

Post Study Abroad Evaluation

THE BASICS			
Your Name	[REDACTED]		
Your Program of Study/Year	Bachelor of Design, Fashion Design: Year 3		
Host Country	Finland		
Host School/Agency	Metropolia		
Participation Dates	January 13 - May 31 2010		
Type of Study Abroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> Practicum	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Section 1			
GENERAL EVALUATION			
Please rate your overall exchange experience on a scale of 1 to 10 (one being poor and 10 being exceptional)			9
In a couple of sentences, explain why you rated your experience the way you did.	Overall, I was very satisfied with the whole exchange experience. However, I felt the location of my apartment could have been more central + the classes more challenging.		
Section 2			
ARRIVAL			
How difficult was it for you to obtain your travel documents (visa, etc.)? *Always verify immigration regulations with the consulate or embassy of your host country*	Fairly easy. Because of application complications, I didn't receive my acceptance letter until very late. Since I had planned a holiday over the Christmas break, I wasn't able to send my passport to Ottawa. I was approved for the visa before I left, but I had to mail my passport to the Canadian Embassy in Finland once I arrived.		
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you change any part of those arrangements?	My flight was cancelled the day of departure (because of the snowstorm in London) so I flew Vancouver to Salt Lake City, to Paris, (missed my connection) then flew to Vienna to Helsinki. Then I took a cab to my apartment with my tutor. I would have preferred a direct flight to Helsinki.		
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	Nobody even checked my passport upon arrival. However, my luggage didn't arrive and it took me close to a week to receive it.		
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	My tutor met me at the airport and we took a cab together to my apartment. It only took about 15 minutes and the cost was around € 15 - (but my tutor paid for it)		
Section 3			
ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE			

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to at your host school/agency.	I was very satisfied with the orientation and assistance available at my host school.
What help did you receive from the international staff or office? What was your impression of the international staff or office?	The tutor system was amazing! The Finnish tutors were really friendly and helpful and they helped with everything from getting a transit pass, food card and school keys to recommending a good bar.
What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one? How well did it suit your needs?	The orientation was very detailed and helpful. It allowed us to meet all the other exchange students in the culture field and it addressed all possible concerns we might have.
What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site? Were there people you could talk to about what you were experiencing?	It was pretty easy to adjust to the culture of Finland. The school provided people to talk to but the greatest comfort were the other exchange students who were experiencing similar emotions.
How receptive were the local people in providing assistance?	Finnish people are typically quiet and reserved but generally, the people I met were very friendly and willing to offer assistance.

Section 4

HOUSING

Describe your accommodation arrangements.	I lived in a 2 bedroom apartment with a Spanish girl. We lived in Koivukylä, Vantaa (7 min from school, 35 min from Helsinki)
How early could you move into housing before term and how long after the end of term were you allowed to stay?	The rent agreement was based on my arrival + departure dates, but closely followed the 1st of Jan to the 31st of May. I arrived after Jan 1st and I had to return my keys on May 31st. But we were offered to stay for the month of June for free.
How comfortable were you with your accommodation?	I really liked my accommodation and my roommate but it would have been nice to live in Pasila with the majority of exchange students.
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	I ate lunch at the school of Unicate most days as it was cheap (€2.40) and good food. All other meals I bought groceries and cooked for myself. Restaurants were expensive. The food was good - nothing too different.
How close was your accommodation to where you had to study?	It took me 15 min to walk to the train, take the train for 2 stops, then walk to school. (ie 15 min door to door!)

Section 5

COURSE REGISTRATION

Please describe the registration process at your host institution. What	Since school is free in Finland, the registration system is very different. You basically sign up for classes on Winnakile, then go to the class and talk to the teacher.
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month	Health insurance - per term	Communications (internet, phone, etc.) - per term	Travel documents (passport, entry visa, etc.)	Vaccinations	Personal Spending (eg. entertainment and extra travel) - per term	What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than you expected?
	\$ 270	€ 100 ~ \$ 150	\$ 225	Ø	\$ 5000	Food and alcohol was really expensive. Food was also pretty expensive going out to bars and clubs was also expensive.
Section 8						
EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES						
How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your host site?	Thanks to Metka and the tutors, there was a great variety and out-of-class opportunities.					
What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to you while in your host country? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students?	There was lots of activities to choose from. I did a folk dancing course, a knitting class, I went on a trip to Tallin, I went skating and strolling and I went to various parties. Also, I got to visit a lot of places through the Finland close-up class. I would recommend all of these.					
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer. Did you require special permits to do this?	I am not sure about work or volunteer opportunities as I didn't do either. I have heard it is difficult for international students to find paid work in Finland.					
What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?	go to Tallin, St. Petersburg, Stockholm. Also, there are lots of museums and beautiful places around Helsinki.					
Section 9						
SAFETY AND HEALTH						
Describe any safety concerns you had during your experience.	I felt really safe the entire time. However, be careful coming home late on the train and always travel with someone.					
Section 10						
PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS						
What was it like making friends? How successful were	Other than the tutors, it was difficult to get to know the other Finnish students because					

you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) people?	they were very quiet, kept to themselves and rarely came to class. But I didn't make a huge effort either.
What was it like to adjust to the culture of your host site?	-pretty easy to adjust, everyone was helpful and friendly and there was lots of exchange students
What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging?	-not really any, but at school they served a big lunch at 11:00am. I'm used to eating a light lunch around 1pm.
What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?	The history of Finland and how people are proud of their heritage and continue to practice ancient crafts
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	I was treated really well. Lots of people want to practice their english with you. communication was difficult with some of the older teachers.
As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?	If they were willing to be really independent and self-motivated, I think they would be fine. The teachers were pretty accomodating and there was lots of staff to go to for help.
For students who are visible minorities in your host country?	-no problem
For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?	-no problem

Section 11

TAKING STOCK

What are the 5 most important things one should take with them when going to your host country or region?

- 1 Canadian souvenirs (to give to people you meet from all over the world)
- 2 A really warm coat (down feathers, waterproof)
- 3 Insulated, waterproof winter boots.
- 4 Pictures or things that remind you of home
- 5 An international student card.

What are the 10 most important things you would tell another student who is going to your host facility/agency:

- 1 Make sure you are going on exchange purely for the experience.
- 2 Be prepared to spend a lot more money than you budget.
- 3 Get involved in as much as you can while you are there.
- 4 Be proactive about the courses you want to take
- 5 Push yourself to try new things and get out of your comfort zone.
- 6 Keep a journal and/or blog and take lots of pictures.

7	Get to know a variety of people; local and international.	
8	Try to experience traditional things: food, activities, rural life.	
9	Be thankful that you have been chosen for this opportunity.	
10	Learn!	
	Meeting people from all over the world and forming a close bond with these people for an unforgettable period of time.	What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?
	I wanted the school portion to be more intense. I had to adjust to less homework and no job for making money.	What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?
	I've realized that I really belong in Canada and I have a greater connection to my home and heritage. I appreciate life more.	As a result of your study abroad experience, how has your perspective changed?
	It was the most rewarding experience of my life! I am so thankful that I got to do it. I can't be happy now.	What else do you want to say about your study abroad experience?