

Post Study Abroad Evaluation

THE BASICS			
Your Name	[REDACTED]		
Your Program of Study/Year	Fashion Design / 4 th year		
Host Country	Finland		
Host School/Agency	Metropolia		
Participation Dates	January-June 2012		
Type of Study Abroad	Exchange		
Section 1			
GENERAL EVALUATION			
Please rate your overall exchange experience on a scale of 1 to 10 (one being poor and 10 being exceptional)			10
In a couple of sentences, explain why you rated your experience the way you did.	Going on exchange was the best decision I ever made. I've made lasting friendships and seen so many amazing sights. Every day since I've wanted to go back to Europe.		
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*	Getting the visa was expensive and there were lots of forms to fill out. I couldn't send in the application till I was officially accepted by Metropolia and had a physical acceptance letter so I didn't receive my visa till about 4 days before I left which was very nerve racking. I would suggest having all forms in an envelope ready to go the day your Metropolia acceptance arrives in the mail so not a day is wasted.		
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you change any part of those arrangements?	I flew from Vancouver to Chicago, to Copenhagen then to Helsinki which took 18 hours but of course it was worth it. Then when my plane landed I had a Finnish tutor waiting for to take me to my new home so it was worry free from there.		
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	The only surprise was the immigration officer making jokes with me. The whole travelling process was problem free.		
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	From my apartment to my campus at Metropolia it took me 5 minutes on the train. I bought a monthly train pass for around 50 euro.		
Section 3			
ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE			

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to at your host school/agency.	The Finnish tutors were a huge help, the experience wouldn't have been the same without them. The teachers were all very helpful at school as well.
What help did you receive from the international staff or office? What was your impression of the international staff or office?	We had a councillor helping us with signing up for our courses which was not a very successful process because she didn't know which courses we could take since some were in Finnish but she helped as much as she could.
What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one? How well did it suit your needs?	It was helpful to meet the staff at the school and the student tutors so if we had any questions we would know who to talk to.
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?	Most of my friends were exchange students from all over Europe so we were all experiencing the same thing. The only difficult part was trying to read signs and Finnish and navigate our way around the city. Finnish people are very friendly though and the majority of them speak very good English.
How receptive were the local people in providing assistance?	Very, we were offered help without even asking on trains and buses all the time. Finn's were curious where we came from and were eager to help.

Section 4

HOUSING

Describe your accommodation arrangements.	I lived in a 2 bedroom HOAS apartment. The apartments were really big so it was easy to have a lot of friends over.
How early could you move into housing before term and how long after the end of term were you allowed to stay?	I moved in January 2 nd because the office was closed on New Years day. I moved out May 25 th but I could have stayed till the end of June and HOAS offered June for free to all exchange students but most went home by the end of May to start summer jobs.
How comfortable were you with your accommodation?	Very, I had a really nice Spanish roommate.
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	There were 4 grocery stores within a 5 minute walking distance so I never starved. All grocery shopping in Finnish was easy except for baking because it was as clear what was inside the container.
How close was your accommodation to where you had to study?	5 minute train ride.

Section 5

COURSE REGISTRATION

Please describe the registration process at your host institution. What	Registering for classes was the most frustrating part of the exchange. I wouldn't know if I would be able to take the course until the course began so sometimes I was worried about getting all my
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assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?	credits but I ended up taking mostly graphic design courses and got enough credits.
How successful were you in registering for classes? What advice would you offer to another exchange student about how to register at your host institution?	I would have emailed all my teachers as soon as possible making sure that they knew I didn't speak Finnish and if this would be a problem. Then make sure of when the class actually starts and which classroom the course will actually be in.
How many courses did you take per semester? What course load would you recommend for future students? What particular courses would you recommend to other students?	The courses at Metropolia were all one to three weeks long that I took so it was possible to take quite a few courses but I only took five courses. The graphic design courses were very interesting and the instructors all know a lot about their field so they can teach you a lot. Also those types of courses aren't available for fashion students at Kwantlen so it was good to take advantage while I could.

Section 6

ACADEMICS

How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?	I learned a lot more about photography which is something I've always been interested in. all my other courses were interesting too.
How did the style of teaching compare with that in Canada? How did the workload compare to what you would expect in Canada?	In general the school was a lot more relaxed than Kwantlen. The teachers would give broad due dates and no classes were really mandatory to come to.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad?	Five
What impact did the language barrier have on your learning?	There were a couple courses I couldn't take because they were in Finnish and the teacher didn't want to have to translate.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	They had so much amazing photography equipment that students could borrow. The weaving studio was amazing, they had a ton of looms all set up for students to use. There were plenty of computer labs to choose from. The library was quite small but had a lot of fashion books.

Section 7

COSTS

Books and Supplies – per term	100
Flight	1200
Accommodation – per month	500
Meals – per month	200
Local transportation – per mon	60

Health insurance – per term	100
Communications (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	40
Travel documents (passport, entry visa, etc.)	350
Vaccinations	0
Personal Spending (eg. entertainment and extra travel) – per term	Entertainment- 1000 Travel- 4000
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than you expected?	I had to pay every time I wanted to withdraw cash so I would suggest checking with your bank to see what their policy is on spending overseas. I did more travelling than I expected which is expensive but it was worth it.

Section 8

EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your host site?	Our school had a lot of parties at clubs in the city which were always a good time. I took Finland up close where the teacher took us to all different parts of the city which was interesting.
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?	The only organized activities I participated in was the group travelling. I went to Stockholm and Lapland with the school but there were more trips being offered. I would definitely recommend these trips.
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer. Did you require special permits to do this?	My visa wouldn't let me work in Finland.
What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?	Its pretty easy to take a boat to Russia, Estonia or Stockholm so any of these trips would definitely be worth your time.

Section 9

SAFETY AND HEALTH

Describe any safety concerns you had during your experience.	I never would go home late by myself so I always felt very safe.
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Section 10

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

What was it like making friends? How successful were you at making friends with	I had a few Finnish friends but they were much busier with school than exchange students were so I saw them mostly on school breaks and occasionally on weekends but I could still always reach
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local (i.e., not international) people?	them on Facebook if I had a question for them.
What was it like to adjust to the culture of your host site?	I was very open minded when I arrived so everything just seemed new and interesting.
What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging?	The language occasionally cause problems but there were always people around to ask for help. Street names were the hardest.
What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?	Just seeing something different than Canada was something to appreciate.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	Everyone was very pleasant and eager to get to know me and other exchange students.
As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?	The language might be more of a problem and the lack of direction or structure to a course could be confusing at times.
For students who are visible minorities in your host country?	Go for it.
For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?	You guys go for it too.

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 a cell phone that is unlocked so it can accept an international sim card.

2 Canadian souvenirs to give to new friends

3 Some euros to get you started

4 an adaptor

5 an open mind

What are the 7 most important things you would tell another student who is going to your host facility/agency:

1 Get your courses organized as early as possible

2 do lots of travelling

3 meet as many people as you can

4 see as many Finnish sites as you can

5 Rent a good quality camera from the school and continue renting for as long as possible

6 take pictures of everything!!

7 have an amazing time

What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?	Meeting friends from all over the place
What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?	I thought it would be challenging being away from my family because I've never lived away from home before but it ended up not bothering me at all.
As a result of your study abroad experience, how has your perspective changed?	I know a lot more about different cultures and it's made me see that there are so many ways to do something.
What else do you want to say about your study abroad experience?	I loved it and if I could go back right now I'd be on a plane in a second.