Helsinkin Yliopisto

My exchange semester at the University of Helsinki
First: The technical details
• Which language certificates do I need?

• When and how can I choose my courses?

• How can I find an accommodation?
• English B2 is enough (Abitur)

• All Finns usually speak very good English

• Finnish language is easy to pronounce, grammar is very hard.

• Master courses are usually all in English, but only few Bachelor courses.
• The semesters are shifted 2020/2021:
  • August 31st – December 20th
  • January 17th – May 16th

• Course application one week before semester start

• Searching and choosing courses: weboodi.helsinki.fi
• One click application for student housing
  • HOAS: more shared flats & Unihome: more studio apartments
  • Munich prices

• Usually, one has to be lucky to get a place there, but due to corona, it is very easy for exchange students to get it.

• Open housing market is slightly more expensive than in Munich.
• Living

• Sights

• Public transportation
• Most groceries more expensive than in Germany (especially alcohol!)

• Classic supermarkets are Prisma, K-market, S-market and Lidl (often German special weeks, for Spätzle, Lebkuchen, etc.)

• Saving hints:
  • Fresh fish from the supermarket
  • Filtered coffee
  • Alkohol from Talinn (15€ for the ferry)
  • Uni café is cheap and generous
There is a lot of nature in and around Helsinki, so check out your area!
Don’t miss the Oodi library.
The sea is everywhere!
Make sure to check out the harbour(s) and Sompa-Sauna
And the standard sight: Helsinki cathedral
How do I get around in Helsinki and Finland in general?
Metropole area divided into 4 zones:

• HSL app combines payment and route planning for the whole system.

• The student card is very cheap (~120€ per semester for AB-zone)

• Nuuksio and Sipoo national parks are within the HSL-system
Finnish transportation system is very reliable and cheap for Finnish students.

• Trains: check out vr.fi (all major cities)

• Busses: check out matkahuolto.fi (fixed routes anywhere)
• Courses, specialties and schedule

• Exams

• Grading system
• 1 Semester = 2 teaching periods (courses often go for one period)
• Level comparable to TUM
• Masters courses usually in English
• Corona during semester: Mostly remote teaching via zoom exception:
  • Libraries
  • field trips (forestry, meteorology, etc.)
  • lab courses
  • Uni café
  • Uni sport
• There’s an exam week after each teaching period.

• Exams are currently mostly held remotely.

• Include homework as a big part

• Similar tasks like homework
• Grading system:
  • Grades from 0-5
  • 0 is fail, 1 is just passed, ...

• 5 is quite reachable, if you do your homework.
Student Life in Helsinki       To-Dos in Finland

And now: The fun part
Student Life in Helsinki

To-Dos in Finland

Student groups:

• Overalls show field of study and are usually covered in batches

• Lots of events, even with corona
  • BBQ
  • Picknicks
  • Scavenger-Hunts

• Cancelled due to corona:
  • ferry cruises to Riga and Stockholm (tax free alcohol...)
  • Sitsit: festive dinner party
Student Life in Helsinki

To-Dos in Finland

• South: Turku – Archipelago – Porvoo

• North: Lapland!

• In general:
  • Sauna
  • Ice-Swimming
  • Hiking
  • Camping (see: Everymans-Right)
Student Life in Helsinki

Visit Porvoo

To-Dos in Finland
Student Life in Helsinki

Visit Turku,
The former capital city

To-Dos in Finland
Student Life in Helsinki

To-Dos in Finland

Don’t miss Lapland!
In summer...
Student Life in Helsinki

...and in winter.

To-Dos in Finland
• Summer until December:
  • Everything open, even Clubs, if they had a hygiene concept
  • Some of the biggest events did not take place (City festival, Sitsit)
  • Open travel to Norway and Estland

• In Helsinki from December until January (preliminary):
  • University buildings closed
  • Museums and sports sites are closed
  • Travel within Finland still unrestricted

Summary: Corona restrictions