

Personal Report

Instituto Politécnico do Porto, Wintersemester 2018/19, 1 Semester International Business Administration, Fachbereich 3, Frankfurt

Language

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

The classes were all held in English. Sometimes it was hard to understand and follow some of the professors due to different pronunciation. I took a Portuguese A1 class while there and learned the basics of the language. With the other students, I communicated in English as the classes were only for Erasmus students.

Accommodation

Did the host university arrange for accommodation?

No, unfortunately not.

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

400€

How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?

Very good.

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

My accommodation was situated well - close to Casa da Musica, so very close to the city center. However, ISCAP is pretty far away from the city center (I think it actually belongs to Matosinhos and not Porto) and there was no direct Metro connection to ISCAP from my Metro station so it took me almost 1 hour to get there. I would recommend accommodation close to the yellow Metro line because it is the only one that goes to ISCAP.

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

I can only recommend uniplaces.com because the quality of my accommodation was really good and uniplaces was always reachable and reliable. The fee was definitely worth it for me because it was very safe. I would not recommend looking for accommodation via Facebook because there is a lot of scamming.

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?)

My accommodation was, as mentioned before, situated near Casa da Musica. There were 3 different supermarkets I could reach within a few minutes by foot, a bus station right in front of my door, the Metro station was about 10 minutes by foot and there was a shopping center with everything you need about 10 minutes away by foot. It took me about 5-10 minutes with the bus to reach the center of the old city and about 10 minutes by bus to reach the Matosinhos beach. I was really happy with the neighborhood and the location.

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

I would say you should definitely arrive in time for the orientation week. It would be even better to arrive a few days before the orientation program to explore the city and your surroundings.

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?

I arrived about a week before the orientation program started, which I think was really good because I had time to explore the city and enjoy the sunny summer days at the beach. I had already booked my accommodation for the semester on uniplaces, so I went straight there. The orientation program was good. The most important questions were answered. The best part was that it gave you the possibility to meet the other Erasmus students. We didn't really get in contact with many Portuguese students because we had no classes with them.

Living Abroad

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

Less, it costs about 75%.

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 mensas/ 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?

Public transportation in Porto cost me about 30€ per month. We got a discount on our monthly ticket because we are students. If you are older than 25, you do not get this discount though. There are different zones you can choose for your ticket. Other than that, buses and trains for trips are cheaper than in Germany. For example, if you book in advance, a trip to Lisbon and back by train is around 40-50€, and day-trips to Aveiro etc. are about 3€ one-way. I would recommend getting an ESN (Erasmus student network) at the beginning of the semester. It costs 10€ and you get discounts on activities and at parties, as well as for Ryanair. I never ate on campus so I cannot comment on that. I also didn't really use the facilities at the university for studying but I know that there were some rooms free to use for studying. As far as I know, there were no separate rooms you could rent for studying. Wifi was available on campus with eduroam.

Studying at the Host University

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

Similar to Frankfurt.

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?

In Porto, you can choose between continuous and final assessment. In general, everyone chooses continuous assessment. In most subjects this means that you have 2 tests, one in the middle of the semester and one in the end, as well as a project which includes a paper and presentation that is due at the end of the semester. In general I would say that it is easier than in Frankfurt, however it is a lot of work. The projects took a long time and we were very stressed at the end of the semester because of all the tests and projects - it didn't really seem like continuous assessment. The classes were all strictly for Erasmus students so it was definitely taken into account that we were exchange students. The service of the International Office in Porto was okay. It generally took a while to get answers because everything is more relaxed, but Ana from the IO was always very helpful and glad to help.

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?

If I were to do it again, I would consider doing final assessment in some subjects because I feel like continuous assessment was more work. Other than that, I don't think I would change much. I would recommend looking for accommodation beforehand and also keeping up with

the deadlines because answers sometimes take a while. For my future career, I don't think I benefited linguistically, however I do think I grew as a person and gained some academic skills. Especially because we don't have to write a lot of papers and hold many presentations in Frankfurt, I think I benefited from these experiences. It was also really interesting to see how students from other countries approach their studies.