Field report semester abroad

Please do not mention any personal data (name, e-mail address, etc.) in the field report.

Photos (with description) can be inserted at the end of the report.

I agree with the publication of the report and the inserted photos:

Yes ☒   **No** ☐

Study programme at the EUF
Bachelor of Arts in Education
Combination of subjects (for Educational Students)
Special Education (L, PMSKS)   **German**   **Pedagogics**
Country
Finland
Partner university
University of Eastern Finland (UEF), Campus Joensuu
Semester abroad (e.g. fall semester 2016/17)
Spring 2019
Duration of the semester abroad (lectures and examinations)
January-Mai = five months
Preparation
gather information about finland in general (climate, culture, language, habits and to read other students field reports which was very helpful   **learn basic phrases in finnish (for example: „Hei, Moi-moi, kiitos" = hello, bye, thank you)**   **apply for housing at Joensuun Elli company as soon as i got letter of acceptance, sent deposit to accept housing offer /contract**   **discussing with teachers in EUF about the required content(s) of the module in Germany and Finland to get an agreement about courses**

- fill in Learning Agreement in coodination with the international center in EUF

-also, i had to fill in an erasmus plus application form in december, and take english language test by ELS as early as possible

- last, but important: pack suitable clothing for a finnish winter

Studies at the partner university (e.g. period of lectures, language of instruction, courses offered, type of examination)

- orientation week in the beginning of january (first week of semester)
- studies in general at UEF: courses are lectures, seminars, online workshops and may include observations in schools. Important difference to Flensburg is that courses are not ongoing through the whole spring semester (i.e. usually no course lasts five months). Seminars may last from january untill march, or may be scheduled from march untill mai with a changing weekly meeting time.
- assignments or exams are similar to what i experienced in Germany, but expectations by teachers for one seminar may be higher (subjective experience: more work to finish a course which equals 3 ECTS workload in finnish university)
- in the second week of january, some of my scheduled courses started. but many only started in february. it may be helpful to check the schedules as soon as you registered for the courses and to keep in mind your (upcoming) workload.
- the language of instruction was english, and in my courses there were mostly Erasmus students with some finnish students in education. It was also possible to collaborate with international students which studied their degree at UEF.

Life in the host country (e.g. living, shopping, leisure, costs)

I lifed on the erasmus plus grant (amount for 3,5 months in spite of staying in Finland for 5 months because of my studies) , a savings account and funding provided by my family. Overall, i experienced the living cost as similar to Northern Germany. When going shopping, you will soon find out how to profit from discounts (eg. student discount) or find the cheapest supermarket nearby. In my freetime, the prices were comparable to Germany or even chaeper, as eg. in most cafeterias there are special prices for combinations, for example: one coffee and one sweet side for maximum 3€. In joining the Erasmus exchane student network union (ESN) section of Joensuu, every student could take part in multiple events for a minimum expenditure (or for free). When joining sport clubs, it's allways possible to ask for a student membership fee.

I had a good experience with coming to my host city some days earlier than required by university. Before starting my studies, i had a lot of organizational things to do: register as a student at university, „register" for the courses from my learning agreement in the finnish system, which is called „weboodi". Sometimes, i had to message instructors for

explanations on the assignments, which was easily possible in english. I also profited of the early arrival in Joensuu to get a finnish student card for discounts , as the ISIC- card is not accepted by trains or busses (Mai 2019). get to know my host city and university by walking with my student tutor, buy additional winter clothing.

Seasonal experiences:

- Winter: in 2019, snow lasted from january untill april. There was a winter-return in the beginning of mai. Surely but slowly, the temperatures rose from -25 to -12 to approximately zero degrees celsius. I experienced it as „warmer" when it was finally -5 degrees in March, because i got used to the lowest temperatures (luckily). the exchange students learned fastly, that it's difficult to bbe outside in -20 longer than a sepcific amount of time, as your body freezes heavily.
- Spring: from my experience spring season (with the greening of trees etc.) had a long duration, as the first signs i found in april but then it took around for weeks to finally get warm enough for the snow to melt
- Summer: in 2019, it felt like summer from mid-may onwards. most students gathered at the riverside or at the local sandy beach in shorts and t-shirts for the first times near the end of the semester. During Mai untill June, temperatures constantly climbed from 18-28 degrees with a lot of sunshine, despite some thunderstorms.

Practical tips/conclusion

- try finnish sauna, ice-swimming, and many other winter sports
- try to meet up with many erasmus students in events, or during lunchtime at cafeteria
- enjoy your lunch at campus restaurants (1,55€ or 1,95€ for an entire menu), and you will save a lot of money
- apply for a finnish student card <u>directly</u> after you registered in university
- try to rent a bike by a city organisation, or buy one second hand from other students
- go at least one time to a natinoal parc close to your city, you may feel like a true Finn !

Photos: I hereby declare that there are no third party rights to the photograph(s) specified below and I authorise the EUF to use the photograph(s) Yes ☐ No ☐