

[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

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

My experience abroad was amazing, I have no regrets and if I could go back in time I'd definitely choose Helsinki again because I loved this city.

GRADE : [a grade between 0 and 5]

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

5!! I can only recommend the experience

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

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

Finland is in Europe so you don't need a visa as a French citizen. I can't help about other nationalities

2. The flight

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

I took a plane from Paris to Helsinki with Air France in January (booked a few weeks before), and Helsinki to Paris with Ryanair in June (booked about two months before). The flights itself can buy quite cheap but the price increase depending on your luggage

3. My luggage

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

Obviously, do not forget warm clothes. I would say thermal underwear is the best thing to have (decathlon provides the best quality/price ratio) BUT do not over-prepare yourself as I did, Finnish winter is not as bad as you think and you get use to it quite quickly.

Do not forget to take a swimsuit and flip flops for the saunas!

But don't worry about forgetting something, you can buy anything you need in Helsinki and it's not more expensive.

4. Bank account

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

I'd recommend using an international online bank (Revolut for example) to avoid any international banking fees. Also, if you travel in other Northern Europe countries using different currency (Sweden, Norway, Denmark...) the online bank allows you to change currency without fees)

5. Insurance

[Help : What insurance did you subscribe to ?]

I had to take a home insurance in Helsinki and it was around 10€/month

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)]

If you are at the Leppävaara campus (which I recommend), the best place to live is in Leppävaara. The campus is located between the center of Helsinki and the center of Espoo so they are both 10/15 minutes away by train.

To be fair we went to the campus once or twice a week because most of the courses were online, so its absolutely ok if your apartment is not the closest.

2. Find a flat or a room

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

Most of the students live in HOAS apartments, it's the most popular student housing company, but I personally went for a private landlord. The problem with HOAS is that they get so many students they can only make 1 apartment offer per person, and the offer I had seemed a little bit far from my campus and from the city center. The university will send a message a couple month before the semester with some websites where you can find private landlords if you don't go with hoas. That's what I did and everything went perfectly find.

However, I recommend being really careful with private landlords, because you can always find scams, but my experience was great and I didn't hear any complaints.

If you are planning to study in the Leppävaara campus, you can just send me a message and ill share you the contact of my apartment's landlord. I was a 8 minutes walk from the campus and 12 minutes train ride from Helsinki city center so its probably one of the best places to live.

3. Cost

[Help : How much should I plan for a room or a flat?]

I paid 510€ for the rent and 50€ water and electricity fees per month for a 18 square meter room (the room was BIG) + a balcony and a fully equipped apartment. The offer I received from HOAS was the same price without the fees for a 14 square meter room.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

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

It was quite easily made online beforehand and everything was clearly explained by the university. Do not hesitate to ask if you need help (to Laurea or MOMA's service des relations internationales)

B. Information on the university

1. Class

[Help : for each class tell us how was the class, what did you like and not like, would you recommend it for the next student?]

Service Design: 30% of the course was online before the actual classes with quizzes regarding the theoretical part and 70% was a group work for a company. I do not recommend this course. I was put in a group with only Finnish people, talking with them was difficult and the work itself feels useless and irrelevant to the theoretical part and to the company.

Data Driven: its a business simulation in groups during the complete semester (almost the same we did at MOMA) and also some individual work. I'd recommend taking this course

Corporate Social Responsibility: online course, no classes. The good part is that the course is short and you can lock in to finish it quickly. The bad part is that you literally meet nobody (not even a teacher).

Digital Marketing: This one is probably one of the most interesting course. You basically need to do some tasks for a company. Our group had to build a visual identity for a small sailing company and it was very pleasant to feel how our work was useful for the company. BUT, throughout the course, we had to complete several certifications (Google...) and this part was very long.

Introduction to Finnish language and culture : the best class I had. The content is interesting and its always useful to learn some Finnish bases for the life there (even though absolutely everyone speaks English). And it is face to face classes so you ACTUALLY MEET PEOPLE: a teacher (mine was lovely) and exchange students. Its an optional class but I recommend it with all my heart. Do not think its a bad idea because it'll give you extra work. As I said, you will have plenty of free time and this class only lasts for 2 months.

2. Organization of the Class

[Help : tell us the duration of the class, the volum of work, the behavior of teachers etc. ?]

It's very different from the French system. Most of the classes are online (Zoom) or just individual/group work to do on our own. We had to be on campus maybe 1 or 2 days a week. Some people would say it's a good thing but I wish we could meet more students

at the uni. Having no face to face classes means more homework, so the amount of work at home consequent, but still, this semester will give you more free time that you never had. Regarding the teachers, the majority of them are very nice (but nice is kind of an euphemism when it comes to Finnish people) and they will always be available for any help. Also, the teachers are very chill about the work so do not put too much pressure on yourself. The Finnish mentality is to be **overly accommodating**.

3. List of courses and recommendation

[Help : list your different courses and let us know what do you think : level (easier, same or harder than the 1st semester course at MOMA, what you liked about the content, how is the class organization, who is the professor). Finally, for each class, tell us if you recommend the course.]

I talked about my opinion on each classes. Regarding the level, I'll say it's easier than MOMA because we don't have to deal with the most challenging courses (accounting...) but this is just my opinion.

A funny thing is that for some courses we had like 3 teachers in class at the same time doing the same job, very different from what we could see in France.

4. Exam

[Help : How was the exam? Format? Duration? Grade]

The only real exam I had was the Finnish exam (easiest of my life) for the other courses we were graded on the online quizzes and the group presentation (also on the simulation for Data-driven)

IV. When I live there

A. Safety

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

Finland is very safe. I cannot think of any place/area that did not feel safe.

B. Phone and Internet

[Help : How to be able to call and have internet?]

My plan in France (with Orange) included internet and calls within Europe, so I didn't have to change anything

C. Events

[Help : How to know about the events?]

To know about the events organized by the university you can just follow them on Instagram, but I recommend the Kide application where you can find every single student event taking place around you (and there is a LOT of them: parties, cinema, karaoke, learning workshops...). All the exchange students are also invited in a telegram

group with the tutors where some things are organized by the students (day trips, sport activities...)

D. Sports

[Help : What sport can I do ? and how?]

I think what was the most impressive thing in Finland in comparison with France was the facilities : basketball and football pitches, tennis and padel courts, outdoor gyms for free, huge stadiums. If you like sports you'll most likely be satisfied. As I said before some sports sessions are organized between the students so stay tuned to the groups

E. Eating

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

Try the salmon because its great but besides this Finnish isn't the best country for gastronomy.

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

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

I just walked less than 10 minutes to go to the university but most of the students used the train

G. Travels

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

I recommend going for the Lapland trip organized by the university. It is expensive but it's a one in a lifetime experience. All the activities were great, we also visited Tromsø in Norway.

I didn't really like Tallinn but its also a must-do when you're in Helsinki and its quite cheap.

I also travelled to Copenhagen and to Stockholm (using the ferry, also a great experience to have).

There are also some nice trips to do in Finland: Turku was absolutely great, Porvoo is nice for a day trip, and I didn't visit Tampere but I heard its beautiful too.

I always recommend to do any trips you can, you always learn from visiting a country or a city and this is an experience you wont regret. The HUGE AMOUNT OF FREE TIME during an Erasmus is probably the best time ever to discover new things and places.

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]

Do not take too much things with you because you'll buy things in 6 months and have to come back eventually and the luggage fee can be hilarious.

And ill say that for the 10th time but you will have a lot of FREE TIME, so USE IT. I think what made my semester amazing and made me love Finland so much is that we did explore the city and the country as much as we could. Just go on a walk around your

place and you'll find some marvelous places. Go to the beaches, visit the islands, explore the forest, this is the best advice I can give. We met some people here that didn't explore that much and they almost hated Finland. So id say if you give a little bit of yourself and your time to this country, he'll give it back a million time.

If you need any additional informations or any kind of help regarding Finland for the university, the city, the accommodations of whatever feel absolutely free to contact me and ill be glad to provide my help as I can
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V. After your semester abroad

A. What are you planning do to?

[Help : What do you want to do next year]

Taking a gap year to work, travel, and prepare for the masters.

B. Did you apply for master?

[Help : in which master where you accepted]

I didn't apply for any masters, I will apply next year.

[remember to fill in the excel : <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11-vB4ABdkzIJR1AQ82drWyAVXfnCpRYr8COkeKihnlS/edit?usp=sharing>]

