

Erasmus Exchange Semester at the
Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME)
Hungary

Experience Report



Hi! I'm an ERM student and spent my 5th semester abroad in Budapest at the University of Technology and Economics (BME). I want to share my experience and give you some information, in case you consider going there for your semester abroad.

Application & Preparation

The application process was accompanied by the International Relations Office and included all necessary documents for the general application at the university and Erasmus+ funding, if requested. After the IRO and the BME accepted the application I had to upload some other documents and start choosing courses for the semester and enter these into the Learning Agreement Before the Mobility. The courses can be chosen from a list you receive, depending on the faculty you enroll. Further, you need to register in the BME's online system where you can register for courses and upload documents. In case you face any issues with that, contact the BME's Central Academic Office, they were quite helpful with completing my Learning Agreement.

Accommodation

Budapest is a capital city, so you can expect the rent to be higher than in Cottbus and unfortunately the BME doesn't provide a dorm for exchange students. However, there are

many private flat offers for students in the city center. I started to search for a room about 4 months before the semester started. As an Erasmus student you will probably rent a room in a flat share, which is solely rent to other exchange or international students. You can contact the landlords via Facebook, flat share sites and other social media. Just be a bit careful and try to check whether the offers are authentic, so that the room you see in the rent advertisement hopefully looks the same when you arrive. The rent varies about 330-600€ per month, depending on the location, room size, etc. I had a room in a flat share with two lovely flat mates, studying at other universities in Budapest.

Arrival & The First Weeks

The journey to Budapest takes about 8-13 hours from Dresden or Berlin, if you choose a more environmentally friendly transportation like by bus or train. Of course, Budapest is also well reachable by plane. I arrived a few days before the semester started (in September) and had time to see the vicinity and some sights of Budapest. If you like to go around in Budapest using public transport, you can buy a student semester pass (ca. 30€) for your stay.

During the first week it was important to visit the official information event where we received a signature for the Start of Studies paper and advice for the semester. The next days were filled with get-to-know activities organized by the ESN, like pub evenings, a picnic, a campus tour, etc. I was surprised by the huge amount of exchange students, which made me feel a bit lost in the crowd at the beginning, but it was easy to come in contact with each other.

When the lecture period started, I visited the courses I enrolled and could decide whether I would like to switch or keep some modules and prepare the Learning Agreement During the Mobility.

Explore Budapest

Besides studies I had quite some leisure time to spend in the beautiful Budapest. I visited some main sights, like the castle area, the parliament and Margaret Island, but I enjoyed the most the view from hills in and around the city, like the Gellért Hill or János Hill (in case you don't like to hike up the hill you can take the ropeway or bus). Also, a walk along the river Danube is always nice, especially in the evening. Budapest is not only very beautiful but has lots of good cafés and bars where you can spend your evenings. Some are well-known like the Szimpla Kert (a bit touristic but has a great atmosphere), but you can also find small and comfy cafés and bars e.g. Lámpás Student Pub or Műterem Kávézó. Just check out a few places and see whether you like them. Also, if you like live music, movies or stand-up comedy, many bars, cinemas or museums have interesting programs e.g. film festivals. Another nice tip: In case you want to see the Budapest by boat you can use a regular ferry D11 (during the week with your regular public transport ticket) which goes from Boráros tér to Margaret Island.



Also, the surroundings of Budapest are worth to visit. I went to Lake Balaton and Visegrád, which are both very beautiful, especially in late summer and are easy to reach by train.

For sure you won't be bored if you decide to go to Budapest, since the city offers a lot of activities you can do with friends or on your own. Besides, the very dedicated ESN will keep you busy with all the events they organize for exchange students.



Everyday life & Language

Not at the university but during everyday activities I noticed that I'm actually abroad. The different currency (forint) will train your mental calculation skills, but the Hungarian language can be overchallenging. I could not enroll in a language course at the BME, so I learned the most helpful phrases on my own and used them when I met neighbors or in a store. Hungarian isn't really related to any other language, so at first it sounds a bit strange and is difficult to memorize. However, most Hungarians were kind and spoke English as well, so it is possible to spend the semester in Budapest even with very little Hungarian language skills.

University

I was enrolled in the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences which offered many courses in the field of environmental economics and management. Overall, I was satisfied with the course's contents, which fit in well with my studies and interests, and also the lecturers were kind. In most modules group work and presentations were required, which helped me a lot to develop my presentation skills and get used to speak in the presence of others. The only thing that was a bit disappointing is that most courses were mainly attended by exchange students, so I didn't meet many local students there.

Overall...

I enjoyed my semester in Budapest very much and can recommend you to go there. The exchange semester supported my studies and personal growth and I hope you will have a good experience too during your semester abroad :)