

## Feedback on studies with the Erasmus+ program

*“Hey fellow student, I'm Tomas and I am currently doing double degree program at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences in Finland. My experience with the Erasmus+ program has been both challenging and rewarding, as for rough climate conditions and new environment, but also thanks to the knowledgeable and approachable professors who create an engaging learning environment.*

*Beyond the studies, exploring Finland has been fascinating experience. Whether indulging in the local cuisine, exploring historical landmarks, or participating in cultural events, every moment has been a delightful adventure. The international community at the university is warm and welcoming, making it easy connect with people from around the world.*

*I am grateful for this opportunity and would recommend the Erasmus+ program to anyone who is seeking an interesting experience.”* – Tomas Levon, a 3rd-year student of the International Business Studies program, shares his experience during the Erasmus+ program.



Dmytro Palii, a 2nd-year student of the International Business Studies program, shares his experience during the Erasmus+ program:

*"My academic semester is almost coming to an end, with only one final assignment left to submit. The educational journey began with an orientation week, which I believe was well-organized and provided an opportunity to meet many people and explore the city during the first week. In the initial phase of my studies, everything progressed quite smoothly and seemed routine. However, as time passed, the process became more intricate and less comprehensible. Challenges arose right away, mainly related to the lack of clear specifications for assignments and projects. Despite choosing the "Creativity and Business Innovations" program, I still find myself questioning whether I should be independently crafting guidelines and setting goals for my projects. Currently, I have successfully completed almost all assignments, except for one. However, in my perspective, the majority of them seemed somewhat unproductive and inadequately specified. I was merely completing tasks without fully grasping their purpose and the ultimate outcome we were supposed to achieve. Teachers, on their part, often failed to articulate specific goals for the assignments, leaving many students to complete tasks for the sake of completion, rather than a deeper understanding or purpose.*

*I was surprised and negatively impressed by the work of the teachers, and I don't want to single out individuals. It's possible that I come from a different teaching environment, and at times, it was unclear to me whether the person in front of me was a teacher or just delivering a lecture. There were instances where it seemed that some teachers themselves didn't fully comprehend the significance of what they were teaching and how it could be applied in real life. This lack of clarity became a source of confusion for me and, perhaps, for other students as well.*

*It extended to the point where they couldn't always answer basic questions on the subject matter. Some instructors faced noticeable challenges with the English language, leading to communication issues with students and a struggle in understanding the course material. Additionally, one teacher consistently arrived late for classes, started them with delays, and ended them early, reducing the overall class time from 1.5 hours to approximately 50 minutes on average. This was not an isolated incident but rather characterized the approach of a specific teacher to their subject. The irresponsible behavior of some teachers created a sense of insufficient seriousness in the educational process. For instance, one teacher had a peculiar approach: he would just come in and constantly laugh. Initially, it seemed interesting and amusing, but after a few sessions, it became annoying. Due to this lackadaisical attitude of teachers towards their subjects, students also treated their subjects with a similar lack of seriousness.*

*I was greatly surprised by the management course. Despite having no complaints about the teacher, the assessment system and the course structure left me perplexed. The evaluation process involves either taking a test and presenting a project or simply taking a final exam.*

*However, if you fail the test or project, you are immediately directed to the final exam. To present a project, one must attend 10 mandatory classes in advance. Failing the test means forfeiting the right to present your work. We received our test grades just a day before the project submission deadline, and there was no opportunity to review our tests or appeal the grades. This situation resulted in only 5 out of 12 teams being able to present their projects. It seems absurd to me that students, who dedicated time and effort to attend special classes for this project, were informed just a day before the deadline that they couldn't present their work. They were deprived of the chance to review and challenge their grades to be allowed to take the final exam.*

*Personally, I managed to overcome this obstacle, but I still feel dissatisfied with my grade and had no opportunity to review my work or file an appeal. When I inquired about the possibility of reviewing my test, the response was vague, mentioning January, which, in my opinion, does not align with the seriousness and relevance of the situation. This is just a small part of my experience with this subject, not to mention the structure of the text, the goals of the assignment, and the fact that we had to spend almost all our mandatory classes doing a survey...*

*For me, each subject has evoked a sense of dissatisfaction, and I am inclined to believe that the reason lies in the imperfect nature of the educational program, which may require significant reworking. It might also be related to the limited qualifications of some instructors, although making definitive statements on this matter is challenging. If this is indeed true, it would be advisable to make improvements in this area to enhance the quality of the educational process. Such lack of seriousness and uncertainty has manifested in all subjects for me, except for the Portuguese language.*

*I would also like to highlight the challenges faced in finding and choosing accommodation. The university provides only a few websites offering housing options, but they are not directly affiliated with the university. On these platforms, almost all options are already booked 2-3 months before the start of the academic year. Therefore, the housing search proved to be quite challenging. It would be wonderful if the university engaged more actively with partners in this field or provided more efficient tools for students. This would make the process more convenient, as many students encounter similar difficulties. The housing market often presents options that are either too expensive or already taken.*

*The city appeared before my eyes as vibrant but unfortunately noticeably polluted, with heavy traffic and imperfect infrastructure. Navigating through the labyrinths of Porto proved to be quite challenging and intricate, and the city, except for the center, waterfront, and some areas, left an impression of insufficient attractiveness for walks. To move around Porto, one needs either a private car or to use public transport since pedestrian walks are limited due to the lack of sidewalks.*

*There is also a significant number of migrants in the city, mostly Brazilians and people from African countries. I won't go into details, as their behavior is already well-documented in the news. There is a large population of homeless people, street cats, and dogs, and many abandoned and dilapidated houses throughout the city. As someone born in a country that is not considered the wealthiest in Europe, I witnessed such dirt, poverty, and "ruin" for the first time in Europe. The architecture in the city center is impressive, as are the massive bridges, but the tightly packed houses stacked on each other evoke unpleasant feelings, resembling a continuous large anthill. Drivers seem to navigate as they please, giving the impression that you are in Turkey or India, and at times, it feels like traffic regulations are simply nonexistent. Additionally, I wouldn't say you feel safe during the nighttime. It's fine during the day, but in the evening, it can be quite unsettling.*

*On a positive note, I can highlight my trips to Madeira and Figueira da Foz. From my experience, Madeira left an indelible impression with its astonishing beauty and unique character. This island in the Atlantic Ocean amazes with its diverse nature, breathtaking landscapes, and cozy atmosphere. The mountain peaks covered in green forests create a captivating scenery that comes to life under the sunlight. Trips along the mountainous serpentine roads offer incredible views and delightful moments. Madeira's shores are adorned with beautiful beaches gently transitioning into the warm waters of the ocean.*

*Strolling through the charming streets of local towns and villages brings a sense of authenticity and uniqueness to this place. Madeira is where nature, culture, and hospitality intersect. Here, I found tranquility, inspiration, and joy in every moment of my stay. Unfortunately, I haven't visited Lisbon; there wasn't much desire. Of all Portugal, I genuinely want to return only to Madeira. Additionally, positive aspects included numerous acquaintances, new emotions, and many memories.*

*In brief, my exchange experience unfolded in a way that left me grateful for the opportunity but, perhaps, with more negative impressions, ranging from academics to the city itself. While I initially wanted to go on exchange again for the second semester, my enthusiasm dwindled significantly in the latter part of my stay, leading me to lose interest in participating in another exchange anytime soon. It seems my expectations were simply too high for Portugal, contributing to my disappointment. However, I take full responsibility for my expectations. I want to express immense gratitude to everyone who made this possible. Thank you for the experience, and thank you for the opportunity.”*

