

Student Experience Report SoSe23 Stavanger, Norway

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As everything in life, Norway had its good and bad side. The country has astonishing nature, it is clean and well-organized. People gave me the impression of being really polite and helpful. It was great that Norwegian people usually speak English, so we international students do not need to struggle to communicate in Norwegian. On the other hand, prices are too high and the options of goods in supermarkets are very limited compared to Germany. While being abroad, I really missed Germany and all the variety of vegan and vegetarian products at supermarkets. Personally, I follow a vegetarian diet and I struggled a little bit in Norway to keep up with my usual diet. I would say Norway is not vegan and vegetarian friendly.

The University of Stavanger has great facilities. My favorite part was the study rooms available for students and the fact that the library was open 24 hours. During exam period, I really appreciated to have the opportunity to stay longer in the university if I needed to finish something. Besides this, the university is very clean and with a very modern design. The classrooms are well equipped and with a lot of natural light. On the other hand, I feel like the quality of education was quite poor compared to the classes I took in Germany. We hardly had classes or contact with the head professor of the courses. Most professors were available via email to answer questions and doubts. However, some of them did not consistently answer our inquiries or worries. Sadly, I can say that I did not learn a lot in my field of studies in Norway. It was very interesting to live in another country and experience another culture, but the down side is that, academically speaking, I believe I could have learned a lot more somewhere else.

Would go to the University of Stavanger if I had the chance to do it again? The answer to this question is no, definitely, I would not. I loved the Erasmus experience and how helpful the administrative staff was during my stay abroad. However, as I said before, I am not satisfied with the quality of education of the University of Stavanger.

I viewed my stay abroad more as an opportunity to expand my horizons, practice English, and meet different people. I believe that I learned a lot at the personal level thanks to the Erasmus program, but I also think that I could have acquired these skills and knowledge in a different host university. I would love to repeat an Erasmus stay abroad, since I think regardless of where you go, you can have an amazing experience and gain a lot out of it.

I took four different modules in Norway, but I only had classes twice a week. Some weeks I had classes the whole week, but that only happened three weeks during the whole semester. The free time we had between classes I used it mostly to write my final papers and prepare presentations.

Freetime in February, Norwegian students usually have a free week to rest or travel. During that time, me and other three friends from my program decided to go on a trip to the city of Bergen. Bergen is a city in Norway known for its beautiful nature and fjords. We did a couple of hikes and enjoyed waterfalls and natural parks. We also tried some local food, although not many vegetarian options were available. I was able to enjoy the Norwegian pastries and chocolates which are very good.

Other memorable moment in Norway was when we saw northern lights in a park near to our dorm. It was great to just open the door, go out and see northern lights in the sky. Many Norwegian people told us that we were very lucky, because usually, it is very hard to see northern lights in the city of Stavanger. Most of the times people must go to other places more north like the city of Tromsø to be able to enjoy the aurora borealis.

The hardest part for me in Norway was the weather. During winter time we reached temperatures below zero and it was very windy sometimes. I also consider that it was a bit difficult to make Norwegian friends. I do not think I made any Norwegian friends. It can be very lonely at times for international students, but the good side

is that one can find many international students in Stavanger, and making friends with the internationals is very easy.