



**Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg**  
**ERASMUS Report 2016/17**

| Personal Information                         |   |
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| Surname, First name:                         | <b>Pohlenz Garza, Gabriela</b>                  |
| Study programme at FAU:                      | International Information Systems (IIS)         |
| E-Mail:                                      | gabriela.pohlenz@fau.de                         |
| Host university:                             | Budapest University of Technology and Economics |
| Host country:                                | Hungary   |
| Study programme at host university:          | MSc. Computer Engineering                       |
| Duration in semester (WS, SS or whole year): | SS 2017   |
| May the report be published?                 | YES   |
| If yes, may name and e-mail be published?    | YES to both                                     |

1. Preparation (organization, application at the host university)

Preparation for the exchange semester was very straight forward. I applied in January via TechFak and submitted my information online. A couple of months later, around April, I received the nomination confirmation email from the host university.

As I went in summer semester, I filled in the online application for the host university until November and received the letter of acceptance mid-December. One week later I received an email with important information from BME such as tips on arrival and accommodation, applying for the residence permit and course registration via Neptun (hungarian Mein Campus).

Registration at the host university took place during the first day of the orientation week.

2. Arrival / Visa (flight, train)

Because of my nationality, I was allowed to apply for the residence permit directly in Budapest without applying for a visa at the Embassy/Consulate in Germany. Still, for all non-EU students, I would recommend to send an email to the Hungarian Embassy in Germany to ask the procedure for their nationality.

Regarding traveling, I took a direct flight from Nürnberg to Budapest with Ryanair. I flew in January, when prices were very low. If traveling in summer, I suggest to check prices in advance. There are also direct buses with Flixbus (10-11 hour ride) or trains with transfer in Viena (8 hour ride).

3. Accommodation (student residence hall, private apartment)

The university does not provide accommodation for international students, so one has to search for its own place. I was lucky as I had an acquaintance already living in

Budapest and moved in with her. However, there are several Facebook groups for apartment/flatmate search. Those with advertisements in English tend to be slightly more expensive than those in Hungarian (use Google Translate). I would recommend to stay in a hostel during the first week and have appointments to see rooms as soon as you arrive to the city. The ESN BME also organizes a flat search during the orientation week for those who haven't yet found a place.

Most exchange students prefer to live on the Pest side near tram 4-6 as it runs 24 hours and goes straight to the university. In general, I would say anything between Margit and Petőfi bridges is well located. Most buildings in the inner city are old-styled with inner yards and have rooms with high ceilings. Check the windows; if they are not well insulated, get prepared for very cold or very hot temperatures inside your room. I would say rent is on average 250€ + utilities, gas being the most expensive.

#### 4. Study at the host university (Courses / Language Courses / Timetable)

The course offer for the corresponding semester was available around 3 months before the semester start. Nevertheless, it kept being updated so I suggest to check it frequently.

From the general purpose subjects, there is a wide offer of communication skills courses in several languages (as long as you're not native speaker) other than English, such as Spanish, French and German. For example, as a native Spanish speaker I was able to take Intercultural Communication in German. I also took Beginner's Hungarian and Hungarian Culture. I highly recommend both courses; the teachers were very friendly and eager for us to learn about Hungary.

Regarding the informatics subjects, the offer was very technical for an IIS. However, I still found a couple of courses that fit my study abroad electives.

#### 5. Support service at the host university (International Office, Department)

It is recommended to attend the first day of Orientation week as there it is explained how the university offices work. The Central Academic Office has a time slot for international students, organized via a queue system. I found it efficient and had no problems with any formalities (temporary student card, learning agreement signatures). The ESN also organizes a workshop for learning to use Neptun and the mentors are always available for any help you might need.

#### 6. Facilities at the host university (library, computer pool, etc.)

The campus is located along the Danube on the Buda side between Liberty (Szabadság) and Petőfi bridges. The iconic building K houses architecture and civil engineering courses, as well as the ESN office, among others. Informatics and electronics courses are held in building I, at the south of the campus. Language and culture courses are usually held in building E, which also has a bookshop and a copy and print service. There are at least 2 externally managed cafeterias with affordable menus, Stoczek and Goldmann. For the wifi, one can connect either using the local student ID or with eduroam. The library is housed in a beautiful classical building, though I never used it. Students also have access to a modern sports center; registration in Neptun is required and the fee varies depending on the chosen activity.

#### 7. Spare time activities (sight seeking, bank, mobile phone, jobs)

If you are into culture, there are a lot of options: the Opera house sells student tickets for standing places at 300 Ft two hours before the performance; the Palace of Arts (Müpa) sells student tickets for 500 Ft, also two hours before performances; the Liszt

Ferenc Academy of Music also has cheap or sometimes free concerts. Most museums have an entry-free day a month or you can get student discounts.

If you like thermal baths, Király and Dánder have student discounts during the week.

There are a lot of parks in the city to hang out, although my favorite ones were Kopaszi gát and Római part (end of D12 boat route) as they are more local and less crowded.

If you are into nightlife, there is something for everybody in Budapest: from cheap student pubs, through popular ruin bars, to high scale places.

The ESN BME also organizes a lot of events every week and at least one trip a month, either inside the country or to neighboring countries.

As I only stayed one semester, instead of opening a Hungarian bank account, I opened an online bank account in Germany which doesn't have fees for withdrawing cash anywhere in the world, which was very helpful as I ended up traveling often to neighboring countries outside the euro zone.

Regarding mobile phone service, there are only 3 big companies in the country and they all offer similar packages. I bought a Hungarian SIM card with 1GB internet from Telekom for 3000 Ft ~ 10€, although this might not be needed any more with the recent EU roaming regulation changes.

#### 8. Finances (cost of living, grant)

Overall living costs in Budapest are very low, even more so thanks to student discounts. At this time, the monthly public transportation ticket for students costs 3450 Ft ~ 12€. If you don't like cooking, daily student lunch menu at Stoczek Menza costs 790 Ft ~ 2.50€. For grocery shopping, there are the usual German discounters like Penny, Aldi and Lidl, as well as big stores like Tesco and Interspar, although for fresh produce I would recommend to buy at the local markets.

The grant is meant as a help and at least it covered most of my rent expenses. In general I ended up spending a lot less than I usually do in Germany.

#### 9. Conclusion (best and worse experience)

During my first month, in February, the weather was very cold and my windows did not have insulation, so my room felt very chilly even with the heating on (which then translated to a high gas bill). Even the city felt kind of gloomy. Only the possibility of ice skating in the city park lifted my mood.

But once spring and the warm weather arrived, Budapest transformed itself with terraces and open air activities everywhere, a truly enjoyable place.

#### 10. Important contact persons and links

BME site for international students: <http://kth.bme.hu/en/oie/exchange/>

Neptun: <https://frame.neptun.bme.hu/hallgatoi/login.aspx>

ESN BME: <https://www.esn.bme.hu/>

Info on Budapest: <https://welovebudapest.com/> ; <https://www.budapestbylocals.com/>