

Personal Report

Warsaw University of Technology, Winter Term 2018/19, 1 Semester Urban Agglomerations, Fachbereich 1, Frankfurt

Language

Which language did you use? How did you communicate with your fellow students?

My entire learning process at Warsaw University of Technology has been conducted in English. During my exchange semester the partner university offered language classes both in English and Polish, but I have enrolled in neither due to my efficient English language skills, and the fact that I did not need Polish to facilitate my daily life in Warsaw.

The main language of communication with my fellow ERASMUS+ students was in English.

Accommodation

Did the host university arrange for accommodation?

Yes in a dormitory.

How high were your overall monthly costs for accommodation (in Euro)?

150€

How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?

Good.

How well was the accommodation situated? How long did it take you on average to reach the partner university (in minutes)?

The accommodation was situated near the main campus of the Warsaw University of Technology, very close to the center of the city, and in a nice, well serviced neighborhood.

It took me around 5 minutes of walking to reach the building where the Architecture Department was situated.

Which web sites, forums, Facebook pages, contacts, etc. can you recommend for looking for accommodation?

<https://pepehousing.com/> This is the website I have used to find accommodation.

Although the university DID in fact offer to arrange accommodation in a student dormitory, I have arranged my own accommodation using the website provided above.

Where have you been accommodated (name of dormitory, location, part of town, etc.)? And how would you describe the surroundings of your accommodation (shopping facilities, distance to the city center, nightlife, etc.?)

The room I have rented was in an apartment building in Stanisława Noakowskiego Street, opposite to the main building of Warsaw University of Technology.

The area where the accommodation is located is very well serviced, with many restaurants of various cuisines and cultures, as well as multiple convenience stores and service shops - tailors, print shops, hair salons, etc.

As mentioned before, the apartment is around a five-minute walk away from the faculty of Architecture, and it is around 15 minutes away from the Złote Tarasy shopping center and Warszawa Centralna train station.

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

I would recon that arriving around two weeks prior to the start of the semester would be very adequate.

This allows the students to organize all issues regarding their accommodation, get to know the surroundings of where they intend to stay and how to get around the city. This will also allow them to meet their fellow students and get to know them before the start of the semester.

I have arrived in Warsaw the weekend before the start of the semester, and everything went alright. However, I would have loved to have arrived earlier to get to enjoy the city before the semester starts.

How did you organize your arrival? Was the extent of the orientation program sufficient? What activities can you recommend? Were all important questions answered? What did you have to find out yourself? How fast were you able to get in contact with the domestic students? How were the services for exchange students?

Upon my arrival to Warsaw, I visited the International Students' Office and informed them of my arrival.

The welcome meeting was held by the International Students' Office on the 4th of October, prior to the start of the semester, however, I was not able to attend to it.

Living Abroad

Compared to Frankfurt, how high was the cost of living abroad?

Lower, it cost about 50%

What additional expenses did you have during your semester abroad? How far were you able to travel with your semester ticket? How was your student life off-campus? How were the Mensa's/ student cafeterias? What types of meals were served? How much did the meals cost? How were the libraries? Was their use free? Did the university provide computer workplaces/ computer pools? Was Wi-Fi available on-campus? Were you able to use study rooms? Were you able to rent separate rooms for studying? Did the university provide a sports program? Was this free of charge?

The expenses I was paying for accommodation covered everything in regards to the room I was staying in -internet, electricity, etc.

I have not used the semester ticket to its fullest potential, and cannot weigh-in on the subject matter, but as far as I understood, the Student Card would give us discounted public transportation cards within the city, not sure if it works the same outside Warsaw.

The university didn't have a Mensa similar to FRA-UAS; it had a small cafeteria instead that served some drinks -coffee, juice, etc. - and some sandwiches and croissants.

The average meal from surrounding shops would cost between 3-6 Euros, this could of course go up based on the type of food being ordered.

I haven't used the library at WUT while I was there, we would usually meet in the 'Bunker' the underground meeting place at the faculty where most students meet and work.

Computers were available for certain topics. Wi-Fi almost never worked for me. No idea in regards to any sports activity.

Studying at the Host University

How would you describe the academic standard of classes compared to Frankfurt?

A little bit less challenging.

Did you experience any difference in teaching methods/ class structure? Which were the difference regarding your expectations and your experiences at the partner university? What surprised you, what should newly arriving students know? How were the student services? Was the fact, that you were an exchange student taken into account (by professors or other staff)? If so, how? How were difficulties, which you or other exchange students may have met, handled by the partner university?

The entire experience was different compared to FRA-UAS, where in Frankfurt the entire curriculum is research-oriented, while at WUT it was more project-oriented. Most of the subjects revolved around design, rather than theory.

Teaching methods, then, are quite different, where they are more involved in portraying local guidelines and restrictions in respect to the design tasks we had.

I was expecting to have a more 'experimental' approach at WUT in regards to design studios, but it was -in general- more inclined towards a slightly classical approach, and of course towards being as 'realistic' and applicable in real-life as possible.

Being an exchange student was not an issue, however, with the batch of ERASMUS students being of different backgrounds and academic levels -some were still early in their bachelor's degree, the programmers were a little bit toned down to facilitate all students.

Final Remarks

What should future exchange students know/ do/ avoid? How would you overall rate your exchange experience? In what ways have you benefitted academically, personally, linguistically for your future career?

Future exchange students should be prepared to handle the design tasks given at WUT, as the academic structure works in such a way that students will attend all modules at the same time -rather than having one module at a time, and starting the next after the first one finishes, this means having to design 3-4 projects at the same time, probably working in teams as well. Time management is the key.

The modules I have taken at WUT and the experience I have gained helped me increase my knowledge in both Architectural and Urban scales, which also helped me better my understand of the dynamics of large scale projects, as well as developing my problem-solving skills at the same time.

My stay at WUT helped me get in contact with some brilliant minds -both from the teaching body as well as my colleagues, and helped me to better evaluate my approaches and thought-process to enhance them during, and after the semester.