

My Erasmus experience in Helsinki:

Academic Experience:

I studied business and IT at LAUREA – University of Applied Sciences. At KEA in Copenhagen I am also a student of Business and IT. At Laurea I had 4 courses:#

1. Service Design – as the name says the course was about service design. I have previously had a course like that at KEA but here it was a bit more advanced so I was happy about this course. It was fully online and based on one project for a company we had to do with a group.
2. Digital marketing and sales – based on one big project for a company. All the theory was to make certificates. I thought it would be great to have it done so I could possibly add the certificates to my CV but the life showed that it was just really boring and it was hard to motivate yourself to spend roughly 30h on another google ad course (and there were many certificates to do).
3. Data driven decision making – a short and easy course. I haven't learned much, it was very basic.
4. Finnish language and culture – this course was more advanced than I would have thought. Always fun to be able to say a few words in Finnish but here the load of study was much more than 5 ECTS from my, and my colleagues' experience.

From the 4 courses I only liked Service Design. If I have to be honest I don't think LAUREA is the greatest school when it comes to teach you something. Courses are either boring or too easy (excluding Finnish language) and many of my study colleagues had the same thoughts. You will have LOTS of free time so get ready to explore Finland, party a lot, or whatever else that makes you happy 😊 and don't get me wrong, Erasmus in Finland is absolutely amazing, but if you want to learn a lot you probably should choose a different uni.

The application process:

1. KEA helped me with finding the university and country where I was interested to do the Erasmus exchange in (thanks to an amazing Erasmus coordinator we have). They reminded me about all the deadlines and formalities and made the process go smoothly! During the application process I didn't get much help from my Erasmus uni - Laurea, when I was asking them questions the answers were quite confusing.
2. Before arriving to Helsinki we got an offer to have a tutor from Laurea. I signed up for it, without knowing much of the purpose of having a tutor but it was a great decision because my tutor helped me a lot with picking up my keys, documents, and even picked me up from the airport and drove home with me to show me my place. We also became friends later on and had lots of good memories together with my tutor.

3. I lived in Helsinki, I was very lucky with my apartment. I got a single studio, big and spacy, fully furnished with a big kitchen in a very central area in Helsinki, right next to train station and shopping mall. I got it through HOAS which is this organization with student apartments in Finland. I believe I was so lucky because I applied very early (application opened 01/04 and I sent my application 02/04), I also put quite a big budget for me which was 600 euro just to get anything and therefore I got the most expensive option – 600 euro. But it was worth it!
4. My main expenses was the rent, food and transportation. I haven't set a budget which was probably a mistake but I think I've spent more than I was assuming I would – which is usually a case. Helsinki is expensive but a little less than Copenhagen. If you like parties, keep in mind that alcohol is very expensive here – more than in Denmark.
5. I received Erasmus grant which fully covered my rent expenses.

Cultural/personal experience:

1. I was lucky not to have any bigger challenges while being here, everything was going pretty smoothly. But if we had any struggles, there was this Laurea well-being organization where you could go and talk with someone and they seemed to be very welcoming and warm. One thing maybe was going to the doctor. It was pretty easy with the blue card (just a long time waiting in the line) but I went to the doctor twice with different problems and got 0 help in each case, which made me feel pretty terrible and helpless.
2. Studying in Finland is amazing and much better than I thought it would be. I came here with zero expectations or rather an expectation that it could be a little boring and weird, but I was so wrong. Student party scene in Helsinki is amazing, wild, active and awesome. What was shocking to me is that Finnish students actually want to talk to you and socialize, which is pretty uncommon in Denmark where Danes will sadly probably never talk to you if sober. When I came here to Helsinki we started hard with plenty of student welcoming parties. It really helps you to make friends, especially other Erasmus people that are normally very open and social. Then you got this overalls in Finland [for students] and you collect patches throughout parties and events that you later on sew on the overall. It's pretty fun and many Erasmus bought an overall which is a great [but pretty big and expensive] souvenir from Finland.
Then we had this trip to Lapland which was an unforgettable experience!! So many great activities, winter wonderland and (if you're lucky) stunning northern lights. If you are here, this trip is a must!
Also wanted to mention that Finland is a heaven for second hand and vintage shops. It is amazing how many cheap, original, great quality things you can find in UFF (the main second hand here, amongst many). So a good advice is not to bring too many clothes because you can buy it here so cheap.
In general that was an amazing experience, Finland is absolutely beautiful, people are nice and the nature is stunning! Just be ready for a really dark weather from October on. It is dark and cloudy all the time and the weather is much worse than in Copenhagen.

