



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

| Personal Information | |
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| Study programme at FAU: | MSc International Information Systems |
| Host university: | Dokuz Eylül University |
| Host country: | Turkey |
| Study programme at host university: | Master Business Information Systems. |
| Duration in semester (WS, SS or whole year): | WS |
| May the report be published? | (Delete what is NOT applicable) YES |
| If yes, may name and e-mail be published? | (Delete what is NOT applicable) NO to both |

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

Application at the host university was very easy, once the acceptance is given by the FAU they send an email to the host university with the names, after a couple of weeks you receive the first mail from the International Relations Office with the instructions to fill in the application form and the documents you need to upload. Once you have done this, the university processes the information and a month after you will receive your invitation letter.

All the procedures are done electronically and if you have questions, you can write to the email provided and they will answer you/help you with everything you need. All information is given in English including the form.

2. Arrival / Visa (flight, train)

In my case Visa was required prior to arrival, but this is being changed so you need to be in contact with the Turkish consulate as well as with the International Office of the university to ask if you still required the visa.

Visa cost was around 50 Eur and they made me pay also a residence permit fee (around 40 EUR), which was not needed!!!

There are a few direct flights to Izmir from Nürnberg but they are very expensive, the majority of the flights from Nürnberg make a stop in Istanbul; if you want a direct flight you need to depart from Munich, Stuttgart or Frankfurt.

Once in the airport, you need to take a Taxi, please bring the address together with the streets around and important places around, I was surprise to discover that the taxi drivers do not speak English and they do not have a GPS, so they have no idea where the streets are, literally!! So if you do not speak Turkish beware!! because they will try to drive you around the city to charge more.

If you are going to live in Buca the cost is around 50 to 65 Liras.

3. Accommodation (student residence hall, private apartment)

Before the semester starts you are contacted by the Erasmus Student Organization who will assign a buddy to help you look for accommodation, they usually try to place you with students from the University who are offering rooms so it is unusual that you don't find one. Prices vary, but its nice because usually these students speak a little English and are used to Erasmus students, so they will help you with day-to-day situations that you may have.

Student residence: Usually Erasmus students stay at the Guest House that is within the student residence, there are no curfews for Erasmus Students you can get in/out at any time you want and breakfast is included. Student residence has security 24 hours per day and inside you have a small market and a canteen where you can eat or have dinner just like in the canteen of the university. The rooms are for two people and have a bathroom, they give you towels, bed sheets as well as blankets, an electric kettle and hairdryer, they are very comfortable and every week someone will clean your room and change your bed sheets and towels, unfortunately there you do not have a kitchen where you can prepare your meal.

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

Courses in the Computer Engineering Faculty started almost three weeks before the induction week so I was late of course, language of instruction was Turkish although in the course catalog it was stated that language was English, fortunately the exam was in English so If you study on your own it is possible to pass. Professors are really friendly and will try to explain things to you when you don't understand, there is no need of appointment if they are in their office and free they will for sure give you some time to ask questions. In the department Timetable was provided since the beginning and was not possible to change schedule, but good thing since the beginning you know exactly when its free and which date your final exams will be.

In the Business Faculty courses were taught in English, they start three weeks after the engineering faculty and its more chaotic, schedules are not available in Internet so you have to look for the rooms of the coordination of your program and look at the print sheets there for the time schedule. Additionally it is possible that after one or two weeks a subject is open, they decide to cancel it because there are not enough students, so you have to be attentive because then you need to change your Learning Agreement.

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

International Office led by Ms Gecioglu is the main contact point, they help with everything invitation letters, organizing the induction week and helping you with health insurance and other admin stuffs you need, they send emails with detailed information for every event and are always open for questions. I found them to be the most helpful in Izmir, Ms Gecioglu is always there to support the student and look for a solution to almost any problem.

Department: Very little help was given by the Department (in my case Graduate School of Social Sciences) the Erasmus Coordinator barely speaks English and did not have time to be involved, so I had to do almost everything on my own. If you need to take courses from other faculties the thing gets a little bit more complicated because agreements between the faculties need to be signed and you need to look for the other Erasmus coordinators, which sometimes is frustrating as in turkey many professors do not answer emails and do not post their schedules on their doors.

I had some trouble with the departments as I needed to take courses from two faculties, so I turned to Ms Gecioglu of the International Office who was really kind

and helped me to solve the problem, she is extremely efficient and within one day everything was fine.

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

Host University has the main Campus in Tinaztepe located in the Buca district, which is far away from all the cool places in Izmir but you can find everything there. The library is big and many books (mainly in Turkish) can be found there, it is open almost all day and the staff in the info point speaks English so they can give you directions and support.

Internet is given through EDUROAM Wi-Fi, the user id and password from FAU can be used to log in, unfortunately it is a very unstable and often happens that for a couple of days it is not possible to connect, thus it is highly recommended to have internet on the phone just in case something urgent is required.

There are no computer pools so when needed people brings their own laptops and work in the buildings of the university, in the computer engineering faculty there are some computer labs, unfortunately they are most of the time locked and it is only possible to gain access to them when a laboratory class is being held.

There is a big canteen to have lunch or dinner, card can be charged with money in the stations near the canteen (starting with 10 Liras) and can be used to pay for the food. One single meal costs 4 Liras; unfortunately there is only one single menu, which can be looked online. If you pay for the lunch or dinner of the complete week all together, the price of each meal is reduced to 2 Liras (very cheap!), this has to be done every week.

For coffee/snacks each faculty building has small cafeterias and shops where also some Turkish food like döner or bread with cheese can be bought with cash.

Additionally the University has an area with fast food (burger king and other chains), coffees as well as some shops to buy stationary, phone chips, books, etc. within the main campus, so if you get bored on the food in the canteen you can go there to eat.

One supermarket called "Sok" is also there, the prices are good and you can find almost anything you need for home, they also sell bread and some other stuffs, so if you need water, cookies or any other thing to spend the day, you can definitely find it there.

Bus: As the campus is located on top of the hill, there is a free bus (usually blue color) from the university that starts at the main entrance and goes through almost all of the buildings of the campus.

There are also busses from public transportation (ESHOT) which make the same route and charge you 20 cents of Lira for the trip, to get access to these busses you need to have the kenkart for public transportation.

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

There are many places around Izmir that can be visited and its cheap going there, Efesus, Pamukale and Syrince village this places have a lot of history and ancient Roman/Greek ruins can be seen around. Additionally many hand made products can be bought over there.

Istanbul is only one hour by plane and prices for planes are very cheap, highly recommended are atlasglobal airline as well as sunexpress. Furthermore the Erasmus Student Network organizes a trip to Capadocia that is highly recommended.

Museum card: The university helps you to get a museum card, it costs around 20TL and with that it is possible to enter for free to almost all the museums around Turkey,

so it is highly recommended to get the card to enjoy free access especially in Istanbul and Capadocia.

Phone: prepaid chip is recommended there are only two companies in Turkey: Turkcell and Vodafone, but for Vodafone a Turkish citizen must buy the chip.

Rates per month are around 25 Turkish Liras for 500 Min and 1 GB Internet or 40 Liras for 4GB Internet only. Although Internet is not the fastest, it works pretty well almost all the time and especially in big cities.

Shopping: Turkey in general is a really good place to buy clothes as they are very cheap and of high quality. Izmir especially is a big city with an outlet where clothes /shoes are cheaper than Istanbul. Many well known brands can be found here as well as Turkish brands which are cheaper but nevertheless of good quality.

Clubbing: There are many clubs and bars that can be visited in Izmir, the best ones are in the Alsancak district, alcohol in Turkey is more expensive than in Germany, every place has its own prices, which varies: Beer is around 10-12 Liras as well as the glass of Wine, Tequila and Vodka shots are around 15 liras.

I was never at the bank or look for a job as almost nobody speaks English; therefore it is really difficult to go around alone

8. Finances (cost of living, grant)

The cost of renting a room varies regarding the place where the room is located and the person who is renting it, there are place like Alsancak or Bornova which are very nice but the price is higher, in Buca where almost all the student stay prices are around 450 – 600 Euros for a single room, furnished with all expenses included. The student dormitory of the university is more expensive (around 620 Liras) and a little bit far away from the campus but is also a very good option as it has both heating system for winter and air-condition for summer

Food is very good and cheap in Izmir, if you eat in the canteen of the university you will pay around 4 liras per meal. Fruits and Vegetables are also cheap and its highly recommended to buy them in the markets (“ Bazar”) as they are fresh. People in the market do not speak English so it is recommended to go with a Turkish speaking person or just buy in the stalls where a sign with how much the kilo costs.

Restaurant for students are also cheap and good, usually a menu will cost around 10 – 15 liras and will be enough for one meal.

Transportation: In order to move around Izmir public transportation will be needed, to get into the busses (ESHOT) the Izban (S-bahn), Metro and Boats, to gain access it is necessary to have the so called Kenkart, at the beginning of the semester the University will help you to get the card, it costs around 10 Liras and you need a picture and a confirmation letter that the university gives you for this.

Once you have the card, each travel will cost you 1.40 liras for 90 minutes trip, so if you start with a bus and then you have to take metro or Izban, as long as its less than 90 minutes, you will not pay again.

I would say in total you will spend around 300 Euros, which is a very good deal for all you get. If you have Erasmus grant you will get more less 240 euros, which will cover the majority of your expenses in Turkey.

9. Conclusion (best and worse experience)

Best Experience: Be able to meet great people, in general Turkish culture is very nice and Turkish people are extraordinary kind even though they do not speak English, they like to host guests at their home and cook for them, so every time you are invited it is for sure that you will get tons of food and they will teach you about Turkey, about the cultural differences, religion and all the things that make them proud, it is indeed a really enriching experience, this was by far the best part of my semester.

Worst experience: Finding out once there that all the lectures in the University that said were held in English are in fact taught in Turkish because not only the students but also the Professors and assistants cannot speak English, even though the exams are in English. Therefore if you decide to stay you have to do everything on your own to be able to pass.

Please note that this happens frequently in the Engineering faculties, in the Business Faculties professors are able to at least speak a little English.

Additionally almost all admin staff at the faculties do not understand English so it is really frustrating when trying to solve problems as communication cannot occur, please be prepared! Because this is not only an issue of the university but also in the Foreigner office and all government institutions, they do not speak English and you need to go with someone who is fluent in Turkish.

10. Important contact persons and links

Ms Gözde Geçioğlu from the International Relations Office is the main contact and the most helpful person I met in Izmir, she will go beyond her duties to help, she speaks English and German fluently and will answer very quickly all emails and questions you have for her.

ESN Dokuz Eylül: This is the Erasmus student network for this university; they are in charge of organizing all the parties along the semester as well as assigning a buddy who will help you during your stay.

<https://www.facebook.com/esn.dokuzeylul.7?fref=ts>

Buddy: At the beginning of your stay, you will be assigned a buddy who is a Turkish student and will help you throughout your semester with issues like accommodation, residence permit (if needed) and any other stuff that you have to do around, as this is a voluntary support, they are not always available so you have to keep in contact with them and ask to see if they have time to help.