1. **Before the exchange semester**

As a first-year master student studying at Corvinus University of Budapest I knew I wanted to go on an exchange semester. But Norway was only my second choice after Portugal and at the first moments when I received the notification that I got a place to study at the Norwegian School of Economics in Bergen, I was still hesitating. I always wanted to experience living and learning in a Nordic country, but the high prices of Norway and the rainy weather of Bergen scared me a little bit at for a moment. Fortunately I accepted the offer and it turned out to be one of the best decisions I have ever made during my studies.

Before the semester started, I booked my direct flight from Budapest to Bergen with Wizz Air, but they only have direct flights from March to October, when most of the tourists come to the city. When there are no direct flights, the best possible option (regarding time and money) in my opinion is to go to Vienna by Flixbus or by car and fly to Bergen from there with Wizz Air.

2. **The city of Bergen**

Bergen is the second biggest city in Norway with approximately 280,000 inhabitants. The center with the fish market, restaurants, shops and bars is relatively small, but everyone can find something to do in the charming city of Bergen. The special charisma of the old town is mesmerizing every visitor during a walk through the Hanseatic buildings of Bryggen, a world-famous street with a lot of museums and shops.

The old Hanseatic buildings in Bryggen
The town is situated between 7 mountains, all of which provides a breathtaking landscape to the city. It is surrounded by beautiful hiking routes just couple minutes away from the center and it is a paradise for all the nature lovers, who love to do hikes and outdoor sports. Although the weather tends to be rainy, when the sun comes out it seems like most of the people from the city are on the mountains running or hiking. Due to the rainy weather it is highly recommended to pack a warm water-proof jacket, hiking or rain boots and an umbrella as well. At home I was wondering how I will survive the many days of constant rain, but during my exchange semester it turned out, that the weather is not that bad at all, and you can get used to the frequently pouring rain very quickly. The temperature is not that cold as you would think about Norway and even during the winter in December it was kind of mild with 2-4 degrees during the day.

The city of Bergen from one of the seven mountains called „Floyen”

The transportation in the city is really good, buses and the light rail run regularly. The public transportation is managed by a company named Skyss. It is possible to purchase a monthly travel card for students via the machines next to bus stops, or from the Skyss mobile application for around 460 NOK per month.

3. The accommodation and prices

For most of the exchange students studying at NHH there is a guaranteed spot at Hatleberg Student Housing, which is 5 minutes away from the university. This student residence is managed by an organization called “Sammen”, which is the students service organization in
charge of the housing, health services and the gyms. In my opinion, the housing is arranged really well for all of the exchange students. Before the arrival NHH provided all the information needed and gave us a code to register for the rooms. Hatleberg have different living blocks from A to F, most of them are well equipped and in a good condition. From the Bergen Flesland Airport the easiest way to get to Hatleberg is to take the direct bus called Flybussen, it costs around 110 NOK, but there is a possibility to go with the light rail called Bybanen from the airport and change to a bus, which definitely takes longer but costs only 37 NOK.

![Shared room in the F-Block of Hatleberg Student Accommodation](image)

Before the semester started most of the students have received a questionnaire regarding our preferences for the student accommodation, whether we would like to have more expensive single or cheaper shared rooms in the next semester. For us this was basically unnecessary, because in the autumn period there are way more exchange students and later it turned out, that only shared rooms will be available due to the large number of applicants. So I have received an e-mail about an offer for a shared room in the F-Block first floor of Hatleberg. At first sight the room was pretty small (as you can see it on the picture), considering the fact that it was shared by two people, but during the semester it turned out to be much more comfortable than I first thought. The bathroom was shared with the room next to mine, so it was used by four people. And we had a spacious and very well-equipped kitchen for 8 people with an amazing view to the city’s harbor, a perfect place to hang out with your new friends after some lectures at the university. Despite the fact, that for this many people the rooms and the kitchen was
sometimes a little bit small, I would still recommend to choose this kind of accommodation as there is always someone to talk to and hang out with. Although most of the rooms are in good condition, they are only equipped with the beds a table and a wardrobe for clothes, so exchange students have to buy most of the stuff like pillows, duvets, bed linen and trash bins. These can be purchased in a so called “starter pack” before the semester starts from previous students who lived here from Facebook groups. But if you do not want to use second-hand stuff, the IKEA is 15 minutes away by bus from the student accommodation and everything can be found there. Hatleberg has also a common room, which is a great place to gather with your friends, relax a little bit, or have some pre-drinks before a party, also there is a fully-equipped movie room in the basement with a wide screen and leather couches, making it perfect for movie nights.

It is very important when Sammen offers you a spot before the start of the semester in one of the blocks of Hatleberg, you have to pay an initial deposit of 5000 NOK, which will be paid back once you move out and they find everything fine. A shared room during the fall semester costs around 2500 NOK, plus 400 or 500 NOK for the electricity. So all in all it would cost me around 3000 NOK per month, which is still much cheaper than for a single room, which was approximately 4500 NOK per month.

Next to the student residence there are two shops a Spar and a REMA, where you can buy all the groceries you need. As living costs in Norway are really high, you have to be prepared to spend around twice or three times as much on food and drinks as you do in Hungary. I was fortunate to be a part of the Campus Mundi Scholarship program, which provided higher scholarship amounts per month than the basic Erasmus program. This allowed me to cover my basic expenditures from the accommodation to groceries, but for extra travels and parties I would recommend anyone to have some extra savings to add to your monthly expenses.

4. The university and the campus

Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) was Norway’s first business school and is still one of the most renowned universities which is recognized not only in Scandinavia, but throughout Europe. The school is relatively small with around 3000 students studying there every year in the field of economics or business. During the autumn semester of 2018 there were approximately 300 exchange students from all over the globe, which shows the strong international orientation of the university. The majority of the professors were proficient in English as most of the courses are thought in English. The campus is also quite small-scale but is well-equipped with all of the studying facilities from 24/7 open study rooms, to a library a
nice restaurant and a gym nearby. There are more than enough opportunities for students to enjoy their time after the courses within the university as well, because there are a lot of student associations (International Committee, Energy Association) and sports clubs (hiking, soccer, volleyball, tennis) which exchange students can also join and be a part of. From the city center the university can be reached in 15 minutes by bus, but it is just a 5 minutes’ walk from Hatleberg student residence.

Before the semester have started international coordinators from NHH provided us every information we needed about our exchange semester and they were really helpful regarding every single question and problem that we have. During this period I did not face any difficulties with all the paperwork and other things to do. The semester usually starts earlier in Norway than for us in Hungary, in the autumn period we already had lectures from the middle of August, therefore the “welcome week” with all the introduction activities started from the 13th of August. This week is not mandatory, but I would like to advise everyone to go there, because you will get a lot of important information there and they also organize a lot of social events with other exchange students, so this is the best time to get to know others. During the day there are unforgettable programs like white water rafting, hiking and boat trips, meanwhile during the night the Norwegian mentor team organizes parties in the city center and in the club of the university as well.

During the semester I was satisfied with the academic level at NHH. I took 4 courses, Advanced Corporate Finance, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Energy and Resource Industries and Global Strategy and Management, each of these were 7,5 ECTS. In my opinion the biggest differences between the studies at NHH and the studies at Corvinus University were the deeper focus on the theoretic foundation and the more equally divided workload during the semester. At most of the courses at NHH professors were trying to provide a very thorough understanding of the underlying theories, so we had understand them on a deeper level, before applying them to real life problems. Furthermore, the majority of the courses had a so called „course approval”, which had to be completed in order to take the exam at the end of the semester. To get the course approval students had to solve assignments and write term papers, resulting in a more equally divided workload over the semester. From the courses I took, I would highly recommend to take Innovation and Entrepreneurship for anyone who is interested in the topic of starting a new business. The professor is outstanding, the lectures are interactive with an opportunity to get in contact with interesting startups in Bergen. Moreover the course Energy and Resource Industries also provides exciting insights to the most important industries of
Norway, with guest lecturers from different firms working at energy companies or fisheries. The lectures ended in November, after which we had a little time to study for our exams. The exams were organized from late November until the middle of December, but all of the exam dates were stated at the time we registered for the courses back in August. Most of the written exams took a lot of time, from 3 to 4 hours, but they are definitely doable for a student coming from Corvinus University and there are a couple of courses where you only have to write a term paper instead of an exam.

5. Activities and travelling

When it comes to travelling the position of Bergen is perfect to discover the country and the surrounding places. The capital city Oslo can be reached with a flight in about 45 minutes, or a 7-hour long train ride, which is considered to be one of the most beautiful journeys by train in the world. With ferries leaving from the harbor of Bergen the breathtaking Fjords of Norway can be explored in a day or two. And if someone is looking for a more adventurous hike, the start of the path to the famous Trolltunga rock, which is hanging above the Fjords is about 2 hours away from the city. With the discount flights of Norwegian Air (under the age of 26), students from Bergen also have the possibility to visit amazing places such as Iceland, Stockholm and the city of Tromsø for really good prices, where you can try the husky sledge and most probably can see the incredible Northern Lights as well.

The view during a hike we took to Trolltunga
Bergen has a couple of universities so there were always a lot of opportunities to go out to the city with other exchange students and enjoy the night out. As you have probably heard about it, Norway is not the cheapest place to go out and party, therefore most of the time people were organizing pre-parties at the student residence before going to the city center. Usually we went to a place with free-entry called Rick’s, which was packed during the weekends with international students and with the NHH student card we could get in without standing long hours in the line.

6. After the exchange semester

After spending an amazing semester in Norway, I am sure that this was a decision that I will never regret in the future. I made some unforgettable experiences with people from all around the world, from swimming in the freezing cold North Sea in September to seeing the Northern Lights next to our student accommodation in Bergen. So to summarize the above, I would highly recommend to spend an exchange semester studying at NHH to anyone who is still hesitating, whether to go or not to go, because this definitely can be a once in a lifetime experience.