

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-APRIL 2012			
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)			8	
In a couple of sentences, explain why you rated your experience the way you did.	I really enjoyed meeting new people and going to a different country, but the classes were very disorganized.			
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*	The visa was difficult only because the time frame was very short. The school did not send the official acceptance documents until very late which made the process quite stressful.			
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you change any part of those arrangements?	I flew there with Iceland Air; I might choose a different airline next time because they did not serve a meal on the long flight over.			
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	Customs and immigration was not a problem.			
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	The tutor service at Metropolia paid for the taxi to our hotel which was nice. It took maybe 30 minutes to get from the airport to the hotel we were staying at and it was about 40 Euros.			
Section 3				
ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE				

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to at your host school/agency.	Metropolia had a great orientation program and all the tutors were very helpful.
What help did you receive from the international staff or office? What was your impression of the international staff or office?	The international staff was helpful, they helped communicate with teachers and organize our classes. They also told us about events.
What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one? How well did it suit your needs?	The orientation was good, got to meet other exchange students and learn about Finland. However, the presentation was quite long.
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?	The culture was different but not difficult to get used to. It took some time to understand how everything works, but there was lots of help and all the exchange students were going through the same things.
How receptive were the local people in providing assistance?	The local people were nice, friendly and helpful.

Section 4

HOUSING

Describe your accommodation arrangements.	I was in a shared apartment just outside of Helsinki. I had one roommate from Italy.
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 a few days before classes started, they did not give us our keys before January so we stayed in a hotel for the first couple of days. The latest we were allowed to stay in our apartments was until the end of June.
How comfortable were you with your accommodation?	The accommodation was good, nothing exciting or special, but it met all my needs.
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	Mostly cooked all my meals at home. There were several grocery stores 2minutes away from my apartment. The school also served meals that were usually good. The food in general was good, you could find most of the same things we have at home.
How close was your accommodation to where you had to study?	The place I lived was 5minutes away by train from the Fashion campus, but 25 minutes from the city by train.

Section 5

COURSE REGISTRATION

Please describe the registration process at your host institution. What	Registration was just communicating with the staff what classes I wanted to take. There was a website where we were to register on, but it was never working so I would just e-mail the international co-
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assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?	coordinator and she would enroll me into the classes. It was difficult to work out what classes we could take.
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 got registered in all the classes I wanted, but sometimes the classes would be in Finnish so I wasn't able to continue the class. I would tell future students to talk with many teachers and the co-coordinators to see what classes are available to them.
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?	I took about 7 classes in one semester. Finnish classes are very different and sometimes only last for a week or two. I took all those classes and still had lots of time to travel and have fun. I enjoyed the photography classes, the teachers let you borrow and use all sorts of interesting equipment.

Section 6

ACADEMICS

How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?	Most of the classes I took were introductory classes so we didn't go in depth into a lot of topics like I would have liked.
How did the style of teaching compare with that in Canada? How did the workload compare to what you would expect in Canada?	Teaching style is very different. The instructors give you a project and basically say that if you have questions you can ask them, but if not then they look forward to seeing the project! Your learning depends on what you want out of the course. The workload was much easier compared to the Fashion program.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad?	7
What impact did the language barrier have on your learning?	Language barrier was difficult when classes I wanted to take were only offered in Finnish, but most teachers spoke English well.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	The computers were great, mostly Macs at my campus. The library at the fashion campus was small and I didn't use it very much. The photography equipment was great. I didn't use the sewing equipment but they were available to use most of the time.

Section 7

COSTS

Books and Supplies – per term	I didn't have to buy any books or supplies for school
Flight	\$600 for the ticket there, \$500 back (I flew back from London)
Accommodation – per month	391 euros a month
Meals – per month	100-150 euros
Local transportation – per	40-50euros for a multiple zone pass plus extra for the night trains

month	
Health insurance – per term	0 (I am covered under my parent's plan)
Communications (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	Internet came free with the apartment. I maybe paid 40euros for adding minutes to my cell phone.
Travel documents (passport, entry visa, etc.)	You needed a passport and a student visa
Vaccinations	none
Personal Spending (eg. entertainment and extra travel) – per term	A lot, I bought some new clothes and going out all the time can definitely add up. Also I traveled a lot so I would add at least \$2000 to cover everything, more if you want to travel a lot.
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than you expected?	I went out a lot more than I do back home and travelling always adds extra costs. Some food was more expensive than I thought.

Section 8

EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your host site?	There are a lot of exchange students, so there was always a party or something to do in your free time.
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 were some organized activities like culture nights, but I had fun organizing things myself with the people that were studying the same things as me or who were living in the same building. I know some people who played sports, but I never joined any.
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer? Did you require special permits to do this?	I did not come across any opportunity to work or volunteer.
What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?	Explore Helsinki and the surrounding cities. Porvoo is good for a day trip. Travel when you have a few days off. Hang out with new people and make new friends!

Section 9

SAFETY AND HEALTH

Describe any safety concerns you had during your experience.	I never felt unsafe.
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Section 10

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

What was it like making friends? How successful were	Making friends was easy! I met a lot of exchange students. The tutors really help you to meet locals. So I have a mix of local and
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you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) people?	international friends.
What was it like to adjust to the culture of your host site?	It wasn't too bad, there was lots of people going through the same thing.
What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging?	The Finnish language is extremely difficult, but most people speak English. Sometimes Finnish people can seem cold or quiet, but you learn that it is just their culture.
What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?	Most Finnish people like to drink and go out so that was fun.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	Locals were very nice and happy to hear that we were from Canada. Everyone was very friendly and helpful.
As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?	I do not think there would be a problem.
For students who are visible minorities in your host country?	I am a visible minority and I had no problems.
For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?	I do not think there would be a 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 A good winter wardrobe, It is VERY cold in the winter, like -20

2 A big suitcase, I had to leave a lot of stuff behind when I was coming back home

3 A LONG Ethernet cable, you don't get wifi so a long cable is better so you can move around

4 Good shoes, the ice is slippery! I fell multiple times, and bring a pair you can slip on to walk over to your friend's apartment.

5 Lots of money, living away from home is expensive!

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

1 Make lots of new friends from around the world!

2 Explore Helsinki a lot! There is a lot more to see than people think!

3 Take classes that are new to you, I studied things that I wouldn't be able to at Kwantlen.

4 Make friends with the tutors! They help you out a lot.

5 Ask the coordinator questions about the classes, it's the only real way of knowing what you can take

6 Try to learn some Finnish, but know that it takes YEARS to just learn the basics.	
7 Get to know the people in your building, that way you don't have to go out in the cold to hang out	
8 Don't just hang out with the people from your own school and country, meet locals! You are on exchange! You can hang out with Canadians whenever you want!	
9 If you want to take a class just ask the teacher, usually they will let you in.	
10 You are in charge of your own learning – the teachers will help you in whatever you want, but you have to ask for it first.	
What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?	I met a lot of amazing people that I want to go back to and visit again!
What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?	Figuring out how the classes worked, sometimes there would be class, and then it would be in a totally different room the next time. I am still confused.
As a result of your study abroad experience, how has your perspective changed?	I feel more open to new experiences and I feel more confident in talking to and meeting new people.
What else do you want to say about your study abroad experience?	It was very fun and I learned a lot about myself! I recommend everyone go on exchange if they can!