

Exchange Report



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Introduction

I have wanted to study abroad for a long time. To experience another culture, meet new people and try studying in another University. For some time I wanted to go to Spain, Brazil or anything that sounded like a nice vacation, with lots of sun and what comes with it. My perspectives change though, to focus mainly on the school outcome of an exchange abroad.

I chose RGU, because it is a highly ranked School in the UK, teaching is in English, and the Facilities there are just crazy good.

Professional experiences

Robert Gordon University

The University is a very big and modern, with many different apartments. I have never seen any university in Denmark with the size and facilities that RGU have. There is a lot of canteens, workspaces, hangout spaces and a very good library, with a panoramic view over the city. Future exchange students in architectural technology, building surveying and architecture, will attend classes in a new building wing, which will be finished in the summer of 2015.

As an Architectural technology and construction management student, you have to choose between two main courses. Architectural technology, which in many ways are similar to the architectural technology part of the Danish courses. Building surveying, are similar to the construction management part. What goes for both course types is that you will go more into detail with the selected course, than you would in Denmark. I chose Architectural technology.

Architectural technology

Integrated studies 2: Architectural technology

Integrated studies is the biggest course you will have. It is similar to the projects we use to work with in Denmark, but with a big emphasis on the Design aspect. You do not go into that much detail with the structure as far as calculations go, or work with the construction management aspect. The Design however is very interesting to work with, since you make it from scratch. Through the semester, you continuously have consultancy with the lectures about your design, which help you design and understand the process and consequences of the choices you make. The lectures are very helpful and extremely competent.

Environment and services

This course is taught by attending lectures. It was very interesting and gave a good overview on many different aspects of building services and environmental influences on the buildings. The lectures were good in this course as well.

A thing I liked a lot about the course was that you got to work in labs. There you got the real life tools used to measure for example U-values, Sound, daylight etc. instead of just doing it in theory.

Procurement for build environment 1

The course took a thorough review of the different procurements strategies. It was nice to get some of it refreshed from the lectures back in Denmark. It gave an even better understanding on, when to use different procurements and why.

Building pathology/ Building technology

The course is divided into two different subjects. Building pathology, which revolves around how buildings act over time. Maintenance wise, plus typical building errors and how to address them. I think this was a relevant subject, which we have not had in Denmark.

The other subject Building technology, looked into the architectural development through time, and how materials and technologies have affected the building function, shape and aesthetics. We got to take a deeper look into a few famous architects work, which I actually found surprisingly relevant.



Personal experiences

Aberdeen

Aberdeen is a semi large city, with a population of around 200.000 people. The most striking about the city, is that every building in it is grey. This has its perks and downsides, in my opinion. There is a nice holistic feel to the city, and when the sunshine, it look very alive. However, when the weather is cloudy and grey, everything is grey! The city in itself has its charms, very English like streets etc. A thing that surprised me about Aberdeen was the weather. Because of the mountains in the highland to the west, Aberdeen gets less rain than Denmark actually.



Scotland

I was fortunate to get a visit first from my brother and his girlfriend, and the later from my own girlfriend. Both times, we had a rented car so were able to travel around the countryside. Scotland is famous for having a very nice and beautiful landscape. Both close to Aberdeen like Stonehaven and Lonehaven and further away, like Lockness and Isle of Skye. It is defiantly worth a visit if possible. It take some time to drive to both Lockness and Isle of Skye, but it was really worth the trip. It was first when I got outside Aberdeen, I really felt like I had been In Scotland. A thing that is very general in Scotland is that people are very nice and extremely polite.



Practical experiences

Accommodation

It was very easy to find accommodation. I just included it in my enrollment, and got an offer fast. I choose the cheapest student accommodation I could find, which in Aberdeen is not cheap at all. I payed 4,300kr a month for a prisonlike room, in a flat with 5 other guys. I was worried that I would end up living together with guys that were way younger than me, but the accommodation at Woolmanhill select people to live together based on age. I ended up with some very nice roomies, similar age than me. Woolmanhill is placed very close to the city center and there is people from all over the world. If I were to choose all over, I would still chose Woolmanhill again.

Financial

As mentioned before, accommodation is a big expense in the budget. Food can be very costly if, you don't go to the right supermarkets. I use to walk to Aldi, close to the beach, with some of my friends and buy groceries for a week. Aldi in Aberdeen is cheaper, have better goods and hold on, no depressed employee. If you are looking for a cheap place to go out and eat, go to Cosmo in Union Square. Buffet with all you can drink "none alcoholic" for around 90kr in the weekdays. Overall, I had a pretty good time, just by getting SU, ERASMUS and taking SU loan the months I was there. Unfortunately I am a smoker, and even more because a 20 pack cost 100kr. It actually affected my smoking habit so I cut down a lot, which wasn't that bad when I think of it.

Transportation

Since I has situated in the city center and Robert Gordon University is a bit away, I had to have a bus card. It cost 500kr per month. It took me about 45min to get from my door to Uni. I think it is worth it, because I can imaging, living in accommodation near the school might be very boring. It is possible to rent a Bike very cheap from the school, but there is many hills, no bike lanes and people in cars are not use to bike on the road.

Shopping

Shopping is actually significantly cheaper than in Denmark. I didn't do it a lot, because of my financial situation, so I can't comment so much on this subject. However, when my girlfriend visited me, she went renegade with shopping, which thankfully happened while I was attending school.

Going out

Same prices as going out in Denmark. Some things I like about the Scottish drinking culture, and some things I disliked. As in Denmark, people warm up before going out, but since all clubs close at 3 am, everybody goes out earlier. This Means at least for my sake, that I didn't get so drunk, and I actually had a day worth living the day after, due to less hangover. Clubs and pubs generally are very nice in Aberdeen, and you can get decent night out no matter which weekday you go out. One thing that bucked me a bit, was that it was illegal to drink outside. This meant that, the Danish culture of enjoying beers outside, in parks etc. didn't exist.

Conclusion

I am very happy that I chose to go to Aberdeen, since my main focus were the learning outcome. I learned a lot by going to RGU, much more than I honestly can imagine, I would learn in a semester in KEA. I got new perspectives on my subjects, and learned a lot by the very competent teachers they have at RGU.

I also had a blast, with many people I met there and became friends with. I was the only exchange student coming from Denmark, and guess that helped me socialize even more with people from many different countries. Overall, I am very glad I went to Aberdeen. If you are looking for livelier destinations, you might want to go elsewhere. However, if the main focus is the learning outcome, and to improve your English skills, Aberdeen is perfect.