

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name****Year and term for exchange**

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Exchange university

Aalto University

Degree programme

Human-Computer Interaction Design

A journey of challenges and opportunities

Before departure

Exchange students are a great opportunity to study and experience in a different country. Finland is part of Northern Europe but has its own unique culture and climate, and Aalto University's design and games are among the best in Europe, which is why I chose it. I hope to learn something related to game design at Aalto University. There are a lot of things to prepare for before going on the exchange. One of the most complicated is the choice of courses, because the different credits and course composition will affect the training program itself. It is also very important to prepare the dormitory and proof of migration. Proof of migration can be done according to the official information guide from the immigration office, but the dormitory in Finland must be prepared in advance.

Upon arrival

I studied in Finland for four months and there was a teacher- and peer-led meet-and-greet during the first week of school to help exchange students integrate into the group more quickly. Students can join different clubs according to their preferences, but due to the pandemic situation, we lost a lot of opportunities to meet offline, so most of the time was focused on studying. In addition, Aalto has a very heavy study load, and exchange students must be prepared to study every day.

Financials

I received a scholarship from KTH that was just enough to cover my rent. Supermarket prices in Finland are higher than in Sweden, but the prices of other store products are about the same as in Sweden. What I had to pay each month included rent and transportation. As we know, Finland relies on public transportation for most of its travel. If possible, try to choose a student residence, as this can help exchange students save a lot of money. Private rentals are about 100 euros higher than student apartments. However, due to the limited resources available in student housing, students are usually lined up for houses far away from the school or cannot get a place.

Accommodation

There are two different dormitories for students in Finland, the unfurnished Ayy and the furnished Hoas, both of which require queuing many months in advance. Unfortunately, I didn't get a place in the dormitory, so I rented a private apartment. Because it is common to not be able to get a place, the school will not help you find a place, but they do provide some websites to help students find one. I lived far away from the school in a shared house with other students, which was generally in good condition and furnished, making it very convenient for exchange students. The rent was around 450 euros.

University and studies

Aalto University is very large and you can take the bus for several stops in the campus. Compared to the study style of KTH, students at Aalto study almost every day and everyone seems to have an endless amount of homework to write. The daily life is basically like leaving for class at 7am, sometimes without a lunch break, eating in the school cafeteria, then going to class in the afternoon, and then taking the bus home to do homework. I studied in English in Finland, while the school offered Finnish language classes.

Courses

When I drew up the study plan, since my goal was very clear to learn game interaction design, the course consisted of these two main parts. The course descriptions for one of my courses are about 20 PDF pages long. the advantage is that students can calculate their final grades at the beginning of the school year.

City and country

Helsinki is very beautiful, but I live in Espoo. as a person who climbs home every day, living in Espoo gives me a sense of what nature is. I'm sure everyone who has lived in Finland will appreciate the joy of catching a bus. Finns also work on Saturdays, and every weekend when I'm sitting in my school classroom, I'm eager to get out and enjoy the weekend.

But I have to say that most Finns are very welcoming, contrary to our stereotypes. I've received help from passers-by in many confusing times, and that's something I really appreciate.

Leisure and social activities

I have to say that most of the time I was studying. Sometimes I would go out with my classmates to hang out and have coffee. But since my classmates were very busy, there weren't many opportunities like that.

Sustainability

The area where I live is very strict in separating garbage. In addition, there are many recycling sites and stores in Finland where people can donate their unwanted stuff.

Other recommendations and observations

Although the beginning and end sections required a lot of paperwork, the entire exchange period was a unique experience. I got to meet different students and learn about different cultures. It was a valuable experience.