



## EXCHANGE REPORT

Name

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Year and semester for exchange

2022/2023

### Exchange university

The Oslo School of Architecture and design, Norway

### Degree programme

Architecture programme

## Exchange studies in Oslo: Why you should go to Norway and AHO

### Before departure

I wanted to apply for exchange studies because I was done with my bachelors and wanted to see what else is out there in the world outside of KTH. I saw it as a great opportunity to live on my own and become more independent as a person. I also thought I might acquire skills to be able to compete with when I later was going to search for a job at home. I chose Norway because I wanted to: be able to travel by train, go to a country with stunning nature and that spoke at least good English and was not too far from home.

### Upon arrival

I arrived in Oslo by car four days before the initiation period at school. These days I spent moving into my flat and exploring the city. The summer was still warm and in Oslo there are many places where you can go swim in the fjord. The initiation was done by the school and was only for us exchange students, but still, this was a good opportunity to get to know people before the courses started. I felt welcomed to the school as an exchange student and our group was a large one.

I am very appreciative of the contact I could have with the international office at AHO before and during my stay. Solvei was a great help! Outside of school there is the student organization SIO. They help with everything from accommodation to health care.

### Financials

As many know, Norway is expensive. That's just how it is, but it is okay. I had both Erasmus and CSN and this was enough for me. I paid 6900 NOK for an apartment with a bed.

Good thing is the BUA where you can borrow sports equipment for free, (and you are going to want to, both the norwegians and the other exchange coming here are all up for doing hikes, skiing and all sorts). All you need is a Norwegian telephone number. The price for a gym card is 240 Nkr through the student organization SIO and I could also take dance lessons through them.

### Accommodation

All exchange students at AHO are guaranteed student housing with SIO. This was a huge advantage, but many students in Norway live in shared housing, so if you want a more social experience look for some people to share with.

I lived in an area called Sogn, in the north of Oslo, on the outskirts of town close to the forest Nordmarka. It took me 45 minutes-ish to get to school by bus, but for me it was not a problem. The benefits of living in a super safe area close to nature wins over closeness to school every time for me. I also had a bike in the summer and spring which reduced the time drastically, but keep in mind that

Oslo is hilly! The apartment I got was newly renovated and I was the first resident since then. The area has a calm atmosphere and charming houses in brick with cross-windows.

### **University and studies**

AHO is quite similar to KTH, but larger and with other programs, such as design and landscape architecture. The main difference for me was the social activities and engagement from the students and the student organization SAHO. Every Thursday there is a student-led pub, and yearly there are parties organized by the students and the teachers and from time to time flea-markets, language cafes and much more.

Another difference is the amount of teachers per student. In my first studio, Climate Form, led by prof. Tine Hegli, we had five additional teachers for our group of 17 students. This is not the case for all studios, but in general all the teachers are very engaged in the teaching. AHO also has a more academic feel to it, with regular presentations of the student work and many of the teachers are doing their PhDs at the same time as teaching.

### **Courses**

I loved the course I took, mostly because I met some fantastic people, both other students and teachers, but also for the topic that we talked about which I had not encountered yet at KTH. In the Autumn I took Climate Form (studio 24 p) and Lightweight architecture (elective 6p) and in the spring Radical Architecture (studio lead by Lisbeth Funck and Matthew Anderson) and Landscape in print (elective).

### **City and country**

Love Norway. Very similar to being at home but friendlier and sportier people. The attitude towards their own country is refreshing, patriotism in an inclusive way is my experience.

### **Sustainability**

Train works perfectly fine. Trainride from Oslo to Stockholm is under six hours so I could go home or my boyfriend could visit me over the weekend. Otherwise, at AHO students just started a sustainability group called KAOS that aims to bring serious focus onto the question. It is talked about a lot, but at the same time single-use plastic is used a lot in the cantina and the system for sorting waste does not work, but I have hope. The student body is very engaged in school, more so than at KTH.

### **Leisure and social activities**

Personally I did not partake in a lot of arranged social activities, since I made friends with the people from my studio. We started a dinner-club, since we all were from different countries and wanted to share food and traditions from home. The school had a bar every Thursday that we went to. And don't miss the Saunas by the opera!

Some of the best bonding activities in school were without a doubt the study trips with the studios. First we got to go to Vardø, the western most part of Norway, an amazing little island community where we drew a project focused on sustainable tourism. There you can also find the witch memorial Seilneset memorial by Louise Bourgeois and Peter Zumthor, which was amazing to see and discuss. For the second we went on a road trip to Bergen and passed by Allmannajuvet by Zumthor on the way.

I could not have anticipated the amazing people I met on my exchange. I am truly grateful <3

### **Other recommendations and observations**

You should absolutely go to Oslo and Norway! Go for the nature, stay for the people.