

Exchange experience report Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia, Autumn 2019

Study programme

I chose seven courses at the Tallinn University of Technology. The courses were either three (3) or six (6) ECTS, and therefore I had to choose several in order to meet the total amount of 30 ECTS required for exchange. The courses I chose were:

- Human Rights (6 ECTS)
- International Tax Law (3 ECTS)
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (6 ECTS)
- Human Rights, Ethics and Technology (6 ECTS)
- Consumer Law (3 ECTS)
- Insurance Law (3 ECTS)
- Intellectual Property Law (3 ECTS)
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I can definitely recommend most of the courses I took on exchange. Especially Human Rights and Human Rights, Ethics and Technology were both extremely current and dealt with topical issues in the world today. Moreover, Alternative Dispute Resolution provided me with an interesting and vital understanding of the human interactions and relationships with regards to law and legal issues. The course focused on providing the students with an understanding of the complexity of human interactions and I found it extremely interesting and important in better understanding conflict. International Tax Law, Insurance Law, Intellectual Property Law and Consumer Law were all definitely interesting and I learned a lot. However, it must be said that all of these four courses were, understandably, very specific and narrow topic-wise and therefore would be most suitable to an individual who was truly interested by the topics. I found all four courses very informative, and appreciated the insight to each specific field I was able to gain from attending these courses.

It must be said, however, that the amount of course selection at the University did limit me in my choices. I would not have chosen some of the courses I had to choose if there would have been more options available for me. However, with that being said, I am glad that I had the opportunity to gain an understanding to each topic I eventually “had” to study.

In general, the level of education at the University was good. The teachers were very knowledgeable and at least most of them seemed truly passionate about the topic they were teaching. Overall, however, I did not find that the level of education at the University was demanding especially compared to the level here at the University of Groningen. Most courses were definitely easier in many ways (including the examinations) than what I am used to in Groningen.

I really enjoyed the fact that the grading of the courses was not solely based on a single examination as is the case in most of our courses here in Groningen. I feel like this made the grading more fair and representative of my actual level of knowledge and understanding on the topics.

Language

All of the courses offered at the University were in English, as a vast majority of my fellow students were foreign, and did not speak Estonian.

Finance and other conditions

There were no additional costs to the university, nor were there any costs related to the residence permit. Food and daily life was relatively inexpensive in Tallinn.

An estimated cost per month would be housing (350 €) + food (200 €) + other expenses (100 €) = 650 €.

Preparation and contacts with the faculty abroad

The University seemed very hospitable, and the incoming student advisor answered all my questions clearly, and helped me with any issues I may have encountered during my exchange.

Housing

The University itself offered some housing to students but this was really difficult to get, as most spots were filled really fast. Moreover, the housing was shared, and I did not therefore want to live on campus as I would have had to share a room with other people. It is relatively easy to find housing on your own, and this is what I did too. There are multiple rental sites online, and Facebook groups are also helpful in finding housing (as long as you are aware of possible scammers). The average monthly rent for a small studio is anywhere between 300 and 500 €, depending largely on the location.

Guidance / reception at host university

The introduction to the programme was, in my opinion, a little lacking. We had an introduction day but apart from the technical information, this did not really help in practical things, such as meeting new people and incorporating us into the University and the city. I felt as if it was quite challenging to make new friends and meet classmates, and perhaps some sort of activities / groups would have made the whole exchange experience better for me.

Culture, free time and travelling

The Estonian culture is interesting and the city itself is beautiful, especially in the city center, which is the home to numerous old buildings and a vast culture. I did, however feel that the some Estonian people were not that hospitable to foreigners, but it is important to understand the history of the country which helps understand the people better too. I did travel in Estonia a little, but mostly stayed in Tallinn, and travelled to Finland quite often.