

Study Abroad Experience Report

Program at WiSo : B.Sc. International Business Studies
Host University : Vysoká škola ekonomická v Praze (VSE)
Host Country : Prague, Czech Republic
Program at Host University : Exchange Programmes. Erasmus/LLP Bachelor
Duration of Stay (Semester and Year): 5 months (Spring Semester 2024)
Permission to Publish Report : NO

Details of the Study Abroad Experience

My study abroad experience at VSE in Prague, Czech Republic, was a unique and enriching journey.

Application Process

The application process at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU) was straightforward, provided all steps were followed carefully. Prague was my top choice for exchange, and I prepared my CV and motivation letter as part of the application. The application and enrollment process at the host university went smoothly as well. The International Office of the host university organized a Zoom meeting where all necessary information regarding the application and enrollment process was explained. This meeting took place less than two months before the semester started, ensuring timely information for all applicants.

Preparation for Study Abroad

To prepare for my study abroad, I took several steps. I thoroughly researched the host university, its programs, and the city of Prague to understand what to expect. A key factor for me was that the university held courses in English and aligned with my field of interest. After checking all the courses at the host university, I ensured all required travel documents such as passport, visa, and insurance were prepared well in advance. As a non-EU citizen, I had to extend my visa in Germany to ensure it would not expire during my stay in Prague. I made this a priority as early as possible in case the Ausländerbehörde took longer to process it. I also informed them in advance, as getting

an appointment at my local foreign office can be challenging. I highly recommend doing this at least two months before departure.

Visa and Arrival

As a non-EU citizen, I needed a long-term visa for my stay in the Czech Republic since I would be staying longer than three months. The visa application was straightforward; we just had to submit the required documents to the Ministry of Interior and pay the fee. Entering Prague was hassle-free. I used a car-sharing service to travel to Prague, which proved to be a convenient and cost-effective option.

Accommodation

While various accommodation options were available in Prague, I opted for the dormitory provided by the host university due to the high costs of other options. The cost of such dormitory I paid for was around 325 euros monthly. I shared my room with a roommate and had two additional flatmates. The dormitory was fully furnished and provided a comfortable living environment with amenities such as a small kitchen, two stoves, a bathroom, and a toilet.

Enrollment and Classes

Enrollment at the host university was straightforward, and I did not experience any timetable clashes. The classes were smaller in size compared to FAU and encouraged interaction. Regular presentations were held, which helped boost my confidence in public speaking. The support from the International Office, academic advisors, and the buddy program was excellent. Regular events were organized with the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), including sports events, national parties, and trips to neighboring countries.

Courses and Language

I enrolled in three courses with mandatory attendance, each of which included seminars. The schedule was well-organized, and there were no timetable clashes. The classes were interactive, and many presentations were held. The level of the courses was appropriate and not overly difficult. Most lectures and seminars had mandatory attendance, which helped me stay on track with my studies. The host university offered various language courses, which helped me improve my Czech language skills and navigate daily life more effectively. During the first week, we had an online Czech course, which was free of charge.

Facilities and Activities

The host university had good facilities, including a library and computer rooms, which facilitated the academic experience. However, the old building's restrooms were not very comfortable as they lacked toilet paper holders, so we had to bring our own. Numerous leisure activities were offered, including sports events, national parties, and trips to neighboring countries. These activities promoted social integration and made leisure time more enjoyable. Night parties were also a common occurrence.

Daily Life and Cost of Living

Daily life in Prague was pleasant, and I had no problems with everyday tasks such as withdrawing money, using my phone, or finding occasional jobs. But it is always good to make sure whether your bank card regarding the fee, etc. While the cost of living in Prague was cheaper compared to Nürnberg, the Erasmus grant alone was not sufficient to cover all expenses. I recommend saving money beforehand, especially for those who want to travel frequently and participate in activities with other students. In addition, I spend between 400-500 euros monthly as I did not cook so often. Perhaps it would be less if I would have cooked more often.

Reflections

The best experience of my study abroad was the opportunity to live and study in the beautiful city of Prague. However, there were some challenges such as language barriers and living in the dorm with people from different cultural backgrounds. Despite these challenges, I am grateful that I was able to successfully complete my stay and gain valuable experiences.