

OUTGOING STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM - 2007/2008

Programme International Management

University Attended Helsinki School of Economics

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

Before the term started we were offered to be picked up from the airport or to be met at a place of our convenience and to be taken to our accommodation. On the first day we were given a series of talks by academic personnel to help explain the different systems and the way in which the Helsinki School of Economics worked. Personnel from the student union also provided us with information before we were split into groups shown around by “tutors” (previous exchange students). They helped us with setting up bank accounts, buying mobile phones, tours of the university etc, essentially helping us become familiar with Finland, Helsinki and the university.

After this initial start we were encouraged to approach our tutors if we had problems and there was continuous social activities organised first by them and then later which they were invited to and so were kept in regular contact. The induction and orientations were both useful and helpful. They helped people adjust to Helsinki and to make the most out of the university and the city as well as providing many opportunities to make new friends and go on great excursions.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The style of teaching was composed of one of more lectures a week varying from one hour to 3 hours each (with intensive courses having up to a full day). They did not have the same convention of seminars (usually) but there was a lot of variation in the way the courses were taught and sometimes especially with the more mathematical courses there were tutorials. Most lectures were limited, to not be too big and were accessed on a first come first served basis through online selection. This made up for the lack of seminars as questions and speaking from students was greatly encouraged in lectures. In a similar vein it was quite common for the course to be partly graded on presentations, which were made to the class.

As mentioned above the courses varied greatly, with the teachers having greater autonomy to change the regulations surrounding the course grading but there was usually a large final examination at the end of the course and some degree of group work. Group works included mathematical problems, case studies, journal reviews, presentations and essays/projects.

At the beginning of the year we were provided with a coursebook, which outlined along with the School regulations, all the lessons available and their details. We then had to sign up ourselves to our desired course using the online system, which was clear and helpful. The only issue was that the high demand for language courses meant we had to apply for them in advance of the year starting by emailing our preferences to the international co-ordinator, which arranged them on our behalf.

As well as being given access to teaching support both in and after lessons, we could visit teachers for support in their offices but it was more common to speak through email when out of class.

MBS INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

There was helpful advice before setting up and acquiring accommodation etc but the high level of thorough support from HSE meant that little support was needed from MBS, (especially after arriving). However I always believed that MBS could and would help with any difficulties that I may have had.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

I was very happy with the preparatory meetings. They helped provide clear information about the process of how the exchange would work and there was clear helpful guidance about the different destinations allowing for an informed decision on which destinations to prioritise.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

The level of support was sufficient. With the high level of automation with regard to the academic system (which was very clear) and the high level of support from the tutors there was less need for and less interaction with the international office. Longer opening hours towards the ends of terms would have been useful however as opening hours were rather short.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation was split between a variety of locations which provided different facilities at different prices. The accommodation was well priced at an average level of around 30% lower than in the UK. There was a large facility very close to the university in the city centre, which offered a bedroom/kitchen/lounge flat for one or two people. This was the most expensive but was of the highest quality and best location.

There were two other halls, containing 3 and 5 person flats of reasonable quality and fairly priced. Both were outside the city centre but had great public transport provision with regular cheap buses, trains and trams. There were also a few other small residences e.g. two 10 person places which were also high quality. Residences of 3 people would be single sex while larger flats would sometimes be mixed but preferences could be made. Most residences were organised by private housing associations but were done in a professional manner and places were reserved for specific universities and all accommodation was booked through HSE where you were guaranteed a place if applied on time.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport to the university was neither expensive nor cheap if bookings were not made too late. There is a high quality airport in Helsinki itself with good bus access for approximately €5 or a taxi can be taken for around €30. It has regular flights from

both Manchester and London as well international flights all over the world. Cheaper access can be gained by flying with Ryanair to Tampere (one of Finland's other large cities), but that will include an extra €15 train fare for the hour or so train to Helsinki so is not always competitive.

The opportunities for travel are great. There are many excursions organised by the student union exchange sub committee, which went to Stockholm, Tallinn, St Petersburg, Moscow and Lapland. These trips were very popular and many exchange students and Finnish tutors would participate. In my opinion these trips were the best bit of the exchange but they do add to the cost of the exchange significantly over time, so a year long exchange may wish to consider spreading these trips over the year as they occur twice a year. Placed where Helsinki is and the opportunities to make friends all over Europe also provides a great opportunity to travel across Europe on the way back from Finland or on journeys made between Britain and Finland as weekend stop offs.

There was not a great degree of integration with the local students with exception to the Finnish tutors, which in many cases became strong friends of many of the exchange students. This was partly due to the general quiet nature of the Finnish students but largely to the great integration made between the other exchange students, which spent most time together. Having all these students in the same situation, living together, studying together and travelling together made for a great atmosphere and although there could be academic pressure at times. There was a great degree of socialising and going out. Although Helsinki did not have the same degree of nightlife as cities like Manchester there was plenty to do and many, many parties took place.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

An unbelievable experience, which I will treasure for the rest of my life!