

[Finland] – [Laurea University of Applied Sciences – leppävaara]

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I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

Help : How was your experience abroad? If you could go back in time, would you go to this university and why ?

My experience was exceptional, I discovered incredible places and people. This has been the most exciting experience of my life! If I could go back in time, I would definitely make the same choices. The university allowed a lot of flexibility (mainly due to covid). We had all of our courses through internet, and it was 80% of independent work, which allowed me to manage my working time as I wanted.

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

Help : Do I need a visa ? If yes, what is the process ?

No need for a Visa if you come from France or any country in the European Union. Therefore I did not need one.

2. The flight

Help : what flight did you take (the company name, airport etc.) and when did you take your flight ticket

I used AirFrance to go to Finland. The easiest way for me was to go from Marseille to Amsterdam and then to Helsinki. I decided to wait to take my flight back mainly because depending on where you live HOAS (The student accommodation company) can allow you to stay in June for free (no rent to pay). Therefore, I decided to wait until I knew if I could stay. At the end I booked my flight back in the end of May and left on the 14th of June. On my way back I had to go with Finnair from Helsinki to Paris and then with Air France from Paris to Montpellier.

3. My luggage

Help : what to not forget in the luggage (what was useful and what you would like to have taken)

Well it may sounds logical, but you definitely need winter clothes. Winter in Finland can sometimes be fine and sometimes be very cold. For us, we had a very cold winter (-25° peak). Two important items that you will need are an Ethernet cable, indeed, all HOAS appartement come with no Wi-Fi. You have internet but if you want to use it you either

have to buy a router (25€ in a tech store in Sello) or through Ethernet. However, the Wi-Fi might not always be the best, so I would encourage you to take an Ethernet cable, at least just in case. The other important item that I wish I had brought is definitely... Flip Flop. You will very often go to the sauna and then outside. You need something to cover your feet otherwise you are not going to enjoy it.

PS: I also recommend jumping in the snow after Sauna (and running back in the sauna right after) or put big bucket of cold water on yourself after sauna. ☺

4. Bank account

Help : did you have to change bank? To respect some amount requirement on the bank account etc.

I did not have to change my bank. Everything was perfectly fine for me.

5. Insurance

Help : What insurance did you subscribe to ?

I had an « Assurance Santé 1 er Euro et Prévoyance » from AWP Health & Life S.A that covered everything.

B. Housing

1. Where to live

Help : Do a google maps capture and circle the area you recommend to live in (and the one you do not recommend)

You won't actually have many choices. If you decide to go to Leppävaara, which I recommend. You will have to go to the Leppävaara campus and will therefore find accommodation close to it. It will most probably be in Timpurinkuja, which is where I lived. To be honest, this is the perfect place, you are 15 minutes away from Helsinki by train, 5 minutes away by foot from the train station and from Sello (which is the big shopping center where you'll find everything).

Otherwise, if you chose Tikkurila you will be next to this campus. From what I have seen it is not too far away from Helsinki but the localization is definitely not as good as in Leppävaara! (But I suppose that Emma and Loana could give you much more details about it).

2. Find a flat or a room

Help : How did you find your flat? Do you have any recommendation

No need to worry about this, HOAS will do everything for you (or almost). All you need to do is go to <https://www.hoas.fi/muuttavalle/> and wait until you can apply for an accommodation. You will have to tell if you want to be in a studio (on your own) or in a shared appartement. I definitely recommend sharing an appartement, it will allow you to meet a lot of people and create a real group of friends (with which you will probably travel around Finland).

3. Cost

Help : How much should I plan for a room?

I used to pay 436€ per month for my appartement but the rent usually is within 400 and 450 for a shared appartement depending on your localization.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

Help : How was the process, what did you have to do?

You will receive all your instruction by mail from Laurea. You will have to register online and chose your courses. It isn't hard, you will be guided and you will have a contact person in the administration of Laurea to help you in case.

B. Information on the university

1. Courses

Help : List the different courses, and for each course, describe the format, the content, the exam, what did you like and not like, would you recommend it for the next student?

Important to say that Caroline and I chose the same courses, and we were doing all those courses together (since it was allowed to do them in duo)

Service Design: Service Design is shared in 2 parts. The first where you "learn" the course and answers quizzes every week, and the second where you create a group of 5 to 6 people and apply theoretical knowledge to a project (usually you try to help an already existing business based in Sello).

In my opinion it was a good course, however due to covid we could not do the project as it was planned, and we also never met the other group members.

It was also the only course in which I had classes

Market Entry: Probably the hardest course due to the professor requirements (it does not mean that you will also have this professor if you take this course). Due to covid this course was an independent study course. Which means that the professor give you courses, video and documents that you must read and understand and then you will be given an assignment to do.

The content of the course was interesting, and the assignments were probably the most interesting ones of all the courses. However, it was also the course that probably required the most working time.

Corporate Social Responsibility: This was also an independent study course. The course was divided in parts, at the end of each part you had an assignment to do, and the last part was basically a mix of all the parts. The course content was also very interesting, and it was actually not hard.

Intercultural Leadership: This was also an independent study course but this one was in groups of 3. Caroline's roommate also had this course, so we decided to team up. The course content wasn't super interesting in my opinion. However, the assignments could be a little bit challenging sometimes. Also not super hard.

Overall you will see that most courses are not hard. Grades go from 0 to 5 (there is no such thing as 4,5 or 4,75...). Therefore I ended up with only 4/5 or 5/5 grades.

2. Advice on "contrat d'étude"

Help : would you recommend for a student when picking its courses

Make sure that the course content is interesting because you might have to study all on your own. Which means that you'll have to find some motivation somewhere.

IV. When I live there

A. Safety

Help : Is it safe? Is there areas or times I should avoid

I don't think there are many places that safe in the world. You cannot feel unsafe in Finland, just not possible. I haven't ever had an unsafe situation and none of the people I knew there did.

B. Phone and Internet

Help : How to be able to call and have internet

I kept my phone subscription from France because I could use internet and call anyone in every country of the European Union.

C. Events

Help : How to know about the events?

You will be given student tutors that will help you out and will most probably let you know about the events to be coming. Also you will be part of a Laurea WhatsApp group (forget about Messenger in Finland) and a Laurea Facebook group, where you should also get the news about events.

D. Sports

Help : What sport can I do ? and how?

Due to covid there wasn't any sports we could do with the University. However, in Leppävaara there is a gym that was 3 minutes away from my appartement. You will also find on your way to the campus, and further, a lot of sport tracks. Whether you want to play football, track and field or basket, you will find a place to go for free. There is also a super nice forest in that Area where you can run or just go for a walk.

E. Eating

Help : Any recommendation? Or good tips (e.g. an international house buffet)

I honestly did not taste a lot of Finnish food so I would not be able to give proper recommendations. However, I can say that you'll find every fast-food restaurant that you are used to find in France. Just in Sello you'll find many restaurants.

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

Help : How did you get access to the bus, car or bike

I have only been once to the university campus, it was when the tutors gave us a campus tour. However, it is super close from home and we could just walk there.

G. Travels

Help : What do you recommend and what do you not recommend

Due to covid many of the University travels were canceled. But I have to say that it doesn't make any difference! If you manage to get a good group of friends, I recommend traveling with them directly rather than joining any university travel. For us, it was cheaper to go as a group to Lapland (and actually go for longer and a MUCH better spot) on our own than joining one of those travel. However, I can only say that about the Lapland trip because I did not have the opportunity to travel to other countries from Finland. But I can say that usually the university organize a travel to Iceland and to Saint-Petersburg.

I also recommend renting a cottage in Finland both in Winter and summer. You'll find yourself to see beautiful place and create beautiful memories.

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

Help : What would I liked to know if I could have gone back in time

Finland is 2 countries, one in winter and one in summer. So be ready for that and don't waste time because summer is coming.

You will be in an incredible country with incredible landscapes. If you like nature you will love it. Don't ever miss the opportunity to go the Lapland because it is one unique experience!

Don't hesitate to contact me for ANY information, I would be more than happy to help you!

Here is my mail again: Benjamin.appaix@hotmail.fr

