

Host University: Politecnico Di Torino

Country: Italy

City: Turin

Degree Programme: The Master of Science in Architecture for Heritage preservation and enhancement

Semester: Fourth

Preparation Phase: First and foremost, the decision to do a semester abroad through ERASMUS was based on exploring a new country, city and university, apart from choosing something that interests me. I shortlisted the universities based on the course, the language of study, the country and the overall expenses per month.

After finalising the university and course, the next step was to contact IRO (International Relations Office) and send in the application which was to give the preference of universities and signed by the coordinator of our programme in BTU. I was then informed about my selection directly from the host university.

Following this the preparation involved having the learning agreement in place which talks about the modules I wanted to take. In BTU, I had to apply for leave of absence and pay the reduced fee for the upcoming semester.

Apart from this, it was important to understand and go through the formalities of the host university and the city and country which involved cross checking the validation and requirement of visa and insurance. For Italy, I didn't need visa and my German insurance was valid there too. However, it required me to apply for a fiscal code which is ideally a tax code that one can apply for with the residence proof once there. Due to corona, everything was done online and the host university held webinars before to describe every detail.

Lastly, apart from the documents I tried to contact some local people via social media to know about the budget and the mobile services in Italy. A general overview of basic transportation system was also needed to know how to travel locally.

Since I was travelling during the pandemic, keeping myself updated with the latest restrictions and requirements was necessary. I had booked the train tickets first which was going through Austria and seemed like I was in bad luck as a new variant was identified and borders closed two days before my departure. I then had to do my research and rebook for another route.

Accommodation: Searching for a place to live is always a big task if the university doesn't offer a room. I looked into various facebook pages and websites suggested by the university. Finally, I arranged my place to stay based on my budget from 'housing anywhere'. It was a small cozy apartment with all facilities and requirements. I was sharing it with my friend from BTU who like me did the exchange.

Study at host university: The study at host university was done mostly in blended style i.e. partly online and partly offline. The online system was managed well and the subject matter was clear. The professors were good and taught everything in detail. The subjects were well managed and an integrated study approach was applied.

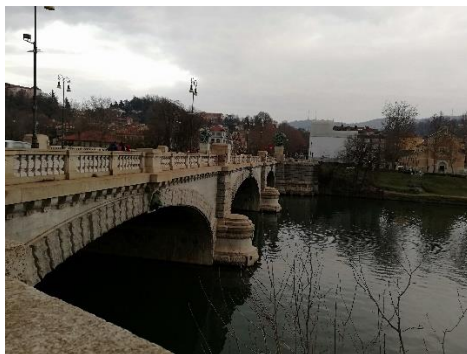
Since it was Architectural Conservation, some review classes were held with professors online and in the seminar rooms which could be booked via the 'polito app'. The structure of the course was meticulously designed and well planned, however I felt the classes were unnecessarily long and could have been more comprehensive.

Everyday life and free time activities: Due to corona, the everyday life was dependent on the restrictions. When I reached Italy, Turin was in the yellow zone but it soon came into the red zone with increasing cases. Despite this, the beauty of the city could be explored by walk or public transport. The city has many parks and open spaces to refresh oneself.

I participated in some of the ERASMUS tours when the restrictions were lifted and bought the ESN card. I explored with the other ERASMUS students, the Egyptian museum and a walk through the monumental cemetery.

Along with my roommate, we tried to explore the local cuisine of the region. The university too organised some webinars on city life and food. I got a chance to meet new people from different nationalities and explore the city together with them. A local tour of the Valentino castle was also amazing and the free city tour gave me a gist of the city and its main spots.

We tried cooking some Italian food at our place and had enough pasta, pizza, lasagne for a lifetime. 😊



The River 'Po'



ESN trip to 'The Egyptian Museum'



Visit to the Monumental Cemetery



Tour of Valentino Castle



Trying the local cuisine