

## Exchange Semester Report\_WS17\_TUT\_Tampere\_Finland

Before I apply, I do, like most of you guys, have some crashes on Nordic countries. But I am not so confident that I could afford the extreme cold weather. Therefore I choose the south ones among those countries. You may ask why not Copenhagen? It did come to me as the first option, but that one is really hard to get and from the later traveling experience, it might not be able to let you feel the Nordic snowy weather, at least, not this Christmas. Also, Finland, in my opinion, would offer the cheapest living expenses than other Nordic country. It did help me save some money for the round travel in Nordic countries later.

Back to my visiting city, Tampere. It's a big industrial city and the second biggest city in Finland. There is quite a few shops, restaurants and place of interests. Not like New York City or London, it is not that busy and prosperous. But you still could find good shows every week, enjoy a nice brunch all week long and wait alongside the lake in the night to see if you have enough luck to hunt for the aurora. Tampere is not a bad place for aurora. Since our university is bit away from the city center, it has less light pollution and offers more chances to see them around. There was even one night that we can see aurora from our dorm Mikontalo. Besides, our university is quite huge with adequate advanced facilities. All alcohols are expensive in Finland, but the service in restaurant is super sweet. One thing I feel strange is, although people do love and consume a lot of coffee there, most of the coffee tastes terrible to me. There are also plenty of museums, which would offer free entrances every last Friday afternoon. Among those, you will find the most popular finnish museum: Moomin!



Unfortunately I got a severe fever and have been sick for a month, so I did not really discovered much during the summer time although there is really nice lakes and much more events at that time. They have a student organization which arranges plenty of events, such as trips to Lapland, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, and other nearby excursions. And you are free to join different guilds. Interestingly, each guild has their own overall suit to present a guild culture. But as an exchange student, you will get another

special kind of them. Lessons learned from that: do not listen to the bands under heavy rains on the liechtensteiner national day before departure, otherwise you will miss more...XDD.

As for the academic study in TUT, I would like to give you some tips after I went through the whole process. Like they told you at the very beginning, do not plan too detail. The courses in the list you have in hand won't tell you the exact schedule, i.e., even if you had an accurate plan, you cannot avoid overlapping of the courses. And yet, on the other hand, it is extremely easy to change the learning agreement. So once you have all those courses fixed, you can go to the student office and get a new learning agreement signature right after. TUT actually allows every student to choose courses freely, even in other faculty. Therefore, it would be easier if you know the principle of acknowledging ects in our university. Then you can make things work very fast. One more thing, if you are thinking about taking a Finnish lesson, better apply it ahead of time. All the new regular students there are forced to take Finnish lesson in TUT, so they have really few places left for the exchange student at the first half semester. But in the later half, it is easy to get one. So, better plan your two half semesters evenly, otherwise you will experience a disaster at the end of one. I know, some people may say the study there is not so much as here. True. But if you made the first period zero and all in the second period, then you already doubled your work in the second period. I did and had two design studio at the same time. It almost killed me together with that Finnish lesson at the same period... So be carefully with your own semester plan.

One more thing I learned there is the Finns. They are somehow interesting. As you may hear, they are shy and friendly. But one thing you may not know is, you should not criticize a Finn too much. On the other hand, you really need a skill to distinguish what they do not want but express in a slightly positive way. I suppose most of their education encourages them to develop their idea. Not like here, if you had a really bad design proposal, you got a terrible comment. That, would never happen in Finland. So, Finns also cannot understand why people are so "mean" at some point. That's a national personality lesson I got from Finland.

To end up with, despite my illness at the very beginning, I still feel lucky to have this exchange semester in TUT. The campus is nice, staff are always helpful and course focus and building codes are fresh and different. Plus, I bumped into their 100<sup>th</sup> national independence Day!



There is for sure much more to explore. If you are interested in Nordic country and able to plan a "correct" semester, you will definitely have a wholly different student experience there in TUT. Oh, do not forget to bring some medicine for cold with you there ;-)