

Student Report Corvinus University Budapest 2015

In this student report you will find a lot of practical information for studying at Corvinus University. I studied there in 2015 and had a great time, I hope this report might help anyone who is considering studying at the same university. It may seem like there is a lot to take care of before you leave, but remember that once you have dealt with all that you will be spending time one of the most beautiful cities in Europe with a great nightlife and cheap beer!

General Information

In the first semester of the year 2015/2016 I studied in Budapest, Hungary, at the Corvinus University. At Corvinus there are two semesters every year. The fall semester runs from the start of September until the end of January. Typically the last classes and the exams are in December, the re-exams are in January.

Preparation

After you are nominated, you will receive an e-mail from Corvinus with further instructions if you are accepted. Make sure to check your e-mail and spam folder on a regular basis.

Since the courses are in English, Corvinus University will ask you for proof of your English language skills. They require a minimum level of B2, which is the same level students are supposed to have after six years of high school in the Netherlands. I took an ITP-TOEFL test at the Erasmus University and it was accepted, it costs about 60 euros.

In the e-mail they will also send you a login code for one of the online systems, the mobility manager. There are three different online systems you will have to use, but this one is fairly easy. You will be asked to fill out your personal information, upload your language certificate and a photo.

In the Mobility Manager you will also find the list of available courses. If you care at all about which courses you will be taking, I recommend looking at it and checking out some courses before the registration period starts.

Finding a place

I did not try to find a room before I arrived but chose to stay in a hostel for the first week instead. There are a lot of Facebook pages and groups where rooms and apartments are advertised. I do not recommend getting a room without seeing it in person first, and of course you should avoid paying any deposit before seeing it. Some people did find something before coming to the city, with different experiences. For some students it was alright, but there were also people who arrived to find the apartment with broken windows, no internet, etc. Also staying in a hostel at first gives you the opportunity to find people to live with and search for a place together. Expect to pay around 300 euros for a place in the center of the city or close to university, this includes utility costs. It is possible to get a better deal but most landlords know that exchange students can afford this and are afraid of not finding anything so you will typically pay a little more than local students. For most rooms, you are required to pay a deposit of one or two months of rent.

I really recommend staying on the Pest side of the Danube. The public transport in the city is working very well, so it is a good idea to find something close to a metro or tram station. I personally think the

best place to live for a student is the seventh district, the Jewish quarter. This is where a lot of the night life takes place and there are a lot of nice cheap restaurants. The public transport to the university either by tram or metro runs every two or three minutes. Another option is to stay close to the university which is in the ninth district or in between, in the eighth district. Make sure you stay on the side that's close to the city center though, as especially district eight has a shady reputation when you get further away from the center. District five is the touristic center and not a bad place but probably a bit more expensive.

Arrival

Before you leave, you will be assigned a local student as a buddy. I would recommend contacting them before leave, they might be able to pick you up, show you the city and maybe even help you find a place. There will be a Facebook group with all the exchange students for your semester and that makes it really easy to meet people.

Courses

There is a registration period for courses, you will get information about the start and end date via e-mail. If there are specific courses that you really want to take, I would advise immediately registering at the start date and time of the registration period, as some courses take only small amounts of students and might be full very fast. There will be a second registration period, during the first week of the semester. This means you will be able to switch courses after taking a few classes or changing classes to improve your schedule. A lot of students take one more course than they are obliged to, so they can drop or fail one course they don't like. Make sure you drop that course before the deadline that will be announced, because it is not possible to do it later and your result will be printed on the transcript of results. If possible, I would avoid taking any courses on Thursday or Friday, especially in the morning because a lot of the student night life takes place on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights. This also makes it easier to travel in the weekends, because some classes will have mandatory attendance.

I took the following four courses:

Institutional Economics of the Public Sector

A course supposedly on a masters level on applied microeconomics in the public sectors. Game theory, wage theories and contract theory were among the subjects discussed. If you have taken microeconomics courses at the Erasmus University this will not be a difficult course.

Health Policy and Finance

An interesting course looking at the economics of the health sector and the decisions a government has to take. The teacher tried to make the course more interesting by inviting guest lecturers. This course was also supposed to be at the masters level but was more similar to a bachelors level course.

Changing Macroeconomic Environment for Asian and European Corporations

This course takes a look at the biggest changes and opportunities for corporations in both Europe and Asia, and the difference between them.

International Political Economy

This course was mainly about the relation between businesses and governments and was very popular by students.

Finances

In some ways, Budapest is a very cheap city. The prices of groceries and brand clothing are very similar to Dutch prices. Eating and drinking out are very cheap in Budapest. In a small bar you will pay around one euro for half a liter of beer or a glass of wine, in a more touristic place probably two euros. Long drinks cost anywhere between three and 5 euros. There are a lot of restaurants where you will be able to eat two courses for less than ten euros, especially if you can avoid the most touristic ones. Public transport is also very cheap for students, a monthly pass cost eleven euros and will take you anywhere in the city.

There are also a lot of opportunities to travel very cheaply to other countries, I went to Ljubljana in Slovenia and Krakow in Poland for example.

Here is an overview of my monthly expenses and income:

Costs:		Income:	
Rent	300	Government finance	285
Transport	10	Public transport (OV-vergoeding)	100
Food	150	Erasmus grant	250
Drinks and going out	150	Savings/parents	105
Travelling	80		
Sport	50		
Total:	740		740

This will of course vary for every person depending on the amount of going out, travelling etc.

Daily life

For every course of 6 ECTS you will have only one class every week, which will be three hours with one break. This means if you get lucky with your schedule, you will only have three or even two (busy) days of classes and you will have a lot of free time. There are a lot of nice restaurants and bars to spend your time off. During the warmer times of the year it is also very nice to just walk around the city and admire the nice buildings or climb the hills on the Buda side to have an overview of the city. Most Hungarian students do not take courses in English, because they have to pay extra for it. This means you will spend a lot of time with your fellow exchange students. If you are interested in meeting local students I would advise to join a sports or dance club, or try to get along with your exchange buddy.

Final notes

Budapest is a great city for young people to spend time, mostly because of the beauty of the city, the night life and the prices. The university is alright but the level might be lower than you are used to, especially in courses at the bachelors level. If you are looking to challenge yourself to stay abroad in a country you don't know yet and want to meet new people from different backgrounds, I would definitely recommend Budapest as your exchange destination!

Bas Stegehuis