

My Erasmus+ experience was in Turin, Italy for the Winter semester of 2019/2020. The university was Politecnico di Torino (Polytechnic of Turin). I mostly took modules on the MSc in Urban Planning, but also in the Architecture Bachelor's degree.

### **Preparation Phase**

The preparation phase includes a lot of steps and obviously the earlier you start, the better it will be. In my experience though, I decided to apply for the semester abroad in January, 2019, meaning I had less than a month to fetch all the required documents and apply.

Personally, the preparation phase was the most stressful one, because of the amount of documents and also because it coincided with several deadlines from the university, which meant I had not only to write my essays, but also motivation letters and check out different universities.

The fact of having to submit different applications, including different motivation letters to all universities you want to apply to, prevented me from applying to more than two. Thus, I applied to Politecnico di Torino and Politecnico di Milano. Turin was my first choice, because the university seemed more organized and they offered the courses information clearly in their website, while Milan did not offer so much information. It was crucial to understand the modules' requirements in order to visualize the proper recognitions I could get from my home university.

After all the documents were ready and the application process went smoothly. The course coordinator at my home university helped a lot, always being really understanding and fast-answering. The International Relations Office was also very helpful and clear. I guess the only direction that was not super clear for me was that it was necessary to take a leave of absence. However, taking it also went uncomplicatedly.

After the acceptance, Politecnico di Torino, was also very willing to help and answer emails quickly. Moreover, their website already provides a lot of information for newcomers.

### **Accommodation in the host country**

Politecnico di Torino stated they help exchange students to get accommodation, but in fact they have agreements with some housing providers that gives students some benefits. After that was clarified, it was not a problem finding a home, although the prices were a bit higher than expected, an average of 450 to 500 euros for a room. Moreover, the providers usually offer housing for one-year contracts. It was a bit challenging finding a place to stay, but nothing extremely difficult or not expected. Also good that I started looking for it in advance, so I wouldn't be overwhelmed before arriving. I found a room in HousingAnywhere and arranged everything online.

## **Study at the host university**

I attended the Welcome event at the university and it was very helpful to understand how the university works and steps I needed to fulfil to start my studies. The university staff was friendly throughout the entire journey.

I took almost all the modules I had already included in my Learning Agreement, because luckily their schedules matched perfectly. It was very good to be able to choose modules from different courses and areas, and PoliTO offers a wide range of English courses. All the modules I took were naturally full of internationals, but it was also interesting for me to see Italians taking English courses, as a lot of modules were also offered in Italian language. This mix between internationals and locals created an interesting setting for the classes. At the beginning, it was a bit difficult to adapt to the Italian accent in English, but after a while, I got used to it.

I really liked the fact that the classes related to Italy and the city (Turin) in a practical way. For example, in the Urban Economics module, we analysed Turin's economy through opening and closing stores' rates. In both history modules I took, the focus was Italian architecture and the professors included several classes about Turin, which for me were the most interesting ones, because of being able to walk around the city and relate to the classes.

## **Everyday life and free time activities**

Taking four modules of 6 ECTS each, fills in much of your schedule during the semester. The classes were intense, but there was some time for rest and free time activities.

Turin is a great city and there is a large international student community, mostly because there are two universities in the city: PoliTO and UniTO. It was great to take part in the activities of this community, as they organize parties, excursions and other events.

Apart from that, the city also offers a wide range of activities, from visiting museums, palaces and churches, to eating great Italian food.

Overall, I had a great experience this semester and I believe it will be really positive for my career to have experienced it. I had amazing classes about topics that are not offered in my home university, and I think this will be an advantage for my next steps. I'll be sure to miss the sunny weather in Turin and gelatos on my way back to Germany.