



EXCHANGE REPORT

Aalto-yliopisto, Suomi
Kauppakorkeakoulu

Aalto University, Finland
School of Business

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IS & OM, Year 4
Fall 2017



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MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG



Syyskuu September

It is my first month in Finland. For the whole month, I was adapting to the life style here. I explored the places in Helsinki; I explored the food choices; I learnt how to cook. Everything I did this month is to learn how to be a Finn studying in Aalto University.

For the second month, I tried to explore Finland outside of Helsinki. I travelled to Turku, the old Finnish captain before Helsinki, with the other exchange students. I also went to Berlin and Riga, Latvia. This was also the month of my first period examination.

Lokakuu October



The second period started in this month. There were 3 brand new courses for this period. Also, I continued to explore Europe and Finland: I went to Porvoo and Saint Petersburg, Russia with the other exchange students, and ended this month with a KY trip to Lapland, home of Santa Claus.



Marraskuu November

It was my last month in Finland, and also time for examination again. However, this was also the joyful month, as both the 100th Anniversary of Finnish Independent and Christmas are in this month! We went to the square with the other Finns and celebrated together!

Joulukuu December



GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

Visa Procedures

Aalto University will not provide any assistance in obtaining the residence permit, so you need to do it on your own. There are two steps to apply for a Residence Permit:

1. **Online Application**

You need to file your application on <https://enterfinland.fi/eServices> first. The procedures are simple, but you need to have your acceptance letter from Aalto University and your health insurance proof from SFAO. You also need to pay €300 for the permit online. When completing the application, it will tell you that you need to visit the consulate in person to proceed.

2. **Visit Finnish Consulate**

An appointment is needed for the visit. You need to call 2525 5385 between 2 - 3pm everyday to book your time slot. Generally the time slot need to be booked 1 to 2 weeks in advance.

Remember to bring the documents and a passport size photo. You will be asked to fill in some paperworks and leave your fingerprints. The consulate will notify you to pick up your card in about 2 weeks time after your visit.

Orientation Activities

There were 3 days of School Orientation on 6th - 8th September. Day 1 was organised by the School of Business, which took place at the Töölö campus. Staff of the Student Exchange Services briefed us about the background of the School of Business, how to use the academic tools, as well as the business students' association KY. In the afternoon, the tutors brought us for a tour around the campus and helped us to apply for Travel Card with student discounts.

Day 2 was organised by Aalto University and was took place at the Otaniemi main campus. Staff from other offices came and briefed information about the IT services, library services, students' health care services and the interdisciplinary courses that are available to students. There was a service fair afterwards that we can join and ask about different facilities and opportunities around the campus.

On Day 3, there is a party called "Aalto Day One". It is like the O-Week period in HKUST, where students societies were having booths in the campus.

International Service & Activities

KY has a sub-division called KY-Sub who are responsible for taking care of the exchange students. Here are the events they organised in the Fall Semester that is opened for us and the price:

Welcoming Evening	9.9.2017	Free
International Sitsit Party	16.9.2017	€15
Mursulaiva - Ship Happens party cruise	23.9.2017	€15
Exchange cottage trip	5.10.2017	€25
Trip to Saint Petersburg	8.11-13.11.2017	€250
Trip to Lapland	29.11-4.12.2017	€220
Farewell Party	9.12.2017	Free

They are good opportunities to meet both other exchange students and local student tutors, and also know more about the Finnish Culture.

Accommodations

Finding accommodations is tricky. Aalto University **DOES NOT** provide any students dormitory, and the supply for student accommodations is scarce. There are two organisations providing student housing in Helsinki: HOAS and AYY.

When you receive your acceptance note from Aalto University sometime in May, go to HOAS and AYY website **IMMEDIATELY** and start filling your applications. If you do not do so, you may end up with no accommodations at all. There are a lot of choices for the exact building, some of them are pretty far away so please check carefully where the building locates at. Remember to choose the one that is furnished so that you need not to buy any furniture for your stay. It took me more than a month between submitting an application and receiving the tenancy offer.

My accommodations is a single studio room located at 29A Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu in Kamppi. It is 5 minutes walk from the City centre and 2 minutes from the Töölö campus, so it is the dormitory nearest to the city centre and also the most expensive one. I needed to pay €500 as initial deposit and €570 per month for rent. The tenancy was covered from 1.9.2017 to 31.12.2017.

Courses Registration

Course Registration was done on WebOodi. The detailed course information was published on 1st August and registration for 1st period started on 14th August. However, the course list was available on INTO by early June, so you can check out which course you want to take before the registration period. There will be several examinations for one course, but the system will help you to automatically enrol in the first examination available.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

A semester in Aalto University is separated into 2 periods: September to October and November to December. In each period, the average workload is 18 ECTS or 3 courses, which is equivalent to 9 credits in HKUST. Most courses consist of only lectures, or lectures with tutorials. A few courses are book courses, in which no lecture will be provided and you need to read a few assigned books by your own.

Assessments are often divided into courseworks and examination. For my Economics and IS courses, I was asked to complete a group presentation or a few group papers. For my statistics and OM courses, I was given individual excel homework every week. The coursework workload depends greatly on the course, but generally it is somewhere similar to HKUST. There will be several examinations offered throughout the year, and students can freely choose which examination they want to take. You will be automatically assigned to the first examination available, as the other will be after the semester ends.

Grading is from 1 - 5 which translate to E - A. You can only pass with 50% or above obtained in the examination. Failed courses will not appear on your transcript.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

The indoor sport facilities are provided by UniSports for all the universities in Helsinki area. There are gym rooms located at both Töölö and Otaniemi campuses, as well as off-campus sites all around the city. A subscription fee is needed for the usage of UniSports facilities. Sport classes are also available in UniSports centres.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

Finland is the only Nordic country that uses Euro. ATMs in Finland **DO NOT** support UnionPay, so your Hong Kong ATM card basically have no use here.

Finland is a semi-cashless country. You can pay most of the things with your debit or credit card. In fact, most of the Finns use contactless debit card to pay for their lunches. You can still pay with cash, but bear in mind that there may not be enough change for you if you pay with a large bank note.

I didn't open a bank account or withdraw any money from the ATM. I brought €3,000 cash with me and that is enough to cover my expense till the end of my exchange journey. Other exchange students from Hong Kong opened a local bank account, but the procedure was a bit troublesome for them, as not many banks are willing to open bank account for exchange students.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

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Day 2 was organised by Aalto University and was took place at the Otaniemi main campus. Staff from other offices came and briefed information about the IT services, library services, students' health care services and the interdisciplinary courses that are available to students. There was a service fair afterwards that we can join and ask about different facilities and opportunities around the campus.

On Day 3, there is a party called "Aalto Day One". It is like the O-Week period in HKUST, where students societies were having booths in the campus. It was a good chance to know more about the student society culture of Aalto.

Health & Safety

Finland was ranked the safest country in the world by the World Economic Forum in 2017. Generally it is safe to live and walk on street, even at night. However, as Finland is also one of the least densely populated European countries, some of the street may be dark and quiet at night, where you should still pay attention to your safety when walking by.

One precaution to be made is that, it maybe super slippery when there is ice on the ground. Therefore, remember to wear shoes with higher grips and walk slowly so that you will not fall down.

Climate

Helsinki's temperature falls from 15 degree Celsius to around -5 degree Celsius from September to December. The Baltic Sea will not be frozen until January, so the climate is quite warm before New Year. It is very windy and rainy during October and November. Knit hat and umbrella are recommended to keep you warm and dry in those months. Snowing begins in November, and the ground is often icy during the last two months of the year. Attention should be paid to walk slowly under those weather situations. The daylight time gradually reduces in the second half of the year. Sun rises at 8:30am and sets at 3:30pm in December.

Northern parts of Finland, such as Lapland, is even colder during winter. It can goes as low as -25 degree Celsius during winter.

Communication

SIM cards were provided by both HOAS and Aalto University. I chose the Telia card from HOAS, while the university provides you the DNA card. The Finnish data plan is rather cheap in the European Union. It costs €0.01 per MB and you cannot be charged for more than €0.99 per day. Prepaid SIM can be topped up in any convenient store.

One thing to be noticed is that Telia does not provide roaming services, while DNA provides. You can use roaming data plan in other EU countries, but surcharged will be charged to compensate the lower data plan price in Finland.

Food

Dining out is expensive in Finland. It costs on average €15-20 for a regular dinner. Lunch is provided in student discounted price of €2.60 in canteens in campus or UniCafe around the city, but they only operates during weekdays and Saturday. It is very common for both local and exchange students to cook at home for breakfast and dinner. You can find all western cuisine ingredients in supermarkets nearby, and also Chinese ingredients in the Asian markets located at Hakaniemi.

Transportation

Public transportation is very convenient in Helsinki. There are tram and metro connecting Espoo and Helsinki area, while VR train and buses covering the greater Helsinki area. The Aalto University metro station was opened last November, so it is now more convenient to go to school by metro.

Fares are determined by region. Single-trip or seasonal ticket can be bought for your Travel Card. For single-trip, you can ride on any bus, tram, metro or train provided by HSL within the hour after you tapped the card. For seasonal ticket, you can ride indefinitely within the validity period. Detailed fares can be found here: https://www.hsl.fi/sites/default/files/uploads/lippujen_hinnat_en_2018_korajttu.pdf.

Our school is located in Espoo, which is another region outside of Central Helsinki. Therefore, you may want to consider to buy seasonal ticket to save your expenses.

ITEMS TO BRING

Done	Items
	Heat Tech T-shirts
	Warm Jackets
	Scarfs
	Groves
	Knit Hat
	Warm Trousers
	Winter Boots
	Bed Sheets
	Utensil
	Notebook
	Camera
	Charger & Adapter
	Wifi Router
	Hand Cream
	Lipbalm
	Medicine
	Rice Cooker
	Water Boiler
	Others:

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

Course Catalog 2017 - 2018

<https://into.aalto.fi/display/enmasterbiz/Course+catalog+2017-2018>

Incoming Exchange Students Into Portal

<https://into.aalto.fi/display/enmasterbiz/Incoming+exchange+students>

HSL (Helsinki Regional Transport Authority)

<https://www.hsl.fi/en>

Reittiopas Journey Planner

<http://www.reittiopas.fi/en>