



2015-2016 Student Mobility/Exchange Program Returning Undergraduate Student Report

Student Name:

Host University: Lahti University of Applied Sciences

Host Country: Finland

Faculty/Department at Host Institution: Faculty of Design

Semester: Winter semester 2016 (January – May)

Date of Report: June 12, 2016

1. OVERALL EVALUATION

How would you rate your exchange experience overall?

Poor

Excellent

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 XXXX

Please explain your rating.

Why did you choose this host institution? What key factors or issues influenced your decision?

I am studying Industrial Design and so I really wanted to know how Scandinavian and Nordic Design had gained so much popularity. What was there focus? There process?

Please share a few of your most positive experiences and a few of the biggest challenges you faced.

Understanding the people was a big struggle at first. They seemed a bit cold and distant. But over time I learned to understand them more. They are amongst some of the nicest people I've ever met.

2. PREPARATION

Please describe your preparation for the exchange, including banking, travel documents and student visa application. In retrospect, would you have done anything differently?

The process was honestly very tedious, but getting my resident permit was more pleasant due to the easy to understand website. Collecting everything took about a month and a bit.

Are there any important items (e.g. art & design supplies, documents, specialty foods, health items) that a student should take to your host country?

Mainly just take the things that you prefer to use, but my school in Finland basically had everything I needed.

3. ARRIVAL

Was anyone at the airport, train station, etc. to meet you? Did you experience any difficulties upon arrival?

Upon arrival it was just insanely cold. About -38 degrees, and so it was very difficult to get to the city of Lahti. But once I was there, my tutor (coordinator) received me, and took my straight to my dorm room.

When should students plan to arrive at the host university? When did you arrive? Would you have benefited from arriving earlier?

They should arrive at least a couple of days before orientation begins. I arrived one day after orientation started. Although it wasn't my fault I would have preferred coming earlier.

Was there an orientation session offered at your host university? If yes, did you attend and what did you learn?

Yes, there was. And they taught us just the rules and regulations, major events at the university, and how to get around, cards to purchase, cheap grocery shops to buy food from etc.

Is there a coordinating office for international students, including exchange students, at your host university? Is there a staff person you would recommend students approach with their questions?

Yes, there was.

4. ACCOMMODATION

Where did you live during your exchange? Were you happy with your accommodation?

I lived in Mukkula, in Lahti. I was more than satisfied with my accommodations. Everything was very clean and new.

Did you have any difficulties arranging accommodation yourself? Did the host institution assist you in finding accommodation?

The host University arranged accommodation for me.

5. STUDIES AT HOST INSTITUTION

To better understand the similarities and differences between academic studies at OCAD U and at your host university, please comment on the following:

Level of academic difficulty and challenge:

I didn't find myself too challenged, because the curriculum is much more relaxed than it is here. Which I actually think is a very good thing.

Time spent in class (# of hours per week):

Close to 35 hours a week.

Time spent working on projects outside of class (# of hours per week)

20 hours a week

Studio-based work:

Not much studio based work. We had workshops

Written assignments:

Interaction between students and professors:

6. SERVICES

Were there any extracurricular activities/events scheduled for exchange/international students at your host university (cultural visits, trips, workshops, etc.)? Which ones would you recommend?

Yes! There were many events. Parties took place once or twice a week, specifically from the University. Events included days in there skiing resort, skiing, playing traditional games, cooking sausages over a fire. There were visits to churches, and iconic architectural sites, and buildings.

What were the library and computer facilities like?

They had decent computers, but the windows ones needed an upgrade.

7. COST OF LIVING

How did you prepare yourself financially for your exchange? Did you pay for the experience entirely out of your own savings? Did you receive student or bank loans? Did you apply for / receive any financial awards (scholarships or bursaries)? Did you have help from parents / family / friends?

I had some help from my parents, and OSAP. I had also saved money from the semester before going.

In general, was the cost of living in your host country higher, lower, or similar to that in Canada? Please explain.

It was pretty similar. Day to day things were expensive but big expenses were actually cheaper. (Rent, public transportation, cell phone etc)

8. EXPENSES

Exchange rate with host country:

Time spent in host country (month/year - month/year):

January/2016 – June/2016

Would you estimate that you spent more, less, or the same amount as an average, local student attending your host institution?

Maybe a bit less.

Please complete the following budget to give other students an idea of what they can expect to spend in the host country.

Basic Expenses in Canadian Dollars:

1. **Tuition and general fees (paid to OCAD U):** \$
 - i. Approximately \$3,500 for the semester
2. **School supplies:** \$
 - i. \$300
3. **Rent or university residence:** \$ /month = \$
 - i. \$460/month
4. **Rent-related expenses:**
 - A) **Electricity/Water:** \$0 /month
 - B) **Telephone:** \$ 38/month
 - C) **Cable:** \$ 0/month
 - D) **Other (other)** \$ /month
5. **Groceries or Meal Plan:** \$200 /month = \$
6. **Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.):** \$50 /month = \$
7. **Laundry:** \$ 0/month = \$
8. **Transportation:** \$ 95/month = \$
9. **Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.):** \$60 Total semester
10. **Travel health insurance:** \$0
11. **Medical expenses in host country:** \$0
12. **Round trip plane ticket:** \$960
13. **Travel/trips during exchange:** \$2,000
14. **Student visa:** \$0
15. **Other expenses (please specify):** \$

Estimated Total Expenses: \$9,000 – 12,000

9. ADAPTING TO YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Did you experience any “culture shock” during your exchange? How did you deal with it? Do you have any advice for students on how to adapt to life in your host country?

For the most part I found that since everyone spoke English it was not too difficult to get around. But I did find it hard to understand Finnish people’s coldness and how reserved they were at first. I would say to other students, just accept what is happening, and that there is a

good reason for it. The weather was also very depressing at times. Not being able to see the sun ever was very difficult.

Was there a lot of interaction between local students and exchange/international students?

What is the best way to develop friendships with students from your host institution?

A lot, yes. All the exchange students lived on 1 residence block. That was about 3 buildings. So approximately 150+ exchange students were all in one 3 building block. So over time we were all very well acquainted.

Did you have any unforeseen problems? Was there anything that you felt was strikingly different from what you expected? If so, is there a way that you could have prepared yourself?

I could not open a bank account in Finland, since I was only there for 6 months. The minimum is 1 year. So I had issues with banking and figuring out how to pay for things as I went along.

10. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Please email your report to Susan Kemp, Student Mobility/Exchange Coordinator, at skemp@ocadu.ca