

Exchange in Oslo!

General Information

I went on exchange to Oslo in Norway. The university I went to was BI Norwegian Business School. I studied there from mid-August till mid-December.

Preparation

I had some practical things to cover after I got word that I was accepted to go on exchange to Oslo. The most important thing for me was the housing. Housing is very expensive in Oslo (what isn't?). Luckily the university provides you with housing in one of their partners: BSN or SIO, which is a lot cheaper than finding a place yourself on the private market. You will pay around 4400 NOK which translates to around 500 euros (unless the exchange rate changes!). Whereas on the private market you would pay around 800 euros or more. There is however a deadline to apply for the house, so make sure you do not miss it. Another tip: make sure you apply the moment you get confirmation because you will be able to get a better accommodation. Everybody wants to get in Bjølsen, which is seen as the place where you have nice parties and social life. So apply early if you want that kind of atmosphere. Sadly, I didn't know about this and applied just a day before the deadline. I ended up at a place that was about 20 minutes from university by metro. The people living there weren't as fun either and the amount of rent I was paying was too much giving the quality of living.

Second important thing: buy an Ethernet cable as most accommodations do not have Wi-Fi connection. What you can do however, is to bring your own Wi-Fi adapter and set up your own wireless connection. Moreover, if you have an Ultrabook you should get an adapter that allows you to connect the Ethernet cable to your laptop. Ultrabooks do not have an Ethernet port!

Next up: clothes. Oslo can be very cold. You might not be very happy if you come to Oslo with the same clothes you wear in the Netherlands. Starting from the end of November, the weather was around 20 degrees colder than what you are used to in the Netherlands. It reached around -15 degrees at the beginning of December (during the day). Snow and ice included. Be prepared to fall down due to the slipperiness. It happened to me... And I wasn't prepared! So make sure you bring proper clothing and shoes. Buy a nice, warm jacket. Tip: Freedomday jackets are quite good and convenient. But luckily, it's not all cold and sadness. When I arrived in August the weather was surprising better than in Rotterdam. I experienced 25 degrees for two weeks even though it was raining in the Netherlands. So it might be handy to bring your swimsuit as well.

Some last tips: a creditcard is accepted everywhere. My regular card was accepted in most places but if you plan to travel by plane, then you will need a creditcard. www.norwegian.com has a lot of extremely cheap flights if you plan to travel to the north or to other nations!

Arrival

Usually you will arrive at the airport Oslo Gardermoen, which is the main airport. There are express tickets directly to the city center which takes about 20 minutes. After that you can buy a 24 hour pass or single ticket to travel within Oslo to your destination. The first thing I would do after dropping your luggage is to get a 30 day travel pass for students. It costs 440 NOK (around 50 euros), whereas a 24 hour pass is around 90 NOK if I remember correctly (almost 10 euros). You will need to carry your admission letter as proof that you are a student. Once you receive your student card you won't need to carry the letter anymore though!

You will have to register as resident from Norway within a certain number of days. However you will receive instructions from the university how to do that. It is very easy and you can do this in about 10 minutes. Another thing you can do immediately is to go to BI and take a picture of yourself. You will receive your student card the next day.

BI organizes an introduction week before the exams begin. I recommend you attend this because it is a nice way to meet all your fellow exchange students and make friends. You will learn about the Norwegian lifestyle and partake in daily activities.

Lastly, there is an Ikea bus for free in the city center. This brings you to a very large Ikea where you can buy all the equipment you need for a cheap price.

Courses

I had to get at least 24 credits on my exchange. However, BI only has 7.5 credit subjects. This meant that I had to do four courses to attain the minimum amount. I did the following courses:

- *Persuasion and Dialogue for Leaders*

This course was aimed at being confident in front of an audience. The aim was to teach you how to write a manuscript about a controversial topic and to be able to convince your audience of your viewpoint. The end project was a speech based on the topic and your manuscript. You had a speech, defense and audience debate. This lasted about 30 minutes.

I had a mixed feeling about this course. In my opinion, half of the lectures were useless and the other half were alright. I personally learned more from the end exam than from the lectures.

- *Tactical Marketing*

This course was nice. You had an online simulation of your own business. You formed teams of 3 and competed against your classmates. You sold computers and laptops and had to choose strategies based on feedback week to week and make sure you got ahead of competitors. This was very competitive and a lot of fun in my opinion. I would recommend this course to anyone who wants to do a competitive game and simulate a real business environment.

- *Project Management*

This course teaches you about project management and what a project manager is and does. It gives you theories that can be applied in a future career as project manager. It gives you some foundation.

This is the course that I spent the least amount of time on. I didn't do much for this course, however a last minute study session got me a nice grade anyways!

- *Financial Bubbles, Crashes and Crisis*

This is the best course of my bachelor. THE. BEST. The professor: Beniamino Callegari is awesome. He teaches you practical knowledge about all the financial crises that happened over the years. It gives you insight into money, banking and the credit market. It is the course that made me feel like I am an actual economist. I loved it and I recommend it to anyone who actually wants to learn something on exchange. It is the one course I recommend attending the lectures of as they are fundamental for the course. The professor teaches in such a way that everyone will end up with a very good grade and a lot of knowledge.

Finances

Norway and Oslo are expensive. Simple as that. So if you are not willing to spend money, then don't go there. Expenditures:

- Rent: around 500 euros per month
- Sports: you can get a sports card at BI that gives you access to 5 gyms owned by SIO. One of them is located inside(!) the university itself. It cost around 150 euros for 5 months access. The gyms were pretty good themselves. Whether you are into powerlifting, bodybuilding or just like running on the treadmill. They were very spacious and with a lot of equipment.
- Social life: very expensive. Going out and buying drinks at clubs will cost you a lot of money. What the students usually did is just go to house parties and drink there before going somewhere else.
- Mobile phone costs: this is quite cheap. You could get a free sim-card at BI and then get credit each month for around 10-15 euros. Or you just use Wi-Fi as that is available at a lot of places.
- Transport: as mentioned before it is 50 euros a month for unlimited travel within Oslo for students. Get the card!
- Food: if you think chicken is mandatory part of your diet, you might want to rethink that. It costs around 13-15 euros for 1 kilo of chicken breast compared to the 5 euros in the Netherlands! In other words: food was quite expensive. However, you could get a very large meal for around 6 euros at the university. They had other meals each day and it was very delicious. So I recommend to eat there as it is cheap and delicious in one!

Daily life

I think I have covered most things already. So how is daily life in Oslo? My regular weekdays looked somewhat like this: wake up and eat breakfast → run to the metro → go to the university and attend lectures → study some stuff → go to the gym → have fun.

Activities you can do: go to parties, go to the ski jump, go hiking, go cinema, visit museums and travel. Kroa, the student pub, is also a lively and entertaining place located in the university building.

Life is very nice in Oslo. I had the time of my life there and I would recommend every single person to go there. I had super nice courses, met amazing people and had a lot of fun. The Norwegian people speak English very well and they are extremely friendly. It does take getting used to the Norwegian currency but that's all the more fun!