

F.A.Q. under the Erasmus+ Program: Personal Experiences of Polytechnic Students

Are you interested in going to study abroad, but do not know where to start? We turned for help to students of Polytechnic University, who have been to leading partner universities of SPbPU for a semester. Polina BORIS, Julia PERFILOVA and Julia KAMZINA answered questions that the coordinators of the [Erasmus+ Program](#) are often asked. Why is it worth participating in an exchange semester? What difficulties occur in the preparation process? What do you feel in the first days in another country? Is it easy to adapt? What sights are worth seeing? What do students who are just about to study abroad need to know? Read about this and not only in the stories of our students.



Polina Boris, University of Stuttgart (Germany)

At SPbPU I study foreign regional studies, and the region of my specialization is Germany. It was very important for me to get the experience of intercultural communication and to “probe the ground” for the future: I have plans to come to Germany to study at the graduate school. Preparations for the trip took about six months. There were no big difficulties: if you are organized enough to

independently solve the problems related to visa issuance and submitting documents, then everything will go without problems. There were some surprises: for example, two days before departure, I found out that I could not immediately upon arrival check into the dormitory, as I was arriving too late. But in the end, everything was safely resolved!



Upon arrival, I had a whole palette of emotions and impressions. The first week was just crazy: get on the registration account, enroll as a student, open a bank account... Germany teaches you to plan time by minutes! The Germans themselves seemed to me rather closed people, and my adaptation was not as easy as I hoped. But after a month and a half it passed, and I realized how great it was there!

I liked the University of Stuttgart right away. The classrooms are well equipped with all kinds of devices. Teachers are able to make you interested; literature and materials necessary for studying are available online. I must say right away that learning is not easy: lectures are given in German quite different from the one I taught in the courses. At times I even felt desperate, but the support of teachers and other students gave me strength.



I traveled all over Germany. As you know, it consists of federal lands. Each land is famous for something special, but I advise everyone to visit Berlin: this is an amazing city. And for students who are going to study abroad, I advise to be patient: this is a serious test, but at the same time, an invaluable experience.

Julia Perfilova, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

I went to study in Finland for many reasons: I wanted to improve my English, supplement my degree with certificate of a semester studying abroad, test my capabilities and compare the educational systems of the two countries. I planned the trip to the smallest detail, so I had a lot of questions for the program coordinators. Feel free to ask: this helps to avoid difficulties in the preparation process!



I clearly remember my first emotions. First of all, it was a shock: do I have to speak only English now? The second was the fear of the unknown: how would I even go to university tomorrow? And finally: how good and calm it is here!

The Haag-Helia University of Applied Sciences impressed me a lot. It is located in a modern high-rise building with huge corridors; there is also a gym and several canteens. At first, I could not believe that this was a university. It seemed like I was in a museum of modern art.

I can't say that I easily adapted to the new environment; I guess this was mostly about my own character. The teachers did everything to help us adapt: they arranged orientation weeks, gave tickets to various events, organized trips and group work. A month later, I felt completely comfortable.



The grading system at the Finnish University is peculiar: from 1 to 5 points. Even if you get 1 point, the discipline is credited. A lot of time is allotted to working in groups, performances and presentations. The teachers pay great attention to practices. I enjoyed learning new programs, for example, how to describe business processes and create videos.

As for tourist attractions, I recommend visiting the National Museum in Helsinki and the unique Oodi Library. It has absolutely everything: from books to virtual reality helmets and 3D printers. They can be used free of charge, you only need to book in advance. And for all students who plan to study abroad, I advise not to be afraid of the language barrier, leave your comfort zone, ask questions, even if they seem silly, and collect documents in advance. Everything will definitely work out!

Julia Kamzina, Sultan Mehmet Fatih University (Turkey)

I was always attracted by the opportunity to communicate with people from different countries. I have been participating in the international activities of Polytechnic University for quite some time: I helped to coordinate the International Polytechnic Summer and Winter Schools in Energy, was a volunteer at the celebration of the 120th anniversary of Polytechnic University, accompanied one of the foreign delegations.



I have long been considering the opportunity to participate in the exchange semester. When I saw Turkey on the list of possible countries, I was surprised and delighted. I like the atmosphere and history of Istanbul, so I went there. But at first I had to wait for quite some time for confirmation from the Turkish university. It was the only difficulty: when they confirmed my participation, then everything went easy. Turkey is a visa-free country for Russians, so I just flew to Istanbul, and already on the spot the staff of the university's international office and volunteers helped me with applying for a residence permit, insurance and other documents.

Since I've already been to Istanbul, I adapted quickly there. I also found it useful that I was part of the EESTEC (Electrical Engineering Students' European Association) at St. Petersburg Polytechnic University. Istanbul also has an EESTEC cell with more than 100 people. I found there many new acquaintances, and even participated in various events.



The University of Sultan Mehmet Fatih has several campuses. My campus is called Halic campus; it is located in the European part of Istanbul. It so happened that I was the only student in my field with an English-language program. Therefore, most of the classes were individual.



The international office arranged for us for a wonderful trip to the island of Bozcaada. In Istanbul, the main attraction for me is the Bosphorus. I really like to cross it on a ferry, drink tea in a cafe or just sit on the promenade and watch the ferries, flocks of gulls, and waves passing by. To students who plan to go to study under the Erasmus+ program, I advise to stop doubting and act. An exchange semester is an incredible experience that is really worth living through.

Дата публикации: 2019.12.20

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