

Student Report Corvinus university Budapest

Julius Oosterom

In this student report you will be able to read about my experience at the Corvinus University in Budapest. This might be helpful if you are deciding if you want to go on exchange, and if so, where. I certainly had the best time of my life here!

General Information

I studied at the Corvinus University in the fall semester of 2016/2017. The fall semester at Corvinus takes place from the beginning of September, until December/January. Usually there is a possibility to take all your exams in December if you want. In January they have the resits. I study at ESE in Rotterdam, so naturally I was enrolled in the economic faculty in Budapest as well. This is called the FEC at Corvinus.

Preparation

Going on an exchange takes a lot of preparation, so I would suggest to take care of everything immediately after you receive the instructions. After you apply for the exchange in Rotterdam, you first have to wait until you get an e-mail from the exchange-coordinator which says you have been selected to study at Corvinus. After that the exchange-coordinator will nominate you, you do not have to do this. After that you will receive e-mails from Corvinus, telling you everything you have to do.

First you will have to fill in your information in their "mobility manager". Here you will also have to upload a photo and an English language test result. You need to proof you are at least B-2 level. At the Erasmus University they have an ITP-TOEFL test, which is not fully official, but is accepted by Corvinus. I took this test at it was pretty easy. This test costs about 60 euros.

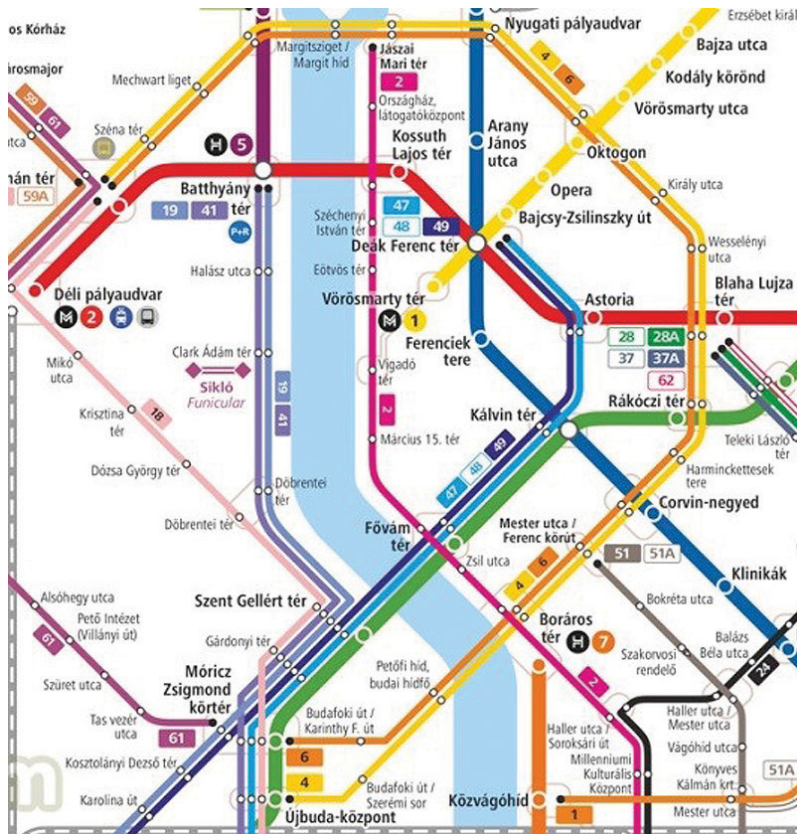
This mobility manager also gives you an option to look at the available courses already. It is useful to look at this before the official registration period starts. The registration period will be announced in the mobility manager, and via e-mail. The registration takes place in the program NEPTUN, which is like sin-online for us. Instructions for this program will also be given in the mobility manager. When your arrive at the university you will also learn about a MOODLE program, which is similar to Blackboard.

You do not have to arrange a visa, since Hungary is in the EU. You need your European health-insurance card, and that's about it. Officially you have to visit the office of immigration in Hungary, to formally let them know you are there. But if you leave the country within 90 days, this is not necessary. Since you will probably will be doing some trips around central Europe, you will not need to visit. I knew nobody who visited this office, and we were all fine.

Housing

This is the hardest part about going to Budapest. The university does not have a dorm or something, so everybody has to find an apartment on their own in the city. The university does not provide a lot of help in this part, so do not count on them. You have two options: Try to arrange something on the internet beforehand, or go there without anything, and try to find something on the spot. I would advise the last option, since you can never know if you can trust people you meet on the internet. You can then at least look at the apartment yourself before deciding. I would advise you to be in Budapest early, so you have the most available options. I went to the "hostel-week", a week organised for people

to meet people to search for flats together. This takes place a week before the official introduction, and is organised by ESN Corvinus. Basically a week full of parties, and flat searching. I found my 2 roommates here, and we went to search for flats straight away, and found something in 2 days. The best tip I can give you regarding locations: be on walking distance to the 4-6 tramline. This is the only line that runs all night long, and basically connects everything. And then I would try to find something in the 7th district (Jewish party district) or close to Corvinus university. You can try to connect my landlord, he was a reliable guy, but we did pay a little more than other people I have met. But this was also because we had the biggest apartment I saw, with a huge living room. Connect him at: atelek@ptg.hu.



The 2 small orange and yellow lines is the 4-6, Corvinus is at Fovam ter next to river. 7th distr is the square between Oktogon-Blaha-Astoria-Deak Ferenc. Find something on the Pest side (right side on the picture)

Arrival

As I told I arrived early, at the first day of the hostel week. I stayed in a hostel, and then I went to the hostelweek, and started to party for a week with a lot of new people. From the airport to your hostel I would advise a taxi at the airport, since you will have a lot of stuff with you (2 suitcases) and you don't understand the public transport yet. Taxi costs about 25 euros.

ESN Corvinus is the organisation which will help you the most. This is organised by students, and they organise the hostelweek, the introduction week, sightseeing's, parties, and so on. I would advise to go to all their events in the beginning to meet as many people as possible. They can also provide you with a tandem partner, a Hungarian that is there to help you if you have problems. They will e-mail you about this.

In the first week everything will be explained, and there is also another possibility to change your courses. This can be useful since sometimes they have overlap, or are on ridiculous times (like Friday 8am). I would advise to take no courses on Friday, so you can do some trips in the weekends.

Courses

The biggest difference with ESE is the mandatory attendance of 75%. Overall the level of the courses is lower than at ESE. The hardest part is being there physically, since the courses take 3 hours, with just 20 min break. I took 5 courses of 6 ECTS, I only needed 24 point, but I wanted some security for if something went wrong with one of them.

Civil society and organisations in transition

Course about the evolution of the Civil society. Sort of a history course, given by a really old, wise man. We had to do one big essay in groups, and an written exam, both 50%. But the teacher provides all the possible questions for the test before the exam. So impossible to fail if you just take notes of all the questions, and learn that before the test.

Introduction to health economics

Course on micro-economic level about the healthcare industry, and why it is different from other markets. We had to do one group presentation, and 2 exams. If you have ever done a micro-economic course, a lot will be old news. But the group discussions about how healthcare should be organised were something new. But the exams were both really easy.

Public policy and finance

Basic economic course about markets, government intervention, externalities, and so on. Did not learn a lot of new things here. But once again an easy course to pass, if you have an economic background. One midterm exam, and one final exam.

Comparative political economy

One of the two more serious courses I took. Was once again more a history lesson by an old wise guy, but better structured and given than the Civil society one. The course was basically about comparing socialism(communism) and capitalism. But it was the most interesting for me, since there was also a focus on the eastern European transition from communism to capitalism, and given that we were in Hungary, the teacher could tell us a lot about his own experience, and I learned quite a lot here. This course had one midterm, and one final.

Institutional economics of the public sector

This was my most intensive course, covering institutional topics on multiple levels. Topics like principal-agent problems, adverse selection, insurances, wage-theories. It is similar to the applied micro-economics we had in year 2. We had to do a lot of group essays, which made it relatively intense. Also the final exam was an oral exam, something I never did before, but was good to experience once.

Finances

Living in Budapest is not that much cheaper than in the Netherlands, if you look at groceries and stuff. The only thing that's really cheap, is partying! You got so many cheap pre-drink places, and even in the clubs beer would only be 1-2 euros for half a litre. But because of this I partied like crazy,

so in the end, alongside with some trips, it is an expensive experience. I do have to say that my lifestyle was not the standard, and you can definitely have a great time with less money.

Income (monthly in Euro)		Expenses	
Dutch gov	270	Rent + utilities	350*
Public transport hold	100	Groceries	200
Grant Erasmus EU	150	Eating outside	100
Grandmother contribution	150	Party	250
Own savings/ loans	380	Trips	150
Total	1050	Total	1050

*this can definitely be done cheaper, I had the biggest apartment of everybody I met. Common was 250-300.

In Hungary they pay with HUF, one euro translate to app. 300 HUF. Make sure, that when you pick up money from an ATM choose to let them charge you **WITHOUT** conversion. This way you get the exchange rate from your own bank, and not the one from the ATM machine, which can safe you up to 10% each time you use it. You can just use your card in supermarkets as well. I used my own dutch sim card to use internet, but most people get an Hungarian one, which will cost you like 10 euros.

Daily life

Choosing good roommates is really important. I was lucky to have met 2 great guys, and we did almost everything together. We cooked for each other every night we did not eat out, we went to the gym together (BME university has a great gym, for fairly cheap price). And of course we went to all the events and parties we could find.

Budapest in an amazing city to live in as an exchange student. The city is beautiful, and very popular with students, so you will be able to party almost every day of the week. The city has some amazing architecture, and so many cool things to do. Like going to the Thermal baths, chill and drink at Margrit Island in summer, Shoot guns at a range, explore the beautiful Buda side and this is just a small part of the things I have done there.

It is also centrally located in Europe, so you have the opportunity to explore a lot of different area's fairly cheap (train, and WIZZAIR). I went to the Balaton lake in Hungary, Bratislava, Belgrade, Krakow and Milan. But every trip I was happy to be back in Budapest. The city really feels like my second home now, and I will definitely go back.

The city is so alive, and the atmosphere in the nightlife and parties is really laid back. I haven't seen a single fight in the 5 months I was there. I met people from all over the world, and this really changed my perspective on the world. I have learned to look at things in the news from the perspective of different countries, and cultures. You will certainly not regret going here, but if you don't, I would still highly advise going on exchange somewhere else. I was a little hesitant at first, but it was the best choice I ever made, and I honestly have had the best months of my life.

If you want to contact me to ask anything, I would be glad to help you. Just send me a message on facebook.

