

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg  
ERASMUS Report 2015/16

Personal Information	
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Host university:	VSE Prague
Host country:	Czech Republic
Study programme at host university:	Elective courses
Duration in semester (WS, SS or whole year):	WS (mid-September to mid-January)
May the report be published?	(Delete what is <b>NOT</b> applicable) YES
If yes, may name and e-mail be published?	(Delete what is <b>NOT</b> applicable) YES to both

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

The fact that the VSE has a website with all necessary information to make an educated choice of school was very helpful and almost the only thing I needed when choosing courses and planning dates, etc. The VSE already has a public catalog of courses, where you can read the description (in English) of the course, and even the required examination (written test, paper, group project, etc.).

The application was very simple and I did not have to do much beyond simply being chosen by FAU for the available VSE spots.

It is always a good idea to check in advance if the courses you are taking can be transferred to FAU – the safest is to talk to each person who is giving/organizing that lecture and get some confirmation for your learning agreement.

## 2. Arrival / Visa (flight, train)

As an EU student, I did not need a visa. For what I know from other students who did need a visa, VSE issues a confirmation that the student will be doing Erasmus, which is enough to procure a visa.

From Nürnberg it is relatively uncomplicated to reach Prague. I find the best way is via a carpool/Mitfahrgelegenheit, however train and bus connections are also good and quite affordable (e.g. the direct IC bus from Deutsche Bahn).

Prague is also easy to be reached from Vienna, so if you are taking an air connection, the Vienna airport is also a good idea.

## 3. Accommodation (student residence hall, private apartment)

Once you are admitted to the VSE, you can apply online for student residence halls by indicating that you need such an accommodation. You can also point out which of the VSE buildings you'd prefer to stay in. There is some information about the conditions in each hall,

and you can also use the Facebook VSE Erasmus website to ask around, as well as your VSE Buddy once you have one.

Student halls for VSE have no single rooms – rooms are multi-tenant, normally for 2 or 3 students. However, for the price one pays in Nürnberg, it is possible to find very good accommodation outside of the student halls (this is what I did), and for this purpose a very good resource is the VSE Erasmus Facebook group, where current students post their vacant apartments for rent.

As long as your accommodation is relatively in the city center (e.g. Stare Mesto, Novo Mesto, Zizkov and so on), you do not need to worry about getting to classes because this is small distance and connections are good.

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

The VSE asks that you enroll in at least 10 ECTS – I enrolled for 12 and the coursework was not a burden and left plenty of time for other Erasmus-related activities. You enroll for these courses online. All my courses were in English. If you have any course-related question, the professor remains the best source of information, as things in the VSE are rather decentralized, and professors can make some decisions that are not already pre-determined (e.g. when to take your final exam).

For general administrative things, you can ask your Buddy or directly the International Office. If you do not have any courses whose credits and grades you would like to transfer back to FAU (meaning they are not part of your Learning Agreement), then you can only audit these courses, as they will not appear on your final FAU transcript.

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

The International Office employees are always very helpful, promptly replying e-mail enquiries. I never had to wonder too much before clearing up an issue (which did not happen too often).

The VSE Buddy program assigns you a local Czech student to be your buddy – he or she can show you the most important places around town, how to get around using the public system, introduce you to other locals, etc.

In general it is easy to get around Prague and the VSE, so do not expect complications.

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

The library of VSE and the computer pool are normally equipped, even though you might find the spaces available to be limited.

As a whole however I do not recommend doing coursework within the university buildings because there are really not enough spaces assigned where one can find a desk, Internet, and silence in order to read/write. The spaces are either too central in the building and therefore too noisy, or it is always full.

Students can use the eduroam WiFi at the VSE. You get the opportunity to configure access for this online while you are still in Nuremberg. Hopefully this works off the bat because it is very convenient. However, for me it did not, but you can go directly to the IT support office in the central VSE building and have it fixed immediately.

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

Prague is great for sight-seeing – there are many things to be discovered beyond the usual tourist hot-spots. In that aspect there is plenty to do in 3-4 months. The Erasmus community organizes itself for trips to various locations, both in and outside Prague. While I was there there were visits to local castles, breweries, and various smaller towns outside Prague. Many of the internationals also took the chance and travelled extensively to Poland, Austria, Slovakia.

It is possible to find an internship while on Erasmus here, however you should certainly not count on this to pay your bills, as these opportunities are very limited. In addition, you will have plenty of other things to do so you definitely won't be bored.

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

The Erasmus grant will end up covering about half of your expenses, which is more than it would do for you in more expensive countries. With some €500 you can pass by comfortably as a student.

Of course, most of your finances will go to cover accommodation, however the rest of your costs will be relatively cheap.

I always received my grant money on time, both the 70% in the beginning and the 30% after I came back. However, as already indicated on the FAU leaflet, you need to procure your own money for all expenses in the beginning, as the grant is late (for me it came November) and in fact varies depending on country and university.

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

It can be awkward in the beginning until you adjust to certain Czech behavioral conventions. Prague is quite a beautiful and interesting city that is definitely worth it as an Erasmus location. The VSE has set up an easy way to be an Erasmus student there, both from an administrative and student-life point of view. You will in most situations get by perfectly by speaking only English.

One fact that at least for me was surprising was that e-mail is not a reliable form of communication when it comes to professors at all. You should not rely on them ever reading your messages, or replying for that matter. Any questions you have are best discussed in person, at the end of class.

#### 10. Important contact persons and links

- Your VSE Buddy
- The International Office
- The VSE website
- The VSE version of MeinCampus (ISIS)
- The VSE Erasmus Facebook page