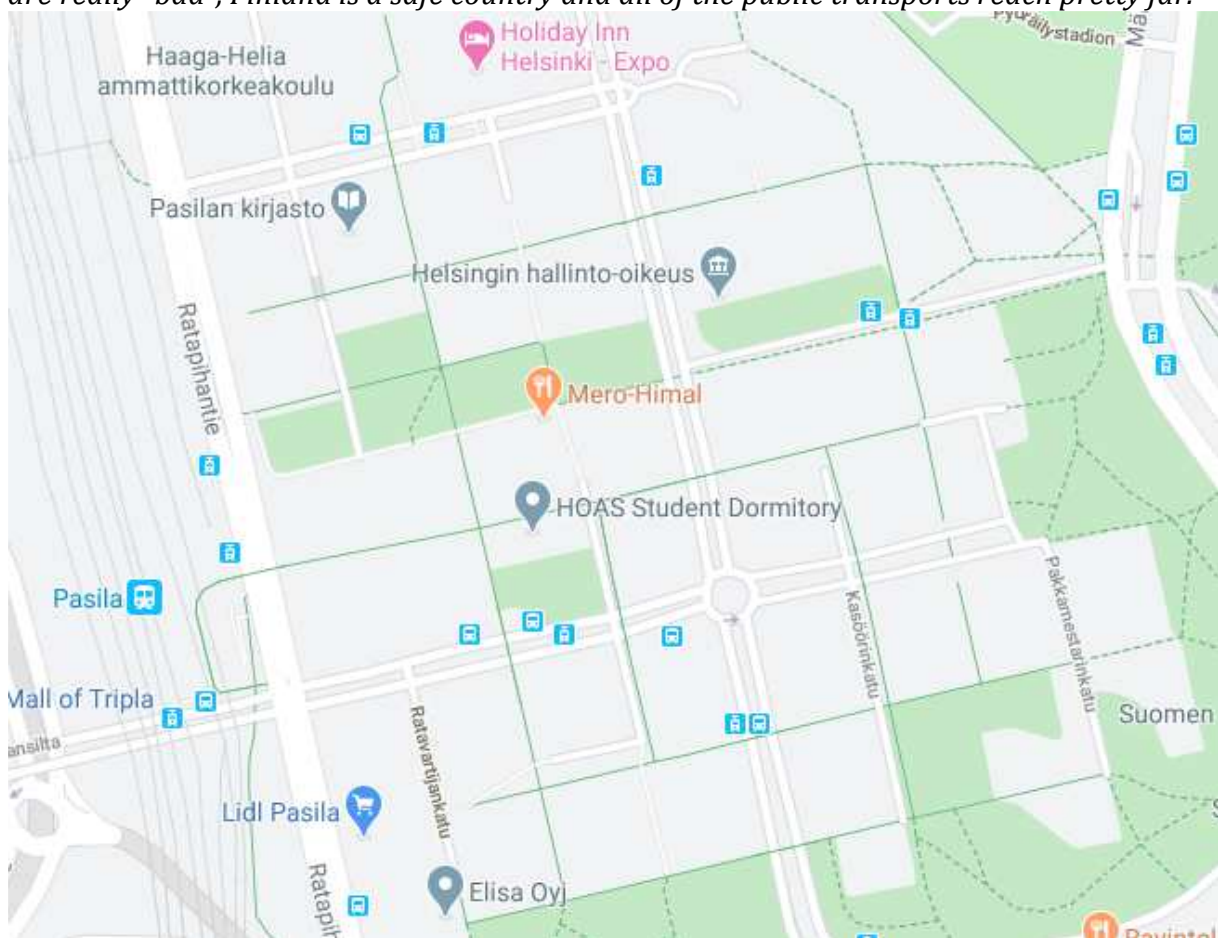
#### 5. Insurance

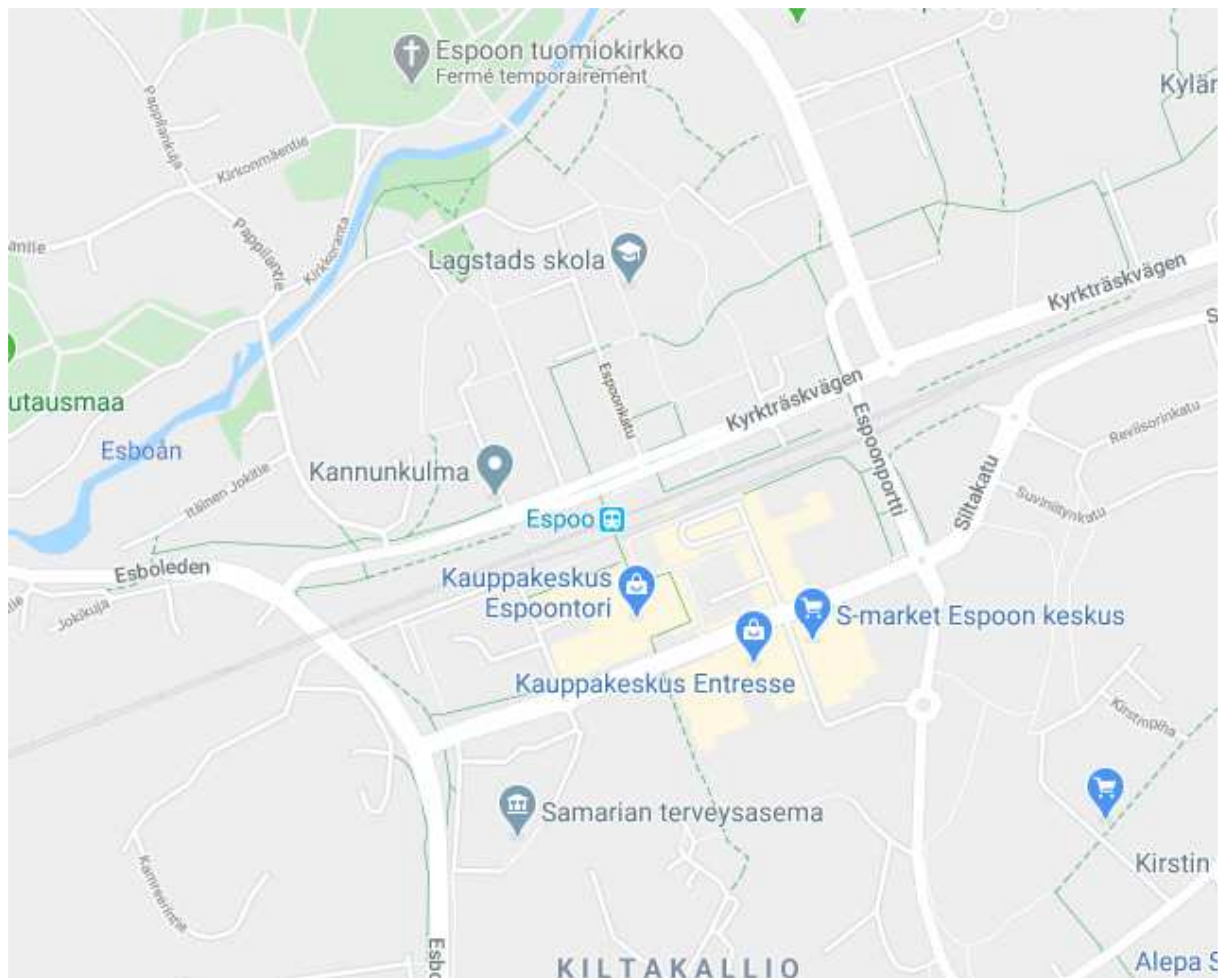
*I took an Insurance AXA for ERASMUS students*

### B. Housing

#### 1. Where to live

*I recommend you to live (if you can of course, sometimes you don't have a choice) in either Pasila or Espoo. Pasila (where I lived) is the closest to the city center (1 train station away), next to the biggest mall of all the northern countries (perfect for shopping and groceries). Espoo's apartment are most of the time bigger and also close to a lot of green spaces (and IKEA!) Both are close to the university's campus of Leppävaara (around 20 minutes) I would not recommend living in Hyvinkää, it's a very beautiful place with a lot of nature around it, and you won't have any neighbors problem, but it's really far from the center (30min by train and 30min bus/walk) so if you want to take part in all of the activities it can be a little difficult. That's about it for all the areas I know, but none of them are really "bad", Finland is a safe country and all of the public transports reach pretty far.*





## 2. Find a flat or a room

*I used the HOAS company in order to find my flat. You can apply as soon as you have been accepted into a school, and they'll provide you with a flat. Apply as soon as you can, as you might not be able to choose where you end up if you do it late.*

## 3. Cost

*The rent for myself was 423euros/month (all included), and from what I heard of other students, it was mostly the same for them (through HOAS). If you don't go for a student housing, the price might be higher, as life in Finland is quite expensive.*

### III. When I arrive at the university

#### A. Inscription at the university

The process was quite easy, as all of the instructions from the university were clear. You will receive access to the University online platform where you can register. The list of all the courses is available online, but some of them might disappear/change later on, so when you will have to register to the different classes, be sure to have some plan B. You can also change courses during the first weeks of the semester, so don't worry too much about it.

#### B. Information on the university

##### 1. Class

**Corporate Social Responsibility** : *This online class was interesting, as it was mostly about recent topics such as social inequalities at work or sustainable economy. I really learned a lot with this class, and I recommend it if you are interested into how to make current companies more responsible both environmentally and socially. As it is an online class, we had one assignment per week, and a final group assignment. The regular assignment normally takes 2-3h to complete, so the amount of work is not that heavy. The group assignment requires a lot more work though, so don't hesitate to start it early.*

**Internet Business Model** : *Also an online course, focused on how companies are building their business strategy around the Internet market. If you are interested in marketing, this is a good course to choose. The teacher is always here to answer your questions or to explain the course through the online platform. The only downside to this course is that there is only one assignment, so your grade will be based on this assignment alone. When I started this course in March, the final and only deadline was for May, so it is sometimes difficult to find the will to work on the assignment. You have to set deadlines for yourself and study this course regularly, if not you are going to be overwhelmed by the amount of work if you postpone it for too long.*

**Content Marketing** : *Also an online course where you are going to create online content for the company of your choice. This is the perfect marketing course, as there is a lot of practice : You are going to build a video script, a social media post, a customer persona, a publishing planning... It was definitely one of the most interesting course that I took this semester, but the workload is quite heavy, so be aware of that. You can chose to do the assignments alone or in a team of 2. I personally did them alone as it allowed more freedom, but having someone else to discuss and clash your ideas might also be a great experience.*

**Service Design** : *Definitely the most interesting course I chose during my Erasmus. In this class, you are going to build real content for a real company. In my case, we worked together with the Coor company, specialized in providing services for other companies (cleaning, mailing, security...) Our objective was to create for them a new service that they could propose to their customers, while keeping in mind sustainable and responsible objectives. You work in teams of 5-6, and I definitely recommend choosing a team with Finnish students in it as you are going to do customers interviews along the line, don't just*

stay with the others Erasmus students. The workload is huge as you are literally building a project from scratch, and you'll have to communicate/meet with your teammates sometimes several times a week. The teachers are really helpful and invested in the class, and are guiding you all along the way. In the end, you'll have to present your project in front of representatives from the company, so do it seriously! It was a lot of work, but in the end a really good practical experience. If you are tired of only studying the theory, then this course is for you.

**Management & Leadership** : This class will focus a lot about the various theories around the theme of management & Leadership (who would have thought?) I liked the class, but I must say that I was sometimes a bit bored as a lot of what you are going to study is stuff that you probably have already learned during your years here in MoMa. It's a good thing as it makes the course easier to understand and it's a good way to refresh your memory, but it can sometimes be a bit repetitive. Plus, the final chapter of the course is focusing on the Finnish laws & legislation around management, so you might feel a bit lost in this part. On the other hand, the teachers are involved in the course and the assignments are interesting to complete.

**Finnish language LV1** : I took this class as a bonus, but I definitely recommend you to take it. It is a great place to meet the other Erasmus student, to learn about the country, the culture, and to know some basic Finnish words. I had a lot of fun, and the teacher was passionate about teaching us.

## 2. Exam

**Corporate Social Responsibility** : 60% of the grade is based on a learning diary : Each week, you have to fill your diary with what you learned, how you completed the assignment, and what you thought of the theme. The other 40% are based on the final group project, where you have to choose a company and analyze it through the various chapters that you studied within the course.

**Internet Business Models** : 100% of the grade is based on the final assignment where you have to build a report about a specific company, and where you analyze it through the theories that you learned throughout the course. The teacher will give you extra points if you participate weekly in the "chapters discussion" on the online platform, as it will show your involvement and enthusiasm in the class.

**Content Marketing** : The final grade is the sum of the grades of 3 assignments : First, an online quiz about the first chapters, then a Portfolio that you will have to fill in (basically a company analysis of its market/customer), and finally the marketing content that you will create (social media post, video script.) The sum of those 3 will give you your final grade for this course.

**Service Design** : 20% of the grade is based on a pre-assignment at the beginning of the course, where you have to build a report focusing on the theories of service design and online marketing. 10% of the grade is based on various online quizzes (4 to 5 quizzed in total) and the 70% left is based on the final group project that you will have to present in front of the company's representatives.

**Management & Leadership** : 25% of the grade is based on an assignment where you will have to interview someone about his/her experience in the management field. 50% is based on a group project work, where you will focus on the theories studied within the class. The 25% left is an individual online exam about the chapter of Finnish Legislation.

**Finnish Language** : A written and oral exam, with questions about basic vocabulary and grammar (Basically like an English test, but in Finnish)

## IV. When I live there

### A. Safety

*Finland is perfectly safe, I have not felt in danger once when I was going back home between 2 and 6am. I can't think of any dangerous place.*

### B. Phone and Internet

*If you have a subscription where you have internet even outside of France, then you'll have no issue. The internet coverage of Finland is excellent, I even had 4g in Lapland! If not, the university will provide you with a SIM card with 5 euros of Internet access, that you can recharge whenever you want. In the HOAS apartment, you will have to bring an ethernet cable to plug your computer to the socket in the wall, or you can also buy a wireless routeur. Ask your tutors about the routeurs, sometimes they have old ones and will gladly lend them to you!*

### C. Events

*Follow the Facebook page/Whatsapp group of the student association, they will always notify you of the upcoming events. If you take the subscription to the association (which I recommend) you will have reduced prices for all events. You will also have access to an application named "Kide" where you will have the list of all the planned events.*

### D. Sports

*Through the university, you will have access to price reductions if you want to go to the gym. You can ask the student association for information about other sports, but if you want to do running/football/basketball, Finland has a lot of parks, green spaces and fields dedicated to them so you will have no issues finding one. If you can, go see a match of Ice Hockey, it's really popular over there!*

### E. Eating

*I must be honest, the typical "Finnish food" is not that good, so go for other options. For the Fast-foods, I recommend Hesburger and Fafa's. If you live in Pasila next to the mall, I recommend the sushi buffet on the first floor, 13 euros for all you can eat. Restaurants are quite expensive, so I don't really have good address in mind. Definitely go for the Cinnamon*

*rolls alongside your coffee, they are delicious. Speaking of coffee, they have a lot of them, and some next to the sea with a really nice view!*

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

*You will mainly travel by train and bus in Helsinki. Buy the monthly subscription, and you are ready to go. For the Leppavaraa campus, I was leaving at 7h20 to arrive at 7h50 to the university, there's like 15min train and a 10min walk from the station. Bike stations are starting to open at the end of March, and when the weather is nice, going around the city by bike is really cool.*

## G. Travels

*Among the 3 travels that the university will propose (Lapland, St-Petersburg, Stockholm), definitely go for Lapland first. Do the 3 of them if you have the means, but Lapland is truly something else and you don't want to miss such an experience. Unfortunately, Russia and Sweden were canceled for me due to Coronavirus, so I cannot tell you much about it. Around Helsinki, you can travel to the nearby cities by trains or buses, such as Tampere, Turku, Porvoo. They are really nice, and one day is enough to visit them. You will also go to Tallinn in Estonia with the Student association by ferries, but you will come back to it several times for a very simple reason : The alcohol is 50% cheaper than in Finland. But don't forget to take some time to visit the old medieval city of Tallinn!*

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

*Here are some tips :*

- Don't be lazy and go to every events you can, even more so at the beginning in order to meet the other Erasmus students.*
- Don't postpone plans because "I still have 5 months to go there", you never know what could happen. In my case, Coronavirus happened, and everything was closed.*
- Go to the Heidis bar in Helsinki on Thursday evenings, there's a weekly beerpong tournament that is really fun to do with your friends.*
- Finnish people might look a bit cold and distant to you, but don't worry this is how they are, and everyone will gladly help you if you ask. Your tutors are always here if you need anything!*
- Having online courses is difficult at first if you need to find a working rhythm, so put some deadlines for yourself in order to not get overwhelmed later on.*
- Everybody uses Whatsapp over there, so forget Messenger if you want to communicate.*
- Experience everything you can and enjoy your time!*



