

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

NTU

Exchange raport by Jan Szonert
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INTRODUCTION

My name is Jan I'm an international student. Since I realized that the exchange program is possible for each and every student I started small research about possible destinations. I always wanted to study in an English-speaking country to improve my language skills. Another reason was to experience a different perspective on the Architecture. In addition, I have to say that I had an opportunity to study Architectural course at NTU (not Architectural Technology) which was something new and refreshing for me. Making new friends also was the reason to go on an exchange.

BEFORE LEAVING

You have to remember

- The blue EU health insurance card
- Learning agreement (there was a little bit of hassle because courses are partially related to the one at KEA. But overall amount of ECTS points are matching with each other)
- Erasmus grant agreement
- Applications for other grants (unfortunately I did not apply for any)
- Travel insurance
- Accommodation (I used the NTU platform with adds from students, but it was quite difficult since I was starting the 2nd term. Luckily I found few offers from NTU students renting out their rooms in Halls)
- Telephone (I chose to go with my Danish subscription since the roaming is unpaid for up to 4 months)



Blenheim Halls my accomodation

THE FIRST WEEKS

I took a flight from Warsaw in Poland directly to East Midlands Airport which is about 20 min. away from Nottingham. When I arrived in the evening I was introduced to all Halls rules and new flatmates. Luckily I didn't have to buy essentials such as bedding, towels, plates, pans etc. because NTU accommodation provides move in the starter pack for about £20 (poor quality but very helpful to begin). I lived in Blenheim Halls which is only 15 min. away from the City Campus. I have to pay £130 per week which was a very good offer. I could rent this room for entire period of my exchange which is almost impossible in other places. Room was furnished but very packed, common kitchen (not very clean). The neighbourhood was quite nice, next to the small park and far enough from the busy and loud city centre.

Right on a second day I started attending classes. I came after the first project handin. They introduced me poorly to the aims of the 2nd semester and project. Thankfully my classmates were really friendly and helped me along the way. They showed me all facilities like SU student union, library and workshop. They also helped me to figure out all paperwork and student ID after my arrival. Next few days were enjoyed exploring the city.

EXPERIENCES AT NTU

Architecture course at NTU is different from the one we are used to at KEA. Projects are more individualy-based. I Was placed in the 2nd semester of the 2nd year.

I went there alone. I have started the semester in the February 2018 and finished by the beginning of Jun 2018. I studied 4 different subjects. The modules run daily (each day one subject) from Monday till Friday and consisted of a lecture following with a seminar. We had one day off each week (Thursday). Throughout the semester we worked on different projects. We had a few site visit on which we were monitoring progress on the site, close by the Uni.

THE CLASSES:

- **Technology and Environment in Architecture 2**
- **Integrated Design Studio**
- **Interdisc Design Studies**
- **Architecture in Context 2**
- **Masterclasses (sort of KEA elective)**

In **Technology and Environment in Architecture** classes, you will get a general understanding of construction design and the technologies behind it, the how to organize construction drawing and set up plans accordingly to the building regulations like fire plan and understanding the materials. We had a lecture and a seminar every week (Tuesday) where we got an assignment afterwards, which had to be hand in digitally.

In **Integrated Design Studio** classes, you are going to learn how to create and design a building with all critical thinking and decision-making processes. All project has to contain deep site analysis and have to refer to another existing project. It relates to the main semester assignment. We had this class every Friday followed by a seminar afterwards where you have a chance to talk to the teacher, ask questions face to face, and get everything explained.

In **Interdisc Design Studies** you are going to learn about the different techniques in hand sketching drawings, painting, modelling from wood cardboard or foam. Everything relates to the other subjects. We attended those classes with seminars every Wednesday.

In **Architecture, in Context 2** you are going to learn the history of architecture with many interesting examples. Lectures are prepared professionally and are thought in an academic style. Taghi is very demanding tutor responsible for this subject. But if you find art and architecture interesting, you will end up with a wide range of knowledge. We had this classes every Monday, and there was a time to ask question afterwards. The main assignment for this subject was to write a 30 pages essay on the self-picked related subject.

Masterclasses was a class which aim was to develop one of the subjects above. I have chosen architecture in a context which was based on reading many old books by Vitruvius and Palladio and analysing the concepts in order to create a mind map of good design. English Language philosophy was a tough nut to crack also for my native colleagues. But overall I'm happy with the result.

Arkwright building



City Campus





Arkwright Studio

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Nottingham is a great city to study. There are still over 60,000 students and always plenty to do. For example: visiting the Nottingham Galleries, Castle, exploring caves and going to Lace Market. NTU is a huge university and has departments all around the city. I had a chance to have classes in 4 different buildings. NTU has a great student social life. They organized many kinds of events, trips, societies, sports clubs and gym which I joined. The gym was around £12 a month and was very well equipped. In addition, you can join many sports classes like climbing (which was fantastic), basketball, martial art, Zumba, handball etc. These sessions are called Play For Fun. Everything is placed at the Student's Union (a hang out space for students, with cafés and venues for events and gym) in the middle of the City Campus. In the Newton campus, you can get a very nice lunch at a decent price about £6-£8 per dish.

I didn't have much time to explore much nightlife but since I'm not a big fan of the mainstream pop music I didn't enjoy most of the popular clubs (except Stealth). But I can only advice to explore some small hidden places like pubs which have a dance floor as well or you dance on the table seriously (Bierkieller).

CONCLUSION

Overall NTU is definitely worth visitting. It provides high level of education and fantastic facilities for an exchange program. But if you are looking for intense social life, you might be disappointed. In my opinion there is almost no time for that as NTU offers demanding courses. Especially if you go for the 2nd semester which contains 60% of the year programme.



Channel in Nottingham