

Ka Man LI
Spring Term 2022-2023

Kozminski University
Warsaw, Poland

February

I arrived in Warsaw on 10th of February and the orientation week started on 14th. Activities such as tours to downtown, old town and campus, bowling, karaoke and parties were organized by the Kozminski International Society (KIS). My courses would be mainly start in March, so I had plenty of time to hang out with friends and visit different museums.

March

This month, I went to Krakow and Berlin. I visited the concentration camp in Krakow which revealed the cruelty of WWII. Millions of Jewish and Polish were killed during the dark time. I could not breathe when I saw a mountain of shoes which were taken off from children before they went inside the gas chamber. Interestingly, at the end of March, I went to Berlin to learn the other side of this history. There were several museums with exhibitions about war. I could see that Germans admitted the mistake they made and learned from the lesson.

April

I joined the school trip to Gdansk, another Polish city. It was a beautiful city which was historically an important trading port in Poland. Having good time spent with the other Erasmus students, the trip was unforgettable. I also travelled to Italy and Greece to enjoy the wonderful scenery.

May

After finishing several presentations and assignments, I travelled to Paris and had a fantastic weekend. The weather was not good in Paris, but I loved my visit to Disneyland very much. Unfortunately, I could not find tasty croissants and the things were too pricy there.

June

In June, most courses had ended, and I managed to finish all of my examinations before mid of June. Then, I started travelling to Sweden, Spain and Portugal. I achieved another accomplishment which was going on a 10-days trip with a backpack only. That was an interesting experience.

Visa Procedures

First, fill in an online form and make an appointment for your visa application. Prepare your official acceptance letter (soft copy or printed copy is not accepted), flight ticket (at least the one-way ticket from Hong Kong to Poland), passport, HKID,

bank statements (either yours or your parents'), insurance and rental contract. Bring the documents to the Poland Consulate in Wan Chai. It may cost you around \$600 and wait for 2-3 weeks to receive your visa. Thus, I suggest you start applying at least one month before your departure.

Orientation Activities

There would be an orientation week with various activities organized by KIS. For example, you may have karaoke, bowling, campus visit, city tour and night parties. Most of the events are free of charge except the night parties. Have fun with other Erasmus students!

International Services & Activities (pick-up, cultural)

The school would send you an email at the beginning of the semester and ask you to sign up for the buddy program. Do remember to fill in the application form! I forgot to do it and therefore I did not have a KU buddy that could give me useful advice. After you sign up the program, your buddy would pick you up at the airport and you could build your first connection in Poland.

Accommodations

KU does not provide accommodation for students, so you need to find your own apartment. It is better to start searching for houses 3 months before the start of the semester. The normal monthly rental price for a shared apartment is 1500-2200zlt (around 3000-4000hkd). DO NOT live in PRAGA! I was told by the local students that Praga is unsafe. Even though it is close to school, it still took me 30-40 minutes to go to school from Praga. Try to find houses near the centrum which is much more convenient.

Courses Registration

Emails would be sent to you to explain the procedures of login virtual kozminski and courses registration. There would be 2 rounds of class enrollment which is like UST. You are allowed to have time clashes for 1-2 classes between two courses. But you should better communicate with the professor and ask for their permission.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Writing essays was not that common. Instead, group projects and presentations were adopted by most of the courses. Sometimes, examinations would be optional if your other performances were good enough. You could negotiate with your professor about the format and the time of examination.

Finance & Banking

Poland has its own currency Zloty (zlt). Euros is not accepted generally. You could find exchange (It is called Kantor in polish) in centrum or shopping malls. It is not necessary to have a local bank account. You could try to register for a Revolut account which is more convenient.

Climate

During spring semester, the weather in Poland is unstable. It snows and rains from February to April. Prepare warm clothes. Starting from late May, the temperature will increase to around 20 degree which is very comfortable.

Health & Safety

Kozminski University has collaborated with a clinic to provide medical services to students.

Food

Polish food is quite salty. But there are many Asian restaurants in Poland and the prices are reasonable.

Transportation

You could use top-up your student card (which is also your octopus card) in metro stations. 3-months unlimited tickets only cost 140zlt (around 270 hkd) and you can take buses, metros and trams. I also recommend you ride bicycle because it is convenient and very cheap. It is free of charge for the first 20 minutes and cost you 2zlt for every 20 minutes afterwards.

Communication

You could buy sim card in main transport stations or convenient stores. It only costs you 5zlt. After getting the card, go to the supplier store and register your sim card with your passport. Afterwards, you could download the app and top up your internet account.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There is an indoor basketball court and a gym room on campus. You can also pay for the membership of other gym room out of campus.

Social Club & Networking Opportunities

It is possible to join clubs such as Kozminski business club and Kozminski International Society. However, you better consult the committee for your application.

Cautionary measures

At night, there could be drunk people on the street, try not to walk alone. Drinking alcohol is not allowed on the street.

Checklist

1. Passport & ID card
2. Cash (Euros, you can exchange to Zloty when you arrive in Poland)
3. Credit and debit cards
3. Clothes
4. Medicines
5. Cup noodles/Instant noodles (expensive in Europe)
6. Chinese herbal tea
7. Printed copy of your travel documents, acceptance letter etc.

Best practice of Host Institution

The KIS keeps organizing activities even after the orientation week. This provides a lot of opportunities for students to know each other and explore Poland.