

Experience report study abroad semester

How was it?

You may have heard this question more often now that you are at the end of your semester abroad. The International Center would also like to know how you evaluate your semester abroad and what you need to know. The experience reports will be published and serve to help orient others going abroad. The International Office would also like to use the contents for advertising purposes if necessary. We would therefore like you to keep this in mind when filling out the report.

1. General information

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

I agree to the publication of the report and the attached photos:

Yes No

Study program at EUF

European Cultures and Society

Subject combination (if BABW)

Klicken oder tippen Sie hier, um Text einzugeben.

Host country

Norway

Host university

University of Bergen

Semester abroad (e.g. fall semester 2020/21)

Fall semester 2021

2. Your Experience Abroad

At this point you can share the experience you made abroad. Sometimes it is not so easy to report on such experiences in such a compressed way. We have therefore prepared some questions to help you do this. At the end of the questionnaire, you will also find a free field for you to fill in, in which you are welcome to enter aspects that are not covered by any of these questions.

How did you prepare for the semester abroad?

To prepare for my stay in Norway, I took language classes provided by the EUU which helped gain an understanding of both basic phrases as well as cultural aspects. The language teacher also arranged for a pre-departure meeting with other who'd already been to Norway and who could give us useful information and 'insider knowledge'. Talking to people who've been where you're going is an immense help!

How did you establish social networks in your host country? Do you have any tips on how this can be achieved?

In Norway, the easiest way to get to know people is to join some sort of organisation or club. In my case, I joined both a sports team and volunteered at Kvarteret which is a student culture house in Bergen. Lots of international and local students volunteer there and it is great to get to know people and hang out socially.

Did you learn the local language, respectively how important did you think it was for your stay?

I did learn the local language, i.e., Norwegian, by attending language classes prior to my stay abroad as well as going to a Norwegian class whilst being in Norway. It was nice to be able to see the progress of understanding more when Norwegian was being spoken and to be able to read signs and books. However, knowing Norwegian was not of great importance because most Norwegians tend to speak perfect English and all the classes were taught in English. This also meant that I was not able to actively use my language skills much. I am still glad I learned some of it before, though, and got the opportunity to be immersed within the language because of this stay abroad.

How was the study program at the partner university structured?

(e.g. premises, workload, language of instruction, examination forms, accessibility)

What intercultural encounters/competencies shaped your stay?

The classes I took, SOS117 and SAMPOL115, were held in English and my exams were, due to Covid, all take-home exams. Both classes were accessible with, and corresponded well to, the knowledge I had previously acquired through EUU. Contrary to my studies in Flensburg, the modules I took were structured in such a way that I had to pass mandatory assignments in order to be allowed to sit the

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final exam. This meant that already during the semester, the workload felt more but on the other hand, it also meant that I was better prepared during the semester rather than having to squeeze it all in at the end.

What intercultural encounters/competencies shaped your stay?

Bergen is a popular place for exchange students, so I met quite a lot of international people. Volunteering at Kvarteret did help a lot in meeting and getting to know local students.

Which perspectives on the host country/country of origin have changed and why?

Klicken oder tippen Sie hier, um Text einzugeben.

What was your daily life like where you were? (e.g. living, shopping, leisure, inclusion)

Due to a housing shortage in the autumn semester, most international students have to share rooms. Because of this, I spent most of my days outside of my room and at Kvarteret or other places in town, meeting friends, having coffee, studying, or something similar. Spending a lot of time at Kvarteret also meant that inclusion into Norwegian people's groups and activities was easier.

Living at Fantoft, the student housing, means living a bit further outside of the city centre, but the tram runs straight from there to the centre quite often. There's also a supermarket right at Fantoft, although it is one of the more expensive ones. Regarding grocery shopping, I recommend going to Kiwi or Rema1000, as these are the more reasonably priced ones. However, you should be aware that life, especially groceries and going out, is generally more expensive in Norway than in Germany.

What are the unique or special issues in the host country and what were the opportunities for engaging with these issues?

Klicken oder tippen Sie hier, um Text einzugeben.

Is there anything else you would like to share? (e.g. anecdotes, criticism, etc.)

When going to Bergen during the autumn semester, one must be aware of the room sharing issue. This can at times be quite challenging as there is virtually no privacy and you're literally never alone. However, it is also an opportunity to meet people and personally, it gave me even more incentive to actually go out and spend my time with others.

3. Photos

Finally, you can upload photos here, which visualize/represent your stay abroad well. If necessary, add a description. The following questions can help you choose the appropriate photos:

- Does the photo possibly reinforce prejudices or stereotypes about the country?
- Do you have the consensual consent of the persons depicted in the photos?
- "A picture is worth a thousand words!" What does your picture say about the country and your semester abroad?



Fantoft



Bryggen



Klicken oder tippen Sie hier, um Text einzugeben.



Bergen from above



Klicken oder tippen Sie hier, um Text einzugeben.



Klicken oder tippen Sie hier, um Text einzugeben.



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Many thanks for your support!