

Post Study Abroad Evaluation

THE BASICS				
Your Name	[REDACTED]			
Your Program of Study/Year	Apparel Design 2011			
Host Country	Helsinki, Finland			
Host School/Agency	Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences			
Participation Dates	Jan 3 – May 30			
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)			10	
In a couple of sentences, explain why you rated your experience the way you did.	I was able to take a plethora of classes in different fields and departments. My tutors were exceptional, the people were beautiful.			
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*	It was quite difficult to get my visa over to Finland. It was just matter of time and how long it took. I sent my documents to the embassy of Ottawa in November and was given my visa the day before I left, Jan 2 nd , on a rush emergency order. The embassy is extremely difficult to deal with; it was one of the biggest stresses of the trip.			
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you change any part of those arrangements?	Ida was my tutor. She picked me up the night I arrived and got me ready. I would recommend students to pick flights that arrive late at night, as the time change is extremely hard on the body. That being said, students should carry some snacks on them for when they arrive; Europe is pretty much closed Sundays and after 5:00 pm.			
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	I had no problems on my arrival.			
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	I traveled via air. My ticket cost me 1300.00 returns. I bought my ticket with expedia.ca in December.			
Section 3				
ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE				

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to at your host school/agency.	I was satisfied. It was an adventure and I took it at that. I got lost plenty of times but made so many friends doing so.
What help did you receive from the international staff or office? What was your impression of the international staff or office?	I didn't get any help from the internal staff office in Finland; it was sort of non-existent. If I had questions I e-mailed kwantlen's staff with e-mailed them. It was difficult at times.
What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one? How well did it suit your needs?	It was a power point regarding customs and the culture and what to expect. It was great, I could ask any and every question.
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 apartments I lived in were more like dorms so I always had a friend across the hall. It wasn't hard at all to adjust to the culture.
How receptive were the local people in providing assistance?	They were always ready to help; very very kind people.

Section 4

HOUSING

Describe your accommodation arrangements.	I didn't prefer my accommodation arrangements at all. I asked not to live with a Canadian for many reasons. I got stuck with a girl from my university class at kwantlen. I would've much preferred living with another exchange student to gain culture.
How early could you move into housing before term and how long after the end of term were you allowed to stay?	I could move in Jan-3 rd . At the end of may 30 th an e-mail was sent to the exchange students allowing them one extra free month in the apartment.
How comfortable were you with your accommodation?	I was comfortable in my town, I was not comfortable with the girl I was living with.
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	The university provides meals for 2.50 euros. Other than that I shopped from grocery stores. Eating out was way too expensive.
How close was your accommodation to where you had to study?	I was a 5 minute train ride from the university.

Section 5

COURSE REGISTRATION

Please describe the	The registration process was extremely confusing. We were limited
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registration process at your host institution. What assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?	to a certain variety of classes. At kwantlen we were shown a bunch of courses we could take so I felt a bit miss-lead by the universities. I was able to get into other departments of design thankfully to make up for it.
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 was successful in getting into what I wanted because I met with teachers and tutors to help me get into everything I wanted. I would recommend all exchange students to wait until they get to the university. They will set you up there.
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 15 classes in total, some for grades and others just for the learning experience. I would recommend taking the amount you want to learn. I wanted to learn Finnish and European design and I did.

Section 6

ACADEMICS

How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?	Pretty satisfied. I wish I was there the semester before to get all the other classes I wanted.
How did the style of teaching compare with that in Canada? How did the workload compare to what you would expect in Canada?	The workload was less than the fashion design program at Kwantlen. They were much more forgiving with mistakes from exchange students. Not all my classes were in English so sometimes it was a guess as what my assignment really was. Have fun with it, its an educational journey.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad?	Around 15.
What impact did the language barrier have on your learning?	None. I took it in stride and now am comfortable working with people who are unable to speak English.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	It was all right. The computers were all macs, and that impressed me. Printers and such were great. Sewing machines were so so.

Section 7

COSTS

Books and Supplies – per term	200.00
Flight	1300.00
Accommodation – per month	375.00 euros
Meals – per month	200 or more euros (very expensive groceries there).

Local transportation – per month	40.00 euros I think for a bus pass.
Health insurance – per term	150.00 for BCAA insurance
Communications (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	0.00
Travel documents (passport, entry visa, etc.)	200.00
Vaccinations	0.00
Personal Spending (eg. entertainment and extra travel) – per term	3000.00 + (I travelled to 13 countries while I was there)
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than you expected?	Groceries are very expensive, so is going out.

Section 8

EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your host site?	Finnish design class encouraged going out on field trips and seeing different art exhibits. I loved it!
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?	None, I was too busy with school and travelling myself.
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer. Did you require special permits to do this?	I didn't have a working visa.
What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?	Hang out with friends. Travel. Make sure to take the cruise to Russia with the university.

Section 9

SAFETY AND HEALTH

Describe any safety concerns you had during your experience.	None.
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Section 10

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

What was it like making	I met my soul mates over in Finland. I won't be Canadian for much
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friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) people?	longer.
What was it like to adjust to the culture of your host site?	It just happened naturally.
What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?	The arts.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	With great respect.
As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?	Difficult, the building isn't design for anything else than feet. The language took a lot of mental strength to unravel.
For students who are visible minorities in your host country?	Difficult, the winter conditions are dangerous.
For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?	Europeans are more open than north Americans.

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 Visa

2 Lap Top

3 Ethernet Cable

4 Money (in euros, before you leave)

5 A very warm warm warm warm jacket.

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

1 Live in the moment.

2 Realize where you are and travel.

3 Meet everyone.

4 Make great friends.

5 Study everything you've ever wanted to study.

6 Network.

7 See the country.	
8 Eat everything.	
9 Try anything.	
10 Enjoy sweet victory.	
What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?	Meeting the people I met.
What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?	Completing a Finnish design thesis course alone.
As a result of your study abroad experience, how has your perspective changed?	I am a totally new designer. I see how big the world is, the possibilities that it creates, and just a whole new way of thinking.
What else do you want to say about your study abroad experience?	I wish it never ended.