Report about semester abroad

I spent the first semester of my final year of BA Sociology in the UK. I applied for the Erasmus exchange program in the second year of my studies and got to study at University College London (UCL) for one semester. It was an unforgettable experience, and I have not questioned my decision to apply for the Erasmus scholarship once.

At Corvinus University I am a Sociology student, however at UCL, I was admitted to the School of Slavonic and East European studies (SSEES). SSEES has different sub-departments, such as Economics, Politics, and Social Studies. I took courses from the Social Sciences section, and I was also allowed to choose courses from other departments, separated from SSEES. All together, I attended four courses per semester, which is the usual amount of courses that UCL students take. At UCL, they do not have credit system, but units. However, if these courses’ units are translated to credit grading system, all together, they give 30 ECTS credits. Even if four courses do not seem a lot, compared to the eight to ten courses per semester at Corvinus University, it was very a intense study. At UCL the requirements are very high and for each class, a student is awaited to do readings or assignments. Each course also had at least two hours of classes, one lecture, and other tutorials. Lectures served for professors to explain new material, while tutorials were place for discussion of new topics and as well readings. I had plenty of readings to do for every week. That is why I consider UCL as an institution, which is primary, concentrated on student’s individual achievements. The atmosphere is very professional and students are bright and hard working. An interesting fact about UCL is also that there is only one exam period, in summer. UCL have different rules for affiliate students who are studying at their institution only for one semester. I was excused from any exam and as a replacement; instead, I had to write two essays for each course. In one point, I really wished I could take exams. At University College London, presumably in other universities in the UK, departments are very demanding about essay writing. Each of them has special rules how essay should look like, how long it should be and about its content of course. If student does not come along with terms which are given, then mark will not be satisfying. One part I found very well is that essay must be uploaded to Turnitin, special service which serves as plagiarism detector. It calculate how much percent of student’s work is copied from another literature and if this detector discovers high percentage plagiarized work, then student fails the course instantly. Fortunately, UCL and affiliate students are smart enough not to use someone else’s work as theirs, so I have not known any cases of plagiarized essays. All together I had to write eight essays, 2500 words each, which I managed to do on time. Some of them in the last moments, as it was hard to be very hard-working when you are in London. The city radiates with friendly vibes, as it is multicultural. I consider this environment very pleasant and I felt really welcoming in London. While living there, I used the opportunity to visit theatre, museums, different clubs and places which are not very known to tourists, therefore, I got to experience the city in a way.
I was very lucky to be living in the centre of the city. My dorm, Ramsay Hall was situated only a few minutes walk from UCL, 10 minutes from Oxford Street and not much further from Soho and Covent Garden. I found Ramsay Hall through UCL accommodation service. They offered different types of housing as well, but I decided to live in dorms, as I wished to experience student life in the best way. I do not regret choosing to live in Ramsay, however, I believe this type of accommodation is not for everyone. As Ramsay is catered hall, we received breakfast and dinner from Monday to Friday, food was not always that great, but pretty decent. We also had small kitchens, so students prepared food there on weekends. Most of the rooms are single, however I got to be in twin room. This was a real challenge as I have never shared room with someone before. I was lucky to be in the room with very nice girl from Poland, an exchange student as well, so we had a lot of in common. The most difficult thing people, especially, we, girls, had to get used to was shared bathrooms. Fortunately, Ramsay is cleaned during week days, so bathrooms were most of the time very tidy. The best part for me about living in the dorm was people, I found amazing friends there. It is unbelievable how from a very short time, only three months, some people became my very close friends. I think that is very best part of this whole experience.

Erasmus program gave me an amazing opportunity to study at UCL in my favorite city. Not only I was able to enjoy the city and study in one of the best universities, but I also made wonderful friends. I gained so much experience and knowledge worthy for a lifetime. That is why I warmly advice everyone who loves to travel and meet new people to apply for Erasmus exchange.

I am so happy to be part of Erasmus community and thankful to this institution for giving me a chance to discover new places and meet wonderful new people, it is something that I will never forget.