

# Student Experience Report

## University of Stavanger

I did my Erasmus+ exchange program at the University of Stavanger in Norway. Actually, it was not an option. It was a mandatory semester of my Master course (European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations). The process of preparation for this exchange started early on in the first semester as there were different documents, transcripts and signatures from specific offices to be gathered and brought together in the application. After that, there was the process to find an accommodation to stay in Stavanger. This process was smooth for me because one of my friends found an apartment in October so I got this sorted out early.

I flew to Stavanger from Hamburg and I did a stopover in Oslo. I arrived in Stavanger in the middle of January and I stayed there until June. When I arrived at the airport, I took the “Flybussen” bus and it left me just around the corner of my house, since I lived in the city center of Stavanger. The metropolitan area of Stavanger is the 3rd biggest in Norway. However, due to the size of the population of the country, Stavanger is not a big city. Its metropolitan area has around 320.000 thousand inhabitants. Stavanger is located in the south of Norway, so the weather is not so cold in the winter and it rarely snows. The summer, however, is not very warm either.



Norwegians are very into nature and sports, so most of the activities they do in their leisure time are in the nature. They love hiking and I also like it, so I could enjoy and go for many hikes around Stavanger. I hiked to Preikestolen and Kjerag, which are two of the most famous hikes in Norway, but also hiked to other places that are not so well known. Most of the hikes are marked with the red letter “t” during the path and one should only follow them to get in the end. They are everywhere on the rocks and trees along the way.



Due to the high cost of living in Norway, going out to bars, clubs or even restaurants is not affordable for students. It is only affordable for those people who are working in Norway. In Norway, there is also a high tax on alcohol, so the consume of it was always very planned in advance for special occasions. For this reason, we gathered together a lot and organized many picnic's, workshops and dinners among the students. It was an opportunity to have fun without spending too much money.

Concerning the academic part, throughout the semester, the classes overall went well. We had many different professors coming in to give us seminars and workshops on a variety of topics within the field of Migration and Intercultural Relations Studies. I had one module with two Norwegian teachers and three modules with Slovenian teachers. However, due to coronavirus the last two modules had to be taught via zoom. The evaluation system was explained to us at the beginning of each course. Our final exams consisted in research papers on a topic we were free to choose as long as it was linked to the topic of that particular course.

The University of Stavanger has a very good library. It is open 24 hours, every day, so it is a great opportunity to study there. It is very cozy and there is even a massage chair. In the University's campus there is also a sports center. Norwegians are very into sports, so it was super nice and modern. Besides the gym, there was also a volley court, a squash room, a climbing wall, sauna... There was also the possibility to do yoga and many other classes, such as body pump, TRX, spinning, etc.



Finally, at the end of my stay in Norway I had the opportunity to do a cabin trip, which is traditional of Norwegian culture. Me and some friends hiked to a cabin in the middle of nowhere with no electricity and no internet. There was a lake in front of it and the connection with the nature was intense. I also travelled to Bergen and Oslo, the two biggest cities of the country, and I loved it. Bergen is surrounded by mountains and its old area in front of the harbor with colorful houses is so beautiful. In Oslo the contrast of modern architecture with the historic and old buildings is also amazing.

In conclusion, my experience in Norway was great and I highly recommend it to everyone, even though the cost of living is high. My advice for people who are considering coming to Norway is that they should organize their budget in advance or they will have to plan ahead when buying many things, such as alcoholic drinks and meat, which are expensive, and also going out to restaurants, bars and clubs. I would say that Norway can be an enjoyable country for those who like the cold weather, hiking and spending time in the nature!