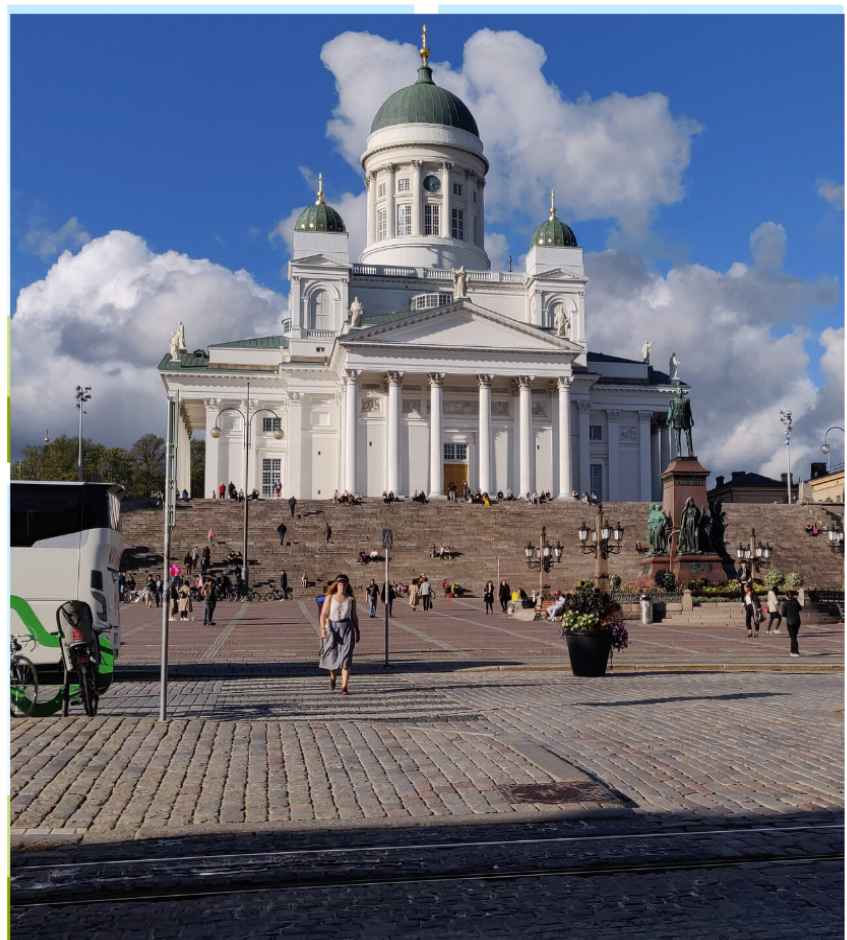
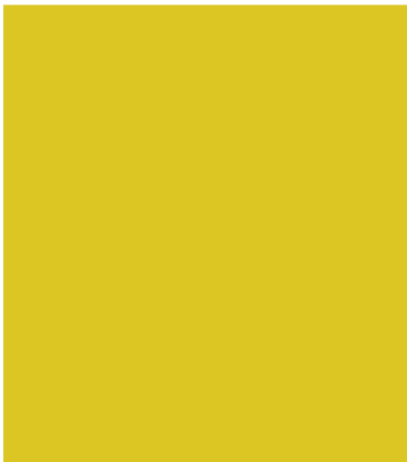
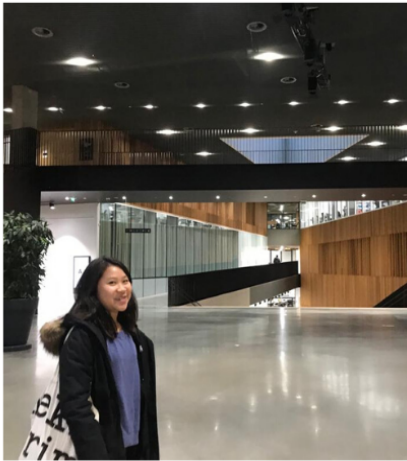


# AALTO UNIVERSITY



Aalto University  
School of Business

BEATRICE WEI

OM & MARK, Y4

FALL 2019



# Monthly Activity Log

## September

The start of September is where the orientation activities began. I attend the Aalto party with other UST exchange students and introduced myself to some people in my tutor group. I played games at booths and learnt about the different clubs and societies. With my tutor group I joined Mursujaiset (image on the left)- an event that lasts for 24 hours, the purpose is to officially inaugurate the freshmen (referred to as 'Mursu') The day was filled with "interesting" performances, team bonding games and other traditions. Not even sure how to explain the day. I stayed for the first 15 hours and all I can say is that it was a memorable Aalto exchange experience. Even if you can't stay for the full 24 hours, make sure you're there for the first 12 hours! I also participated in a 5km run, as someone who is not sporty the run was surprisingly quite fun, and the route was scenic. During the first period (September to Mid-October) I took 3 courses that had quite a heavy workload. The weather is great in September so be sure to go outside and soak up the sun!



Sibelius Monument – Mursujaiset



5km Run



Aalto Party

## October

After finishing classes from period 1, I had 3 exams that took up the full exam week. During the study break, I went to Oodi Helsinki Library to study, the library is very homey and has amazing interior designs. On the weekend I went with other exchange students to Nuukio National Park. The national park is closest to the city and is most convenient to get there. The hiking trail we took was not challenging and we spent quite some time playing at the nature playground. I also bought an annual museum pass, so I was able to visit a wide range of museums for free. After exams, I spent 4 days in Stockholm with an exchange buddy.







Nuukio National Park Hike



Oodi Helsinki Library



Leppavaara Museum

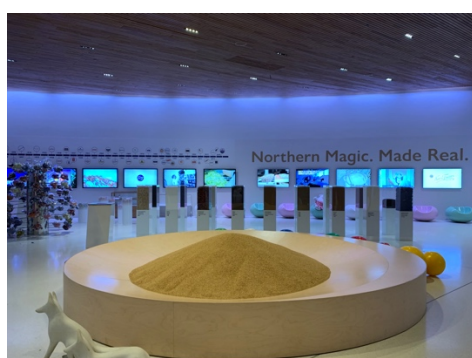
## November

This period I took 2 classes that had quite huge group projects and reports, as a whole my group



became really good friends and worked well together. For my Doing Business in Russia class, we had a Finnish company come in with issues and in groups, we came up with recommendations, it was like a mini-case competition. If you haven't decided on courses yet, I recommend joining small classes with group projects, it's a great starting point to get to know other students from Aalto. At the start of the month, I joined an ESN activity and went to visit the Fazer Factory. The factory tour highlight was the chocolate tasting! In November I only had 2 days of classes, so I

travelled to Copenhagen (Denmark) and Oslo (Norway) for a short holiday. If you are travelling around be sure to check if the places you're going to have Christmas markets open.



Fazer Factory



Oslo Christmas Market



Copenhagen Trip



## December

My classes ended in early December, but I continued to have deadlines of essays until mid-December. As Christmas was quickly approaching me and other exchange students went the Helsinki Christmas market. At the market there were many stalls and musical performances, it got us in a Christmassy mood! Before leaving Helsinki, I said goodbye to friends and then spent the rest of the months travelling. One of the must-do trips in Finland is going to Rovaniemi in



North Finland. There we went sleighing, husky and reindeer riding, snowmobiling, Northern light gazing and even visited the Santa Claus Village. Did you know Santa comes from Finland and that Santa Claus' post office has received thousands of letters from 199 every year? Before ending my exchange semester and leaving Europe, I went to Rovaniemi (Finland), Tallinn (Estonia), Vaduz (Liechtenstein), Feldkirch (Austria), London (UK), Zurich and Interlaken (Switzerland).



Lapland Reindeer Riding



Helsinki Christmas Market



Santa Claus Village

## Part II – General Exchange Information

### Visa Procedures

As you are going to be in Finland for more than 3 months to complete your exchange semester. It is required that you apply for a Residence Permit. Aalto University will not provide any assistance, so I recommend applying for a visa when you have the needed documents. After completing the application, make an appointment to visit the Finnish embassy to prove your identity. It takes 90 days on average from visiting the service point to process a residence permit application for studies.

When you arrive in Finland, visit the Local Register Office as soon as possible. There you can fill in a form and provide various documents. After you have been granted your residence permit and your personal id code (I got my personal id code during that same period of time) make sure to read the attached document.

Be aware of the following documents:

- Certificate of health insurance: Your insurance must cover medical expenses up to EUR 120,000 and cover your full stay in Finland
- Bank statement: To show that you are able to support yourself financially during the entire period of study and for your return flight. The currency used to prove doesn't have to be in euros.
- Passport photo: It must follow passport photo guidelines that can be found

[https://www.poliisi.fi/passport/passport\\_photo\\_instructions](https://www.poliisi.fi/passport/passport_photo_instructions) Photo machines don't tend to have the requirements so it would be easier to take it at a fotomax.

### Orientation Activities

**Day 1: Optional: Aalto Day One** (at Otaniemi Campus a.k.a Aalto University metro station stop). The Aalto party can be compared to UST promotion period. There will be a lot of stands, games and food on the. It is the official opening day of the academic year in Aalto. Starting from 4 pm there will be the traditional Aalto Party in Alvari Square. It is optional and if you are attending its best to go with your tutors (like your exchange buddy). You will need to register for the event. If your tutor doesn't organise anything be sure to ask them or go with your UST fellow exchange buddies. The event is a

great place to learn about different clubs and to earn badges (great for keepsakes and it's a great conversation starter with your tutors and local students)

**Day 2: Mandatory Program: Student life information and tutor group activity** In the morning, you will be briefed with information about business school services and other information regarding student life. This is considered a mandatory aspect of the whole orientation. In the afternoon, you will be with your tutor group. Tutors will show you around campus, take you to get your HSL travel card and in their guidance bring you to get your AYY membership (you'll need to pay for it, but it's not mandatory) Here are some of the benefits of joining, for the fall semester it is 58 Euros and if you do get it the digital student card on the frank phone app is enough. I don't recommend spending around 20 Euros to have a plastic student card. <https://aay.fi/en/students/membership-and-fees/membership-benefits/>

**Day 3: Mandatory Program: Whole school orientation** It introduces you to university-level services. It introduces you to the University level services. An orientation for all students in the university and not just the Business School (unlike Day 2). The day will also have a service fair where you can talk to staff for more information. Topics of the talk include intercultural communication, Aalto IT services, library and information services, student healthcare services, unisport, student union, starting point of wellbeing.

**Day 4: Optional: Wellbeing breakfast and fair**

**Day 5: Optional: KY Welcoming Event** (at Kamppi, KY Building) The welcoming event is an opportunity to order student overalls and to get information regarding the different trips that they will be organising for business school exchange students.

## International Services & Activities

Library and information services: Library services are provided by Aalto Learning Centre. Tutors will show you the place during a campus tour. You can order a library card online.

KY Events: Welcoming Event, International Sitsit, Tallinn Party Cruise, Cottage trip, Trip to Saint Petersburg, Trip to Lapland and Farewell Party. It tends to have a lot of partying, but it's a great opportunity to meet people. The activities are a great way to have fun without doing much planning.

## Accommodations

Accommodations are not handled by the university and are done by two providers: HOAS and AYY. There are no accommodations directly on campus.

HOAS Student Housing: HOAS is the main provider of student housing in the Helsinki Regions. Rooms are located in the cities of Helsinki and Espoo and are within good public transportation connection. Monthly rent is approx. 400 Euro/month including furniture, electricity, water and other additional free services like internet connection. Tenancy agreements are usually between September to December. The housing application was available on the 1st of April for me, so make sure you apply early as it is very competitive. As wintertime can get quite chilly, I recommend taking a look at your transportation route to university. On the HOAS website you will be able to see what sort of properties are available, reviews and the housing application.



During my exchange time, I lived in Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 29, a studio apartment with a kitchenette. It is a pricier property with limited availability. The place is right at the centre of Helsinki with a short walk to the Kamppi shopping centre and metro station. The Kamppi shopping centre is complete with food courts and supermarkets. It also has a sauna and laundry room that can be used via its reservation system. The place was extremely nice and comfortable. From the city centre to university it only takes around 30 mins to get to Aalto. The image on the left is my room when I just moved in. I manage to get a free dining table from the building's

Facebook group. If you need any furniture or are trying to give away anything before you leave, you can refer to the building's Facebook group.

YYY: YYY is more affordable housing for students studying in Aalto and who are members of YYY. The rent level starts at 200 Euros. However, all apartments are unfurnished, and the number of available apartments is significantly lower than HOAS. This option was not as popular with exchange students.

## Course Registration

Registration Process: During fall semester it is Period 1 and 2. The course registration for Period 1 took place on August 12th. Registration remained open for 3 to 5 weeks, depending on the course. The exact times for courses can be found when you search WebOodi (one of the electronic tools of Aalto). The course registration for Period 2 began September 30th. The dates will vary, but don't worry you will receive an email about dates and instructions on how to register. When registering for classes be sure to check the dates and period because the system does allow you to apply for courses that overlap each other. Most courses have their own homepage in MyCourses. There you can access all the course information and materials. When applying for credit transfer you can find the full syllabus there too.

### Electronic tools in Aalto

WebOodi	MyCourses	Into
oodi.aalto.fi	mycourses.aalto.fi	into.aalto.fi
Study management website	Course Information Portal	University and Studies Information portal
Course and Exam registrations	Course News and Results	News from University and Schools
Official Study Register	Course materials and online exercises	
Personal Information	Virtual Learning Space	
		8.8.2019 14

A useful source for finding course reviews is <https://ky.fi/voo/english/>. Not all of them are in English but it will give you a rough idea about what to expect.

## Teaching and Assessment Methods

Make sure to see the syllabus to understand how marking works. All courses were marked using absolute grading. I mainly took Master courses with quite a few readings that need to be done to

participate in class discussion or to write reports/ reflection papers. Generally, courses that had no exam had a heavier workload with regular reflection papers/ reports and a large final group project.

## **Sports & Recreation Facilities**

If you would like to a gym membership and sports classes, you can join Uniports membership which requires a membership fee.

## **Finance & Banking**

When going to Finland I brought 3000 Euros and my Hong Kong credit card (Mastercard). After getting there I went to a Nordea Bank branch to set up an account. The bank account takes time to process, it will require the personal identification on your permanent residence card and a working Finnish phone number. After setting up the bank account, I connected it to Apple Pay and virtually didn't need to carry any cash. When leaving be sure to close the account, you can do that via phone. If you are planning on travelling around Europe, the exchange rate through Nordea will be much better than exchanging cash to different currencies.

## **Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities**

As well as orientation activities, Facebook events are where student clubs will post activities. I joined activities from the Aalto Ventures Program, ESN, KY and other university-wide events. Be sure to join Mursujaiset, it's a traditional event that takes place from Day 1 6 am to Day 2 6 am. It's the best place to get to know other students and experience true Finnish student life. I stayed for the first 15 hours and all I can say is that it was a memorable life experience. Even if you can't stay for the full 24 hours, make sure you're there for the first 12 hours!

## **Health and Safety**

As a whole, Finland is just as safe as in Hong Kong. Scandinavian people are known to have a high level of trust for one another. If you've lost something, don't worry too much it's probably in a lost and found. Although, be aware of possible drunk people on the street.

## **Food**

These are a few of the restaurants and cafes I enjoyed: Fazer café, Shelter, Restaurant Savotta, Ravintola Kuu, Ravintola Muru and Regatta. Eating out is rather expensive, be expected to cook quite a few meals. For cheaper groceries, LIDL would be the first place to check out and if you're looking for a wide assortment K-market is the best. Inevitably at one point, you're going to miss Asian food, Hankaniemi is where all Asian markets are clustered at. Did you know Finnish people consume more coffee per capita than any nation in the world? So be sure to experience typical Finnish café culture, I highly recommend Fazer café and Regatta! If you're on campus, meals are extremely affordable in comparison to outside food! A-bloc is one of the most convenient places to go grab lunch: they have the 2.6 Euro regular and ≈4 Euro vegan lunch.

## **Transportation**

Be sure to download the HSL app onto your phone. Helsinki is divided into 4 zones (A, B, C, D), depending on which zone you are travelling to/in the price will vary. The minimum price for transport is 2.8 Euros which is a single trip between and in A and B zone. During orientation, you will go to get your HSL travel card when at the service counter you can activate the seasonal pass. If you have a lot of days where you need to go to university for classes, getting a seasonal pass is more worth it. In my cases, I had to go to university 4 times a week, so I bought a seasonal pass from the start of the

semester to the last day. If you don't get a seasonal pass you can also purchase tickets on the HSL app.

## Climate

During September the weather is quite warm, and jumpers are just right. In the next few months, it will continue to get much colder. Layer up as indoors can get quite warm; I tend to wear my heat-tech and wool jumper indoors. Make sure you have a thick jacket that can withstand under 0c, especially if you are planning on going anywhere in the Laplands.

## Communication

In Finland, the official language is Finnish and Swedish. Despite English not being an official language, proficiency is extremely high, so there are limited language barriers.

## Cautionary measures

In case of any emergency, being in a foreign country it is best to know where your embassy is and the emergency number. In Finland, the emergency number is 112.

## Other: Helsinki List

These are some of the tourist attractions that I visited in Helsinki. If you're not sure what to do, here are a few ideas to get you started:

Allas Sea Pool	Kamppi Chapel	Suomenlinna
Kauppatori Market Square	Nuoksio National Park	Helsinki Design District
Sibelius Monument	Temppeliaukion Church	Helsinki Cathedral/ Senate Square
Design Museum Helsinki	Esplanadi	Amos Rex
Oodi Helsinki Library	Nuoksio National Park	Kiasma Museum – Contemporary art

## Items to Bring

Winter Jacket	Router and cables	Extension board
Winter Boots	Medicine	Adaptors
Rainboots	Travel backpack	Notebook and Stationery
Scarf	Utensils	Chargers
Heat-tech	Lunchbox	Travel toiletry set
Jumper	Pants	Credit Card
Few short sleeves	Ski Pants	Emergency Cash
Swimsuit	Towel	Toiletries

## Useful Links:

**Visa Application:** <https://enterfinland.fi/eServices>

**Course List:** <https://into.aalto.fi/display/enuudet/School+of+Business> The course list for the academic year was released in late May to early June.

**Information on Housing:** <https://into.aalto.fi/display/enuudet/Housing+for+exchange+students>

**Aalto Income Exchange Student information:**

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

**Course Review Page:** <https://ky.fi/voo/english/>