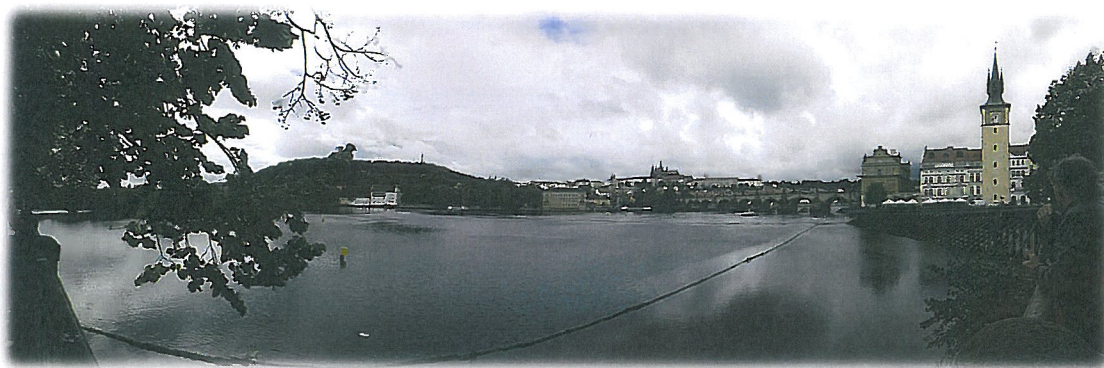


## Exchange Semester at VSE in Prague



### Preparation Phase

After I received my acceptance letter from VSE, I also received a small to do list what needs to be done to get a smooth start in Prague. This included to register at their Intranet called ISIS Integrated Study Information System, sign up for all my courses and decide if I want to room in the dorms or not. I decided not to and to search for a room / apartment on my own. (The dorms are cheap, but most of the students said that the furniture might be old and it's not that comfortable).

I received regularly updates from the international office in Prague about the next steps, all necessary log in data's and with the name of my buddy, who helped me a lot to find an apartment and to get around in Prague.

### Accommodation

As I already mentioned I decided not to live in the dorm and instead I searched for a shared flat or a small apartment on my own. Unfortunately, many pages are in Czech. But my buddy helped me out and looked for an affordable apartment on Czech homepages while I was active on FB groups. After nearly two months of searching I found a really nice room in a shared apartment with another girl at the end of August which was located in Karlín. A quiet area with a lot of cafes and restaurants in Prague and around a 30 min walk away from the university and to the city centre (10 min to city centre by metro). My room was about 20m<sup>2</sup> and the whole flat was around 110m<sup>2</sup>. I paid around 350€ and it was really worth it! WE even had a small balcony.

### University

The exchange semester started with an orientation week for all exchange students (around 800). Around 50% of the students took part in the program but most of the students just skipped it after the first activities.

I signed up for 4 subjects: rhetoric in business use (3 ECTS), insurance industry and insurance products (3 ECTS), corporate governance (7 ECTS), bond theory and praxis (3 ECTS) and Spanish (3 ECTS).

At VSE you receive points for attending at the lecture. It is not mandatory to attend the lectures but for every time you are absent you might lose one point. In general, you can receive 100 points (=100%) in each course. These are subdivided in the different assessment methods which differ from course to course. Most of the time around 10 to 15 points can be received only by attending the lecture. My lectures were scheduled weekly and we were on average 25 to 30 students per course.

Here are some of my experience regarding the professors and the lectures:

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insurance industry and insurance products: We had around different external and internal lecturer with different backgrounds. Unfortunately, they did not talk to each other meaning they did not know what we have already covered in the previous lectures. Therefore, it was a little bit of a mess and most of the time confusing and not helpful. That's why I quickly decided not to go the lecturers and just study the material by myself.

bond theory and praxis: we were only two exchange students in the course. It was really hard to follow the professor because it was often hard to find a real structure during his lecture. Furthermore, Czech students tend to ask questions in Czech and most of the time the answer was also discussed in Czech... Therefore, it was really hard for me to follow the lecture and I asked him if he could advice me some books to reread the content and prepare myself for the exams. Unfortunately, he could only refer to his book which was written in Czech.... I asked him for English material which I received 3 days before the midterm exam.... Unfortunately, he forgot to translate around 25 pages... Additionally, the tools allowed in the midterm exam were not clarified properly before the exam. One week before the exam we were told that we are not allowed to use our laptops, but we would be allowed to take all of our notes and learning material with us. After the exam, had started suddenly it was said we can use everything incl. laptops....

The other three courses were ok. Just normal lectures like everywhere. ☺

### Daily Life, Party's and Trips

First of all, if you want to have a semester celebrating the whole time, having good marks with little effort you will have a great time. The buddy system organizes a lot of trips around Czech Republic and Germany. Additionally, they organize a party every week. Most of the Erasmus students party a lot.

Public transportation is great in Prague and cheap☺ I would advise you to buy a student ticket.



### Conclusion:

If I could choose again I would not go to the VSE for an exchange semester again.

Prague is a nice city, but I did not like the university. I have the feeling that I did not learn really much during my stay. Often it was hard to communicate in English. Besides the international office many people could not speak English... especially in the library.

