

EXPERIENCE REPORT FOR THE EXCHANGE SEMESTER/ ERFAHRUNGSBERICHT ZUM AUSLANDSSTUDIUM

Martin Hamre, Humboldt-University, exchange to King's College London

1. When, where and for how long have you been an Erasmus student?

I have been an Erasmus student at the King's College London (KCL), from September to December 2016.

2. LAND UND LANDESTYPISCHES/The country and its characteristics

London is an immense big city, that offers an incredible amount of possibilities. The danger is that it is easy to get distracted from the studies because of the various opportunities that the city offers. The cultural diversity is quite outstanding, especially in the borrows outside of the inner city. Besides all the positive sides, one must mention that London is a very expensive city, and the support through the Erasmus money is by far not enough to enjoy the daily life there.

3. FACHLICHE BETREUUNG/ Academic advising

In my master program "European History", I was fully integrated in the one year lasting master program "Modern History", being the only exchange student of the year together with another student from the HU. I never felt treated like an exchange student, separated from the others. Instead, I was treated like all the other students. I got my own tutor who helped me both with questions concerning my exchange and the content of the different classes. The learning agreement was quite easy to manage, because every seminar provides 10 ECTS points, which means that I only had to choose three seminars in order to get enough points.

4. SPRACHKOMPETENZ/Language Proficiency

All the classes were given in English, so sufficient English skills are expected in order to study at the KCL. Both oral and written skills are important to participate in the discussions in the classes and in order to write the final term papers and essays.

I improved my English language massively, which was not only a product of the classes, but also the many British friends that I got during my time at the KCL.

5. WEITEREMPFEHLUNG/Recommendation

I can recommend to study at the history institute of the KCL, when someone is interested in reading a lot and less interested in time of attendance at the university. One must read much more in comparison to the history classes in German, but that does not help to make the discussions in the classes better according to my own experience, because many students don't participate enough in the classes.

A huge advantage of the KCL is that less people are in one class than in Germany and the institute in general is smaller, which means that it is less confusing and very manageable. Therefore, it is very easy to get to know both your fellow students and the teachers and professors. The atmosphere is very friendly and familiar.

6. VERPFLEGUNG AN DER HOCHSCHULE/Food at the University

There are several smaller cafeterias at the university, offering ordinary food. The price is higher than in Germany, a meal costs between 3,5 and 4,5 pounds. Still, the food is quite affordable in comparison to bars and restaurants. A coffee costs between 1,6 and 2 pounds. I can recommend the student bars at the university, were the beer and the food is very cheap, in comparison to the rest of the city.

7. ÖFFENTLICHE VERKEHRSMITTEL/ Public transport

London is, as I mentioned before, a very big city, so one is dependent on public transport to get from one point to another, even though one owns a bike. The Oyster student card costs as a one-time payment 20 pounds, and then 20 pounds each month. Alternatively, one can top-up the card on his own, every time one uses the public transport.

A bike might be a good solution, but one has to get used to the left traffic. There are some good bicycle highways, but the rest of the city is not so bicycle friendly.

8. WOHNEN/Living

It is VERY expensive to live in London. Most students pay around 150 and 200 pounds per week for a rather small room. I was lucky and could live for only 450 pounds per month in the house of an acquaintance, which is considered very cheap.

I would recommend looking for a room before coming to London.

9. KULTUR UND FREIZEIT/ Culture and Leisure time

Everyone knows London, unnecessary to mention the highlights London Tower, Big Ben and Buckingham Palace. Fantastic is the fact that many museums are free, such as the British Museum, Museum of London, Tate Modern, Imperial War Museum etc. Many parks, concerts, theatres and bars make London quite unique, there are million possibilities to spend the leisure time. There is also a very agile club scene and bar culture.

10. AUSLANDSFINANZIERUNG/ Financial situation

I spent approximately 1200 Euro every month, but it is reasonable to plan with a larger amount, because London is very expensive, especially the rent and the night life.

I agree with the publication.

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