

Student experience

Host University: University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

➤ Preparation (planning, organisation, and application to the host institution)

The exchange semester to the University of Stavanger (UIS) in Norway is mandatory for students of the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR). We received the first E-mail from UIS in mid-October 2020 and we registered to the UIS at the end of October. Except for the final decision of modules in UIS, all the processes were finished before the beginning of the semester. The EMMIR coordinator of UIS was supportive. She is very well-organized and sends all the information in advance so that we have enough time to prepare the documents.

➤ Travel and arrival

During the Christmas vacation, I went back to Taiwan for vacation. It took me almost a whole day from Taiwan to Stavanger, and I arrived two days before the module started. It is very easy from Sola airport to the city center; when you walked out the airport, you can find the shuttle bus to the city center. It took me 160 NOK for a single ticket (at that time, I did not know the student will have a discount for the ticket). You can buy the ticket with the driver. From the airport to the city center is around 30 mins, and you can take a rest or enjoy the free Wi-Fi on the shuttle bus. For the intra-city bus, you can buy the ticket via the APP called "Billett" or there is a vending machine near the main bus stop (Stavanger h.pl-10).

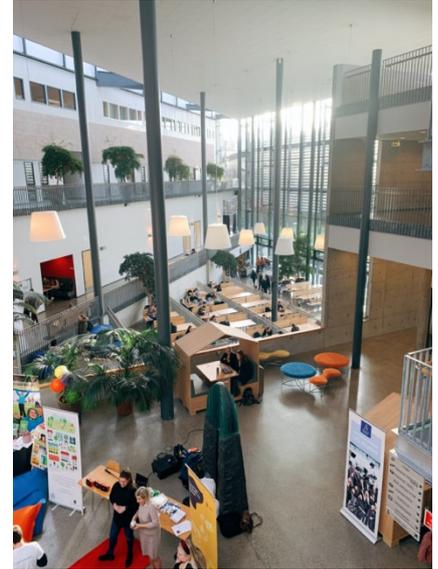
➤ Accommodation

UIS provides accommodation for international students to apply. At the end of October 2019, UIS sent the first e-mail containing the detail of accommodation and the link for the application. However, there are only a few chances to live in the city center, many of the accommodation situated around the University or Sola. Considering the location of student accommodation is not so convenient, I also looked for the apartment by myself. You can search for Hybel or Finn for the accommodation. There are more options on Finn, but Hybel is also worth to take a look. I found my apartment Hybel. I rent a fully furnished apartment with three bedrooms, which costs us 13000 NOK

(around 1300 euros) per month, all included except for the electricity. Although this apartment is not close to the city center (25 mins by walk), the environment is really good.

- Studying at the host university (courses, academic performance/credits, support, credit transfer)

The courses at UIS are really interesting. This semester, I have more freedom to choose the courses according to my interest. It is a pity that after March, all the courses were held online due to the pandemic. But the contents were really good. Besides, all the professors are always willing to answer our questions and open to discussion during the class. Although the working loading is a little bit heavier, this semester really helps me to discover my research interest.



- Everyday life and leisure time

As a student in Norway, you can enjoy many discounts. For instance, public transportation or Starbuck. You can find the information from the website of UIS for student discount: <https://student.uis.no/category.php?categoryID=23317>.

I really recommend the sports center in UIS. As an exchange student, you can sign up for Erasmus student membership, which costs 695 NOK from January to April or from August to November. Once signing up as a member, you can go to the gym whenever you want. You can take the course or use the facility in the gym. Before the pandemic, I went to the gym for almost 4-5 days per week, I really enjoyed the courses there.



Besides the sports center of UIS, I also enjoyed hiking or just simply took a walk around the neighborhood. The landscape in Norway is amazing. Stavanger is really close to the famous Preikestolen (The Pulpit

Rock). It is easy to reach by public transportation, and the hiking route is not too challenge for the beginner.

- General experience, credit transfer, conclusion (tips for other students, DOs and DONTs)

In general, I have had a good time in UIS and Stavanger. Life pace here is relatively slow than my home country. This semester I have more time to reflect on my personal thinking instead of devoting all my time to school. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, I have spent most of my time staying at home and keeping social distance with other people. Maybe I could not provide many useful suggestions as I somehow distance myself from society this semester and have few chances to have further contact with locals during the pandemic period. From my point of view, I would encourage other students to take this chance to explore this country or region more. Before the explosion of COVID-19, I traveled to Iceland for almost a week. For me, this is an extraordinary experience. I would say this experience is not only a trip but also a life lesson for me. This trip inspires me to learn how to respect nature and how to trust people.

