

***Erfahrungsbericht
Turku School of
Economics***

University of Turku

Finland



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1. Motivation and Preparation

When I decided, to do an exchange semester in the winter semester 2019/20, I had to first find a suitable partner university abroad. I was seeking a university that would offer interesting courses for my further academic education, as one of my goals was to improve and expand my specialist vocabulary in English. Thus, I inquired about partner universities, compared their study offers and quickly found what I was looking for, the University of Turku, in Finland. Fortunately, I had already been told a lot about both the city and the university, as a fellow student had studied at the university before me. Furthermore, a friend of mine also described Finland well, as he had studied in Finland for a year during his studies. Another plus was, of course, Finland's reputation with regard to its high level of education.

Weighing up all the benefits, I immediately contacted our International Office After and received comprehensive consultation. After I was clarified, I applied for an exchange place at the university of Turku in Finland. The international office accompanied and guided me through every step and also gave me clear guidelines so that the application process proceeded smoothly. The application process at BTU is quite straightforward. First of all, it was necessary to write a letter of motivation explicitly for the desired university and to enclose important documents such as diplomas, certificates ect. Among other things, I needed a certificate in English. A TOEFL test etc. was not required by the Finnish university. A certificate confirming that I have my English is on B2 level was sufficient. Subsequently, on the basis of the documents submitted, the examination board decided which student was to receive the place. Luckily, I was the one who was offered a place. Obviously, I was very happy about that.

When I was accepted by the BTU, the next step was to get nominated by the BTU at the University of Turku. This was the crucial step since the partner university had to decide whether to accept my nomination or not. It should be noted that the application at the partner university can only be made once you have successfully completed the nomination process. After successful admission to the partner university you have to go through the online application portal of the partner university, namely SoleMove, where you have to submit further relevant documents. As soon as all the required documents have been set up, you will receive a letter of acceptance. This letter of acceptance is essential for all further precautions, e.g. apartment search, student card.

2. Accommodation in Turku

Before my departure I was already looking for a possible accommodation. The university offers 2 student accommodations Student Village (TYS) and Retrodorm. It was important for me to stay in one of the dormitories near the university. The application period for accommodation began in May. Despite applying in time, I unfortunately did not get any accommodation and finally had to go looking for an apartment again. Fortunately, a tutor is assigned to you during your time in Finland and will contact you within a few days of admission. The tutor is there to advise you and to assist you in all matters. After I described my living situation to my tutor, he helped me to find a place to live. I got Facebook groups and websites where I could find out about private advertisements. Facebook groups are ideal for finding accommodation, as a lot of students are looking for a room in a shared flat and you can share a flat if you want. In addition, contacting private housing providers via Facebook is quite easy. In the end, I was able to find a flat-sharing room (€ 420 per month) that was inexpensive by Finnish standards.

After about 2 weeks of active search on Facebook I found what I was looking for and founded a shared flat with other exchange students. The landlord received all documents via email and the process went smoothly. Since my flat was only habitable from September 1st, I stayed the first week in a hostel, which was also run by my landlady. So, I got to know my future landlord and got important information about my environment. On August 23rd it finally started. I flew from Berlin via Helsinki and continued my journey by bus to Turku.

3. Studying at Turku School of Economics

The University of Turku, located in Turku in southwestern Finland, is the third largest university in the country as measured by student enrollment. It was established in 1920 and ranks third in the Finnish university ranking. The university offers very modern facilities. In addition, some buildings of the university are currently being renovated. Prior to my arrival, the university sent me an event plan in with a detailed description of the orientation week. The orientation week is awesome way to get started. They are especially for the exchange students and offer a very good campus tour; lectures on everyday life in Turku, teaching behavior, possibilities to get to know new fellow students quite quickly.



Figure 1: Tuku School of Economics

The semesters here are organized differently than in Germany. The autumn semester here runs from September to the beginning of December. In December the final exams are scheduled until Christmas. It should be noted that courses are offered either during the autumn or the spring semester. Most courses last either a period or the whole semester. Periods I & II are held in the autumn semester and periods III & IV in the spring semester. Therefore, you have to make sure to choose courses that are offered during your exchange.

The university itself offers everything you need. There is a large cafeteria, two cafés, a library, several fitness rooms (offered by Campussport) and many computers to work on. The professors, tutors and also the International Coordinator have always been very friendly and helpful. There were no problems to get in touch with them for help or questions. You can purchase university sweaters, t-shirts and other merchandise in the campus shop. The course grade of some subjects is made up of several partial components. On the one hand homework is included in the grade. On the other hand, some courses include project work or presentations that had to be done or given during the semester. Studying at the Turku School of Economist was very interesting and very helpful for me personally. The courses I took were all very practice oriented. There are many different courses offered, also online, which you complete independently. The teaching language is English and there is a nice and pleasant international atmosphere.

4. Everyday life and leisure

The city of Turku is famous in Finland for being a very lively city compared to other university cities. The city center offers many pubs, fast food chains, cinemas and a good change from university life. Furthermore, Finland is known to be called “the land of a thousand lakes.” The thousands of lakes in Finland are the reason why the country's nickname is named like that. A comparison of the number of lakes with its population reveals that there is one lake for every

26 Finns, which is a funny fact. Water makes up 10% of the land area in Finland. Trips to the local area are definitely recommended. Therefore, I and some friends began the journey and try to visit the various islands. We ended up visiting 3 islands. Moreover, I spend time traveling within the country. So, I went to Helsinki, Tampere and Vasa. All of the cities have beautiful sights, which are nice to see. I have been in Stockholm through an event organized by the university. We went there with a big ferry, which was a wonderful experience.



Figure 2: Activities in Turku

The university has also organized some excursions. For example, I took part in a hiking tour with overnight stay in Tampere. Together with friends I also planned a trip to Helsinki. When there was enough snow, we had been in Lapland. There you can book snowmobiles and a husky safari. I was able to go to the sauna and jump into the cold lake.

Besides that, you have the possibility to participate in the Campussport. The sports offer in the sports center offers almost everything you can imagine, for only 44€ for the whole semester.

Apart from the lectures and homework, the students spend most of their everyday life and leisure time with other exchange students. The student organizations of the university organize various student parties during the semester. I am very thankful for the existence of the Erasmus Plus program. This program gave me the opportunity to experience the Scandinavian culture surrounded by beautiful people from all round the world. All in all, this was a very vital experience, which I definitely recommend every student.