

HOGENT, Belgium

Fien Moerman

16.09.2020 - 29.01.2021

EXCHANGE REPORT

EXPERIENCES AT THE HOST UNIVERSITY

I was studying in Belgium, Gent at HOGENT University from 16 October until the end of January. In Denmark I am a student of the BE-IT programme, and I went for the exchange to Belgium under Erasmus+ programme. I chose to go for the exchange in order to meet new cultures and meet a lot of inspiring new friend. Moreover I wanted to broaden my knowledge of finance, accounting and marketing.

At HOGENT In total I chose 7 classes; Sustainable Development, International Marketing, Management Accounting, Financial Statements Analysis, Financial Management, Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship. I do not recommend choosing more courses (more credits), as my schedule was pretty busy.

Digital Marketing (3 credits) was introducing me to social media marketing, email marketing and Search Engine Optimization. The final grade was based on mandatory online courses on HubSpot platform and exam, 30% and 70% respectively.

On **Entrepreneurship** (3 credits) we were working in the group on our business idea with the supervisor's help. In the end we had to present our work, and based on it we received grades. It was really useful and fun, as we taught how to implement our ideas in the real-life.

Financial Management (6 credits) was challenging as I was not familiar with basic finance notions. It covers fundamentals of strategic financial management, including investments and corporate finance. I learnt to evaluate major strategic corporate and investment decisions and to understand capital markets and institutions from a financial perspective, and you will develop an integrated framework for value-based financial management and individual financial decision-making.

This was the most rewarding course as in BE-IT programme KEA does not teach us about finance, and I believe that is really important and worth knowing.

Financial Statements Analysis (4 credits) taught me how to explain the figures from the financial statements, indicate the importance of a financial plan, explain various techniques of financial analysis, calculate and interpret financial indicators, critically screen the financial health of a company.

International Marketing (3 credits) taught me how to develop, monitor and adjust a marketing policy. I had two assignments from this course, one individual and one in group. In the end I had an exam.

Management Accounting (6 credits) was based mostly on exercises in Excel. Chapters that we covered:

1. Cost Management and Strategic Decision Making
2. Product Costing Concepts and Systems
3. Cost Estimation
4. Activity-based Costing Systems

5. Cost Management and Short-term Decision Making
6. Joint Product and Process Cost System
7. Job and Order Costing
8. Managing and Allocating Support Service Costs
9. Analysis and Management of Cost Variances
10. Transfer Pricing

Sustainable Development (3 credits) gave me an understanding of the key challenges and pathways to sustainable development. Moreover, it introduced me to concepts, visions, principles and indicators of sustainable development, system errors, system and holistic thinking, future thinking, ecological footprint, challenges in sustainable development.

More information about courses is available on Hogent official website.

I was happy with every course that I chose, teachers were really polite and helpful. The exam period was really difficult, as I have 6 exams during the period of three weeks in January!! Mostly, the grading from every course is based on the project (usually in group) and then the exam.

HOGENT, the receiving school, same as KEA, before our arrival was trying to keep in touch in case we have any questions. Fien Moerman, who was responsible for incoming students to HOGENT is really lovely and helpful. On the platform "MobilityOnline" the whole process was indicated, so I knew what I should do next and when is my deadline. If I did not know something I could write or call my international coordinator and get help.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

I did not have a lot of study experience due to COVID-19 and closed campus for the most of the time. However, for the first two weeks I had classes at the campus, which was really huge with a nice cafeteria and canteen. Moreover, I met a lot of other Erasmus students, with whom I am staying in touch. In the beginning, when there was not that much restriction, HOGENT organized "Into Week", where I had the possibility to meet every Erasmus Student and make some connections.

During the exchange I met a lot of friends from different parts of the world, especially in my dorm. It was really interesting and funny spending time with them, as I get to know their cultures. My advice would be: Just be yourself and do not stress out.

Ghent is a really beautiful city, there are a lot of nice pubs with a huge variety of beers and a lot of cozy restaurants. Usually Erasmus Students were going out together for a beer or a meal, however prepare some cash before arrival as we could not pay the check separately.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES

I was living in Mercator D - the dorm provided by HOGENT. The accommodation was really cheap compared to others, however I had to pay for the whole rent right after moving in (September). The room was okay, with a common kitchen and bathroom. However, I had mold in my room and the accommodation service did nothing with it, which was really disappointing.

My expenses went how I planned it. When the campus was open I was eating there for cheap prices. However, after a few weeks there was a lockdown in Belgium, so I did not spend money on food outside, neither drinks. We were spending a lot of time in the dorm, cooking together or taking away food.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I really enjoyed my exchange in Belgium. I met a lot of new and interesting people. I learned a lot of new things, as teachers were demanding. Unfortunately, my timing was not the best because of COVID-19; lockdown and online courses. However, thanks to living in the dorm, I was not lonely, surrounded by other Erasmus friends who were also living in the dorm.