

TRAVEL TIPS

FROM CEMSIES



EUROPE

SWITZERLAND, University of St. Gallen

University

The university classes were of a very high standard, often taught by professors with a high profile in the business world, so it was common for prestigious guest speakers to be invited. CEMS classes usually had greater mid-year requirements and group assignments, we did not have many exams, and where we had, it usually had a low weight in the overall grade.

CEMS life

The university has placed great emphasis on the integration of foreign students. At the beginning of the semester, we had the opportunity to get to know the university building and to carry out the most important administrative tasks related to our arrival at the same time, through an orientation programme and a Campus Rally. In addition to the university staff, the students were also very helpful in helping foreign students to settle in. BuddySystem is an international student organisation at the University of St.Gallen, which organized a number of activities during the semester, especially for foreign students, to help them get to know the city and the surrounding area. The CEMS Club was also very active, we usually had more than one event weekly.

Accommodation

Regarding the accommodation, foreign students can choose to apply for university dorms, or they can search on their own. The advantage of the dormitory is that you will live together with other international students. I was living in a shared apartment, because it is possible to find better prices than what the university offers, the dorms are 650-900 CHF and I could find a room for just 380 CHF so it is worth looking around. For finding a room, you should use *Sharing Is Caring University of St. Gallen (HSG)* Facebook group. The city is not very big, I was not living very close to uni, but I could get there with a 15 min bus ride or 30 min walk. If you plan on partying a lot, than I suggest finding an apartment in the city centre, cause there are no night buses (only Tier scooters during the night).

Getting around the city

Swiss transport is very well organised, with almost no delays, but this is reflected in the ticket prices, which are extremely high. If you plan to travel a lot within the country, I recommend you buy the Halbtax card, which entitles you to a 50% discount. Within St.Gallen you can travel by trolleybus and bus, you can get a monthly student ticket for the city which is around 50 CHF.

Travel around

Switzerland has a lot of great mountains, and amazing hike routes, it is definitely worth checking these out.



University

It is a very small private university, so all students are amazingly knowledgeable and a bit more competitive than usual. There is a curve/average system at the university, most students will get a "B" which at SSE is "very good" - and it is very good! Grade "A" stands for excellent, that is usually about 5-10% of the class and it is not easy to reach that level. All courses are 7.5 ECTS, so you are only allowed to take two courses per term (one semester is two terms). One of my favourite courses was "Investment and value creation in global sports" as I have a strong educational and professional background in sports economics and management, and it contributed greatly to the success of my master thesis. Outside of the classes, the university student association, as well as the CEMS club are very active with almost weekly social and educational/professional events.

CEMS life

I did the block seminar there, which was the one of the most unique and exciting experiences of my life. As being part of the social team in the CCS, I can only say good things about the CEMS Club life. Lot of social and corporate events, many self-organized get togethers as most of the CEMS students lived in the same dorm.

Accommodation

Dormitory and would not recommend anything else! It is hard and expensive to find accommodation in Stockholm and as far as I know CEMS students always get their dorm selection. I chose the most expensive option that is about 50 meters from the university, which cost 7000 SEK. My tip again: apply for a dorm room, you won't regret it.

Getting around the city

A lot of walking and public transportation. The student monthly pass costs 690 SEK (and it's worth it, especially in the cold months). You can apply for a student card through the student organization and can use it the same way as the Hungarian student card.

Travel around

Brace yourself... There is not a single thing in Stockholm that is not worth visiting! From the three main islands to the metro station art, from the archipelagos to museum. Stockholm is beautiful and try to visit every outdoor place when the weather is nice. During my semester I travelled to Copenhagen and Helsinki, went to Kiruna during the block seminar, and visited the lakes with friends where we checked out Linköping too. You can also go to Malmö, Oslo, and up on the arctic circle in the winter. Just get all your friends and book the cheap tickets!

Other tips

1. Have black tie attire with you! Swedes like to organize banquets (and attend at least one of them)
2. Have a lot of winter but also summer clothes
3. Fly to Arlanda airport as it is close to the city and easy to reach
4. Eat as many kanelbullar as possible (Café Pascal and Gust are the top spots!)
5. Start listening to ABBA if you haven't started yet

University

Koc University is a prestigious private university on the Northern side of Istanbul. Even though the campus is far from the city centre, it is quite well-equipped with a massive sports centre, outdoor-inside swimming pool, and numerous restaurants and coffees available for students' needs. You would never feel that you would need to leave the campus, which transportation is well connected to the closest metro station. The University emphasize community-building especially for international students by organising many city tours, movie nights or cooking workshops.

Regarding education, I would like to emphasize that most of my professors did not come from an academic background, but they have forged remarkable careers. Therefore their teaching methods were more practical based on real-life examples. They expect you to actively participate in class, and participate in the high-niveous discussions. On the other hand, you are not burdened with numerous tasks during the semester, but with this method I learn a lot more.

I have two classes that I would like to recommend. First Corporate Dynamics with Professor Esref Unsal. His real-life experiences will help you to navigate your decisions more consciously in the corporate world. The other one is Marketing Communication Strategies with Nilufer Aydinoglu. Even if you have experience with marketing courses before, even if you think it did not stand close to you I would recommend to give a chance for this class. I guarantee you have not met with a similar approach before.

CEMS life

CCI is a relatively new and therefore a smaller club, which can provide a close-friends group-like feeling. You can get to know each individual on a deeper level, which would be impossible with a bigger club. It also did not require a lot of organization to gather everyone together. Our programs were colourful and frequent.

Accomodation

During the semester I rented out an apartment with my fellow CEMSies together. I paid approximately 500 Euros each month. Although the university offered a dormitory option, they had quite similar price for a shared room. As the campus is far from the city centre I knew I would like to explore the city, therefore I rented an apartment close to the end station of Metro line 2 (Haciosman). So I had the option to reach the centre easily, but it only took me 15 minutes with the university shuttle to reach the campus. I would recommend you to look for accommodation close to the Metro line 2.

I would recommend sharing an apartment with fellow CEMSies. For finding the apartment check out the Erasmus Facebook groups, Airbnb-s. Check out the reviews of the landlord.

Travel around

There are so many things to see, you would never get bored of the city. Other than visiting the Historical part of the city I would recommend you to take the ferry from Sariyer to Karaköy/Besiktas during sunset. It is mesmerizing. Also, Kadiköy is a city which is vivid, full of nice coffees and bars, worth visiting.

Personally, Istanbul was enough for me to explore during the semester. But there are so many beautiful sides to see, I would recommend visiting Kapadokya at least. In the Erasmus WhatsApp groups, they were organising a lot of trips specifically for Erasmus students.

Getting around the city

There are so many affordable options to use for transport inside Istanbul. There is the central public transportation company, where with your Istanbul-cart you can use the central bus lines, metros, metro busses, Marmaray train and ferries. On your plastic card you upload money via vending machines, which can be found close to metro and ferry stations. Often they only accept cash.

Other than that, you can use minibuses, where you need to pay on the bus via cash. On the front, it is

written the destination/ stations. It is easy to find one, they are faster than the Central Transportation busses, and their prices are similar.

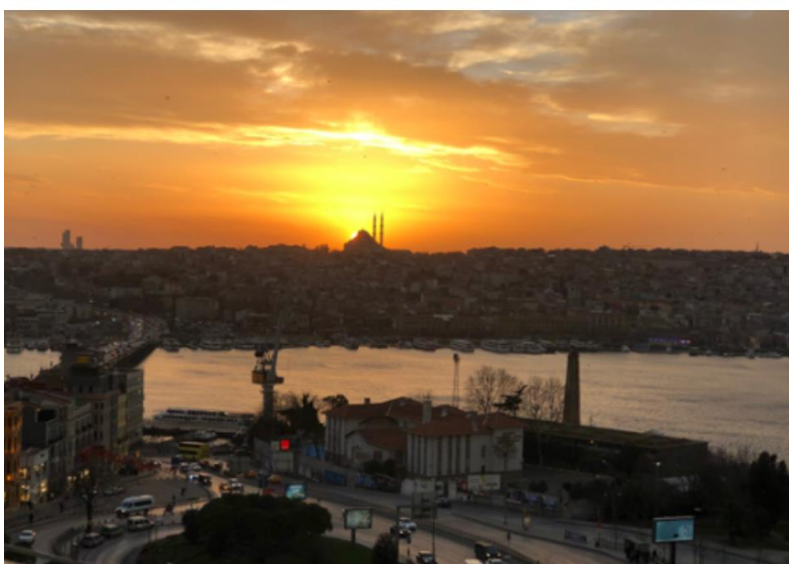
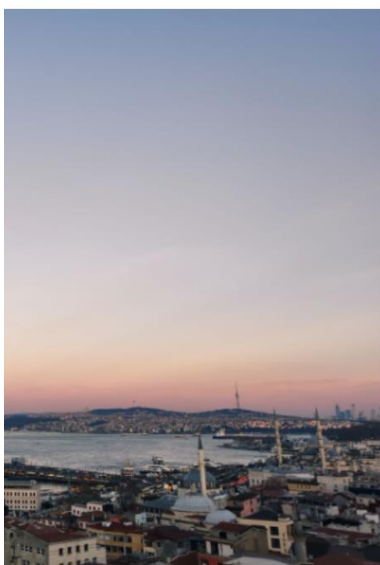
Taxi is also way more affordable than in most European countries. I used them, especially at night.

There is a huge student discount on public transportation. To obtain this, you need to request a personalized plastic card. You can do this at public transportation offices by presenting the Koc University-issued student ID and your passport. With this card, I was able to purchase a package at kiosks, which allowed me to use public transportation 200 times in a month for 100 TL. According to the inflation, this price can differ.

Other tips

Although the country is relatively cheap, scams happen quite often even with locals. It is not that harmful, but be careful and conscious, and you will have a great time.

The city is full of so many different options it can be overwhelming. Don't be afraid to ask for recommendations from fellow local students, friends.



University

University life at UCD offered a unique experience as business students were based in the Blackrock campus, separate from their peers in Belfield. This separation created a close-knit community atmosphere, with common areas being less crowded, allowing you to become familiar with a significant portion of the Blackrock campus population on a daily basis.

During my spring semester at UCD, I had only three courses, which included the Business Project, Global Leadership and the Pricing Strategy hard skill elective. The Business Project was notably rigorous in terms of workload and effort required, while the other two courses were more hands-on, involving numerous case studies, group projects and presentations. Professors, understanding the time commitment of the Business Project, provided some flexibility to help us better manage our schedules.

I wholeheartedly recommend the Pricing Strategy course, as it was exceptionally informative and featured a wealth of modern-day case studies. I particularly found the final part of the semester, focusing on behavioural pricing, to be quite enjoyable.

CEMS life

It was a great privilege for me to collaborate with Concern Worldwide, the largest Irish NGO, on my Business Project. Working with Concern opened my eyes to the challenges and constraints faced by non-profit organizations compared to for-profit companies. I realized how even a significant change could have a profound impact on their mission. While initially, working with Concern Worldwide was not at the top of my list for the Business Project, I was pleasantly surprised by the experience. Despite its challenges and the substantial time commitment from our team, we found it fulfilling, and Concern was also pleased with the outcome.

CEMS Club Dublin offered us a variety of wonderful activities and opportunities to connect with both our fellow students and the vibrant city of Dublin. The balance of events was just right, allowing us to fully enjoy each one. I will cherish the memories of our trip to Galway, the Running Cocktails and Sustainable Dinner events, our Chinese New Year dinner, the Easter Brunch and the countless charming pubs in Dublin that I had the pleasure of discovering thanks to CEMS Club Dublin.

Getting around the city

Public transportation in Dublin leaves much to be desired in terms of reliability and punctuality. Buses often lack a consistent schedule, with instances of two buses arriving within a short span while at other times, passengers have to endure a 20-minute wait. Hence, I preferred walking when feasible in the city center. The Dart train, which transported me to Blackrock, generally adhered to its schedule and arrived on time. However, I still had to cover a 15-20 minute walk from the station to reach the university. In summary, public transport in Dublin is serviceable but falls short of excellence, particularly when time is of the essence.

Dublin's public transportation system requires a 2 euro fare for each individual trip. Payment is conveniently made using the LEAP Card, which can be loaded with funds via a smartphone and tapped on the small device located on buses, trams, or trains. Since I primarily walked within the city center, I managed to save a significant amount on public transport. Nonetheless, my monthly expenditure on public transport still amounted to approximately 50-80 euros.

Students in Dublin are eligible for a 50% discount, reducing the single ride fare to just 1 euro. You can validate your student status by presenting your UCD card when obtaining your LEAP Card during orientation week. A helpful tip: It is customary in Dublin to express your gratitude by saying "Thank you!" when getting off from a bus. Also, remember to signal an approaching bus by extending your hand to indicate your intention to board, as they may not stop at the bus stop otherwise.

Accommodation

Securing accommodation in Dublin poses significant challenges and risks due to the prevalence of scams associated with fake and non-existent online apartment listings. Fortunately, I had the good fortune of connecting with a Romanian-Hungarian individual on Facebook who had a spare bedroom available in his centrally located apartment. The outcome was highly satisfactory, and my roommate and I got along famously.

The University College Dublin (UCD) offered a limited number of on-campus accommodation options. During the summer, we had the opportunity to join a waiting list, and rooms were assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. I narrowly missed the chance to secure a room in the Proby residences building, which housed ten rooms dedicated exclusively to CEMS students. However, I later learned that the Proby residents were paying nearly double the amount I was, despite having to share a single washing machine among a hundred people. So, all in all, I considered myself fortunate. My monthly rent, including utilities, was 750 euros, a considerable bargain compared to the 1400 euros paid by the Proby residents.

Dublin is a remarkably safe city with a low crime rate, making safety a minor concern when it comes to apartment hunting. CEMS students moving to Dublin must make a choice: whether to reside near the city center, where most social events occur but entails a more than an hour-long commute to Blackrock, where the campus is located, or to live close to the university in a quiet, family-friendly environment with dozens of green spaces, requiring a one-hour bus ride home when social events in the city center end.

Here are some areas I recommend considering for accommodation:

- In the city: Smithfield, St. James' Gate, Usher's Quay, the O'Connell Street area, near St. Stephen's Green and close to Trinity College
- Near the campus: Booterstown, Blackrock, Monkstown, Sandyford, Seapoint and Dún Laoghaire

When searching for accommodation, it's crucial to follow some essential guidelines: never make advance payments, conduct a video call tour of the apartment before making any bookings, explore numerous student accommodation options throughout the city, understand that higher prices don't necessarily equate to better quality, be prepared to make compromises, and prioritize locations within walking distance to both the Dart train and the River Liffey. This strategic positioning allows for easy access to the Dart for commuting to Blackrock and ensures quick access to buses running along the Liffey.

Travel around

Trinity College, Temple Bar, Phoenix Park, Guinness Storehouse, Dublin Castle, The Brazen Head - Europe's 3rd oldest pub, St. Stephen's Green

Galway and the Cliffs of Moher tour, castle of Kilkenny, Smithwick's brewery

Belfast - lively student town that is only a 2-hour train ride away, flights are scheduled to London every hour, Edinburgh and the Highlands in Scotland (say hello to Nessie!)

Other tips

Be ready for frequent rain and highly unpredictable weather. Additionally, don't be afraid when a local resident strikes up a conversation with you unexpectedly. While it might seem unusual, Dubliners are genuinely friendly, enthusiastic about meeting people from other countries, eager to get to know you and share a pint of Guinness.



FINLAND, Aalto University

University

Aalto University has a very vibrant student life. Every week there are events organized by one of the student organizations (there are a plenty at Aalto). The Student Union is called KY and they are really active to keep up the student spirit even for international students.

The teaching is really practical. We often had guest speakers in our classes and our corporate partners were often involved in the development of the course. There were many project courses where we had to work on some kind of real life business project, often involving corporate partners. The courses are absolutely deliverable, in most cases the main requirement is a project work. I only had a traditional exam in one of my courses, all the other courses required us to do a semester or quarter project.

CEMS life

I CEMS Club Helsinki is a very active and cohesive community. We have organised many activities together, mainly social and corporate activities. I was Head of Corporate Relations and we worked with a lot of companies. Most of the companies were very positive about approaching us.

Accommodation

In Helsinki, most exchange students live in HOAS apartments. This is a company who own several buildings and rent out apartments/rooms in these buildings to students. They have several locations, but wherever you end up, you're sure to have a great time! Other housing options are quite expensive in Helsinki, the best option is HOAS.

Pasila, Kallio, Töölö, Espoo, these are nice and affordable areas of Helsinki.

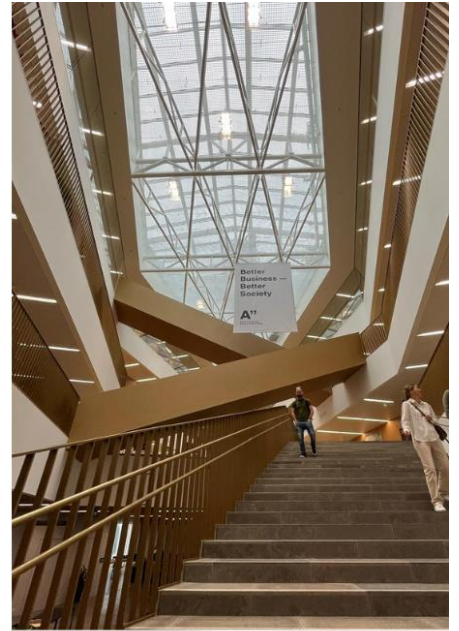
Getting around the city

Public transport in Helsinki is very good! There is a metro, numerous trams, buses and trains within the city. They are very reliable and very punctual. A monthly student season ticket costs around 30 euros.

Travel around

Helsinki is not a big city, you can explore it very quickly. I would definitely recommend Soumenlinna Island, Helsinki Cathedral, Oodi Library, the entire city centre, Kallio area. If you go a little further afield, Espoo, Nuuksio National Park, Tampere, Turku and Porvoo. Also, if you are in Finland, Lapland is a must.

Also Tallinn is 2 hours by boat which is a super nice city, with way more cheaper prices than Helsinki. Stockholm is also easily reachable by plane or boat!



PORTUGAL, NOVA SBE

University

As the Lisbon cohort is one of the biggest ones of all CEMS Clubs out there, the social life is amazing. Only thing you'll have to worry about is the FOMO you'll probably have sometimes, because there is always so much going on, you can't possibly go to every event.

I really enjoyed Negotiation Strategy and the Introduction to Programming course. But also if you're interested in Digital Marketing there was one course named like this where we got to do a real Google Ads campaign with help of industry professionals, that was also very useful.

CEMS life

I didn't do the BP in Lisbon, but I've heard there are always great companies and projects to choose from!

CEMS Club is great, they do the coolest events, trips, merch and team buildings. Go check out @cemsclublisbon on Instagram! It's huge and they always have something going on. And they really do make use of Portugal's great landscapes and beaches and take you out of Lisbon, to surf, to visit other cities and to have a great experience overall!

Accommodation

I had been living just near the Avenida metro station in a shared flat with 4 Hungarian girls. I was paying 350 euros for the room. It was by far the cheapest option. I didn't know anyone else paying even near this price. If you're going to Lisbon, plan with 700+ euros per month for a single room. Look in the city, near Cais preferably, because it's where the trains go from to the Uni campus, but if you're into surfing and more chill, you can search for something in Carcavelos too. Check first with friends and reach out to (ex)CEMSies who've been to Lisbon, always better to get contacts from acquaintances.

Getting around the city

Never the bus. You can't trust them. Maybe metro, but your feet always helps you out. I'd been walking a lot.

As I remember the ticket was 30 euros in case you were under 24. Above 40 EUR per month. Uber and Bolt are very cheap to Hungarian standards. Sometimes it's really worth using them.

Travel around

Go to small restaurants, search for the places where the locals go, just like O Cantinho do Alfredo, in Lisbon it's typically true: the worse it looks from the outside, the better the food.

Rent a car and go through the country from north to south, near the beach, discover the small hidden treasures.

Go to Porto, to Madeira and to the Azores too. Visit Algarve.

Other tips

You can text me anytime. @blntkosa



SPAIN, ESADE Barcelona

University

It is worth noting, that even though most CEMS students, who choose ESADE as their host university, will live in Barcelona, the University is actually located in Sant Cugat. It is not necessarily a bad thing, but commute times can range from 45 minutes every day to up to 1.5 hours (one-way), depending on where you manage to find accommodation within the city, so make sure that the classes you choose to have manageable hours. You may want to optimize your schedule to minimize the commute time.

ESADE itself is a very prestigious place to study, with a nice and modern campus. Professors are usually well-prepared and take education and grading seriously, but some students may find more laissez-faire-styled courses as well. The grading system is rather tricky; they use both letters and numbers. First, for individual performance on exams, they give you a grade from 1 to 10. Based on class performance, they will assign a letter grade from A to F, where A represents the top 10% of the best-performing students. The grade itself is usually made up of several components: assignments, exams, and class participation. Class participation is something that professors take very seriously. Some professors have teaching assistants who take notes during each class about the students' contributions and the quality of their participation. They reward not only answering questions but also whether your comments contribute to the discussion. They believe that the average student performance should be around 8.5, and some teachers will grade accordingly, as they do not believe that all students are excellent or can achieve a perfect 10. In that mindset, unless you are willing to work for it, you may have to settle for a few 4 grades when you complete your courses, as grades above 9.0 are considered 5 grades, and grades between 7.0 and 8.0 are also common (which would be accredited here as a 3).

ESADE is one of the few universities where you can choose an alternative course to Global Strategy, which is International Entrepreneurship. During the course, we had to come up with a startup idea and develop its business model with each lesson. In the end, we had to pitch it to a representative of the ESADE Incubator program. It was a lot of fun, and if you happen to be someone who does not want to pursue a career in consulting and would consider becoming an entrepreneur, I highly recommend this course.

Also, Financial Analysis, as a hard skills course for me, was super helpful. If you have a basic understanding of the financial statements of companies and remember how to calculate NPVs, you have a head start, as this is considered a beginner course. It requires you to do quite a bit of work, but it's super handy if you want to refresh or build a foundation for management accounting and understand how companies are evaluated. Eventually, the requirement of the course is to pick a company and evaluate it based on its financial reports, forecasts created from the collected data, and an understanding of the industry itself.

CEMS life

CEMS Club Barcelona is quite a big cohort. There are around 40 home and 40 incoming students, making a total cohort of around 80 people. It is very international, as ESADE home students are usually also from abroad (I for example only had 2 classmates who were from Spain). The club is very active and organizes a lot of activities from running cocktails to trips to other cities (we went to Valencia together). During my exchange, CEMS Club Barcelona was also organizing the career forum, which was an additional activity.

Accommodation

Finding a place to live in Barcelona can be quite a fun challenge, especially with the city's vibrant and diverse atmosphere. Depending on what you're aiming for during your semester, you should think about which part of the city would be the best fit for your apartment or room search. The historic area includes El Raval and the Gothic Quarter, which are also the hubs for nightlife. Just keep in mind that while El Raval might have great locations and prices, it's also a spot where pickpockets target tourists quite often.

Another neighborhood worth considering with a genuine vibe is El Born. It's buzzing with nightlife, and you can find some fantastic places near metro lines L2 and L4. Eixample is a popular choice, packed with attractions and eateries. This part really defines Barcelona's urban image, but the demand does make prices a bit higher. If you want a similar vibe at friendlier rates, Sant Antoni could be a good bet. Gràcia is super popular, kind of like 'Buda' along with Sarrià, with similar prices and distances from the city center.

If you're looking for something cheaper and quieter, El Clot and Poble Nou are your best bet. They're well-connected to the city, but expect a 20-30 minute commute during the day. Ultimately, it's about figuring out what you want for the semester and what your budget is.

When you've got your goal sorted, it's crucial to look for apartments on the right platforms. Scam ads are pretty common. Idealista is a widely used platform where agencies and individuals advertise for free, but do your homework on the advertiser's reliability. Bigger agencies like Sh Barcelona, Atemporal, and myspacebarcelona are trustworthy options. You can also check their websites for a full view of what they offer. For rooms, liverfurther.com and bcn-nest.com specialize in advertising individual properties and can be a great help for students.

Depending on what you're searching for - a room or an apartment - timing is key. Book rooms as early as possible, even a semester in advance. I'd steer clear of idealista for rooms; housinganywhere.com or uniplaces.com are better options. For apartments, it's best not to start looking earlier than two months in advance. They're usually posted in a move-in ready form within a month, and landlords prefer tenants who can move in promptly or check out the place in person if needed.

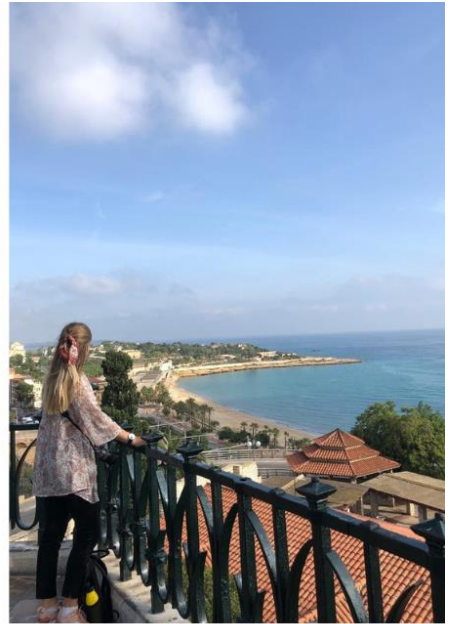
Getting around the city

The best way to get around the city is by using public transport. The metro system is awesome and pretty cheap, plus there are trams and buses available. If you're under 25 and a student or a local, there's usually a discounted price. It's always worth checking out the options you have. When I was studying in Barcelona in fall 2022, they introduced a cool new thing in September, giving students a 50% discount, which was pretty sweet. If you're into cycling, renting bikes is a great way to get around. It's super time-saving and efficient, whether it's daytime or at night. You can pay a monthly fee for them by following the service's instructions. Usually, they ask for a local ID number, but from what I've heard, any number works fine as they don't usually check, allowing you to use the bikes through the app without having to get one for yourself.

Travel around

So many things to do! I could chat for hours about the incredible spots to explore in Barcelona and the nearby areas in Spain. But let's get down to the essentials. First off, hit the beach, soak in that amazing water. Take a stroll down La Rambla. Visit any of Gaudí's masterpieces like the Sagrada Família and Park Güell. Pop by a museum, maybe the Picasso one. And once you've ticked these off your list in the first week, dive into the city!

Keep an eye out for local events and festivals; those are the ones that stick with you. Check out Erasmus trips - they're budget-friendly and offer day trips and hikes, perfect for covering as much ground as possible. Plan a weekend camping trip to Ibiza or Mallorca; it's an absolute blast. Arrange group outings with your cohort to the North of Spain (Bilbao), Valencia, or Andalucía (Sevilla). Catch a train to Madrid, or go on hikes or visit medieval towns organized by Erasmus Barcelona by Shaz. Or if you are up for it, head to Montserrat on your own. There's so much to do and it all depends on what gets you excited!



University

The University offers a lot of extracurricular activities, nice work areas and even items to lend. I would recommend looking at the sports teams especially! Also, in the beginning there will be guided tours around the campus, they are great to get to know what is where. The cafeteria is fairly priced and offers nice Italian food.

CEMS life

Lot of great activities, every single one is worth visiting! The running cocktails and the closing gala were one of the best. Also company and factory visits are fun, the Barilla factory visit was unforgettable.

Accommodation

Super tricky and also expensive to get. The university offers some dormitory places, however they are just as expensive as renting. They are closer to the school, but you have no own kitchen or washing machine. To apply for a space in the dormitory there is an exact date and time when the slots open, and they get taken in less than 3 minutes. There are other websites, like Housing Anywhere, but these agencies ask for hefty fees to make a reservation. Facebook groups are a better alternative. I needed a place at the end of August, and I barely got one last minute even though I was searching for more than two months.

Getting around the city

The public transport is nice and reliable during the day, during night it is a bit of a gamble if the bus even shows up. Getting a monthly pass is absolute madness, you have to get an Italian tax number, but the easiest way to do it is to go to the ATM (the Milano public transport) office at Duomo metro station (the office is underground in the station), ask for an appointment, then around two weeks later show up for the appointment, they generate a tax number for you and take your photo and then you can finally get your monthly pass.

Travel around

The lakes around the city are beautiful, train transportation is great, travelling around at the weekends is highly recommended. Torino is an underrated gem as well!

THE NETHERLANDS, Erasmus University Rotterdam

University

The university is a well-equipped, modern campus with about 10-12 buildings. The buildings have Wi-Fi, laptop or phone charging facilities, coffee and a food vending machine. You can also have lunch at the Food Court in the middle of the campus, although I didn't go there much. The library is a great place to be at, equipped with a lot of silent areas and some massage chairs. The CEMS subjects were doable, the teachers like to make the lectures interactive, and thanks to the quarter system, the education is quite intensive.

CEMS life

CEMS Club Rotterdam is a very close-knit, open community. The atmosphere with my classmates was extremely good, we helped each other throughout the semester. The club organized at least 3-4 programs per week which were clearly communicated, and the application was relatively easy. Overall, there were around 60 people in the cohort, and the participation rate was also very high for most events. We had night outs, we regularly played padel and we had many other one-time programs.

Accommodation

I started preparing for my departure in May. I had basically read this, but I myself experienced that it is very difficult to find accommodation in the Netherlands. I managed to find a place in Schiedam, which is located right next to Rotterdam, and thanks to the metro, the university is about 40 minutes away and the city center is 20 minutes away. The prices of the rooms vary, but in most cases, you can find a good quality place for a monthly fee of 700-900 euros. Traveling is also an interesting question, as there is no direct flight between Rotterdam and Hungary. You can either fly to Amsterdam or Eindhoven and take the train from there to the city. Another option is the train, a friend of mine went to Utrecht this way, for example. The third option, which I ultimately chose, is Flixbus, which allows you to get to Rotterdam much cheaper and directly. Of course, it takes much longer, but it was worth it for me. I used this mode of travel several times during the semester, the reason for which I will explain later.

Getting around the city

Rotterdam is not such a typical Dutch city, there are fewer canals and old-style buildings. There are shortcomings in public transport, for example, the schedule is significantly less frequent on weekends. It is also very expensive if you don't have a Dutch address and account number. This is true not only for Rotterdam, but for travel throughout the country. The city is basically a very open, multicultural population. Almost everyone speaks English in restaurants and shops. I have to mention the immigrants who live in a significant number in the city. This can be scary in some parts of Rotterdam, but during the 4 months I practically never felt that any atrocity would happen. The choice of restaurants is particularly wide, and in most places, you can eat well for 15-20 euros. The nightlife is also a strength of the place, with numerous bars and clubs waiting for those who want to party.

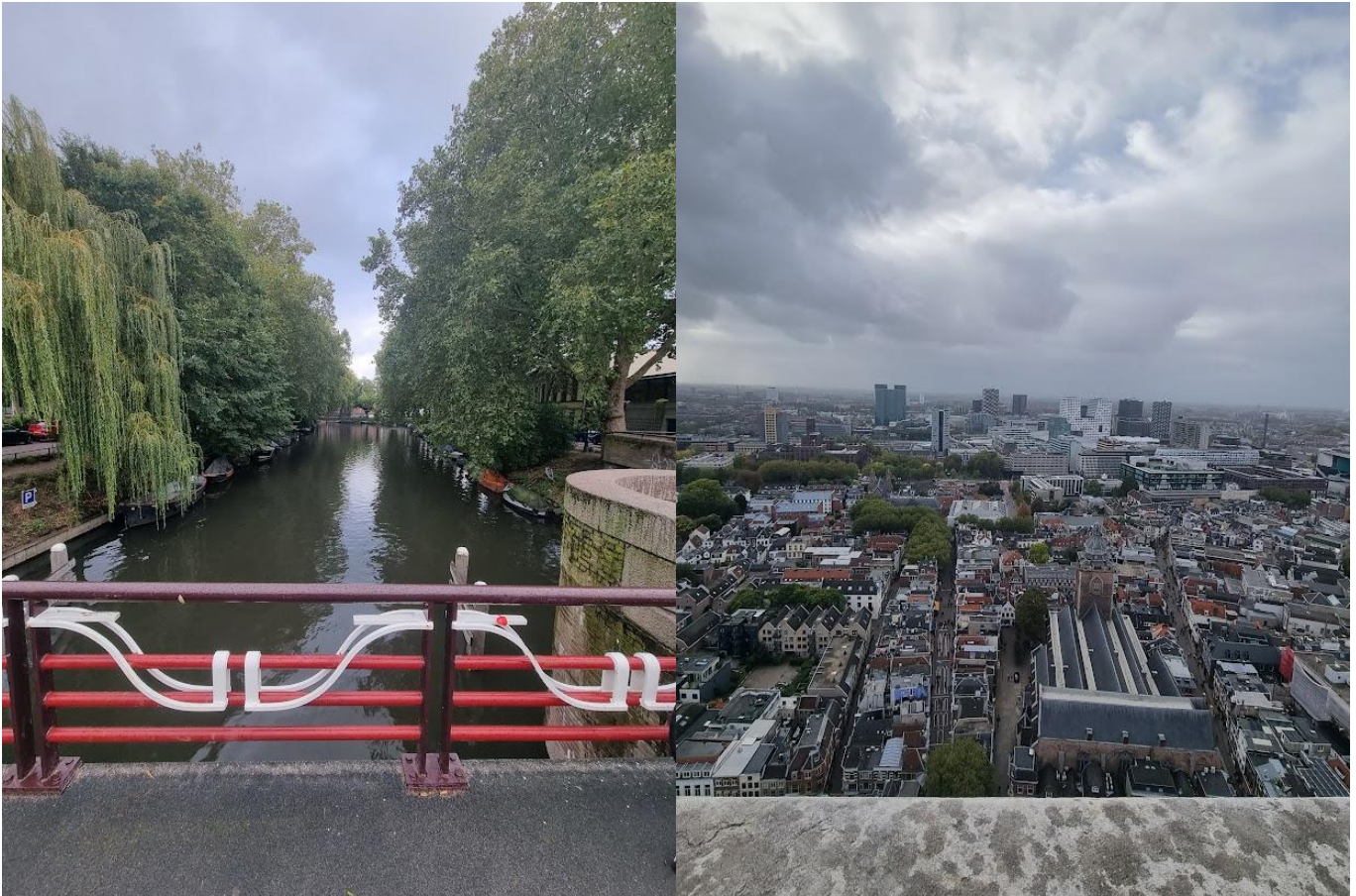
Travel around

During the semester I travelled to many other cities, in the Netherlands and also in Belgium. Here I bring some pictures of my trips.

Rotterdam:



Utrecht:



Amsterdam:



Eindhoven:



University

The university is located right next to the Prater park. It is easily accessible via the U2 metro line or by bus. The campus buildings were designed by award-winning architects, making the entire campus visually stunning, with outstanding infrastructure throughout. On campus, students can find several restaurants, cafés, bakeries, grocery stores, and a cafeteria with multiple menu options to choose from. The courses offered within the CEMS program are excellent. Classes are very interactive, so students are encouraged to ask questions, actively participate, and engage as much as possible during lectures. Course registration is done through a centralized online system before the semester begins. A useful tip is to browse courses in advance and register as early as possible, as popular courses tend to fill up quickly.

CEMS life

The CEMS social life in Vienna is excellent. One of the largest CEMS cohorts is based here, and each semester special emphasis is placed on fully integrating incoming exchange students. The cohort itself is highly international, not only because of exchange students, but also due to the diverse international background of the home students. There are numerous weekly events, and it is highly recommended to participate in as many activities as possible from the very beginning. These include a welcome camp, various running cocktails, and cultural programs such as museum visits. Students coming to Vienna can be sure that they will never be bored.

Accommodation

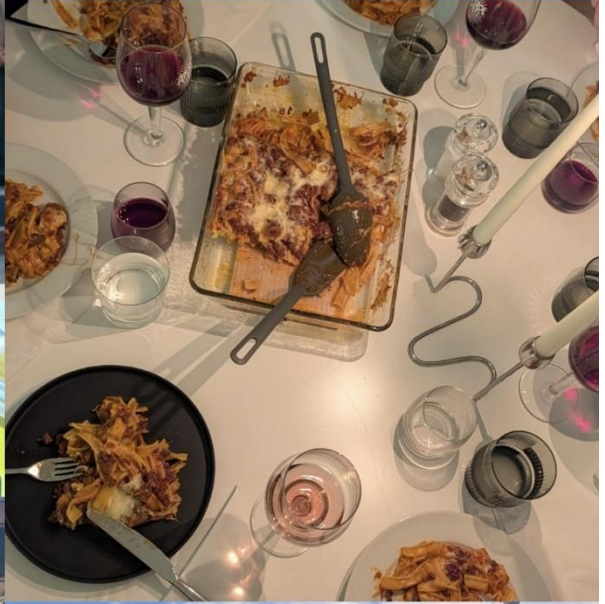
There are several options when it comes to accommodation. One of the easiest solutions is to choose one of the student housing options recommended in the information provided by the university. These accommodations usually offer well-equipped, high-quality apartments with private bathrooms and kitchens, and in some cases even single-occupancy units. Another highly recommended option is to live together with fellow CEMS students. Information about shared apartments is often shared through personal connections and WhatsApp groups. Renting a private apartment independently can be more expensive and should be arranged well in advance due to high demand, however, it is not impossible.

Getting around the city

Public transportation is excellent, with an extensive network of buses, metro lines, and trams throughout the city. For daily commuting, it is highly recommended to purchase a semester-long student pass. In addition, there are various shared mobility options such as electric scooters and bicycles. If possible, choosing a bicycle or bringing your own is often the fastest way to get around the city. The prices of groceries and everyday goods are reasonable and comparable to those in Hungary, although services and entertainment tend to be slightly more expensive, something students should be prepared for.

Travel around

From Vienna, Bratislava can be reached very quickly by train, making it an ideal destination for a day trip. Prague and other cities in the Czech Republic are also accessible within a few hours by rail. Western Austrian cities are likewise easy to reach by train, allowing mountain and nature lovers to fully enjoy what Austria has to offer.



University

The campus is huge, having multiple bus lines just to get from one point to the other and many-many free-to-use facilities, including gyms, swimming pools, football, running, tennis, and squash courts, just to mention a few, as well as numerous student clubs to participate in, so the student life is very diverse and vibrant in general. The business school consists of 3 interconnected buildings, and while the buildings are not as high-tech as one would expect from a university like NUS, the classrooms are all very well-equipped. One clear advantage of NUS are the number of eating possibilities (many restaurants in every part of the campus and they are available for a very cheap price, from 4 SGD), many many cafeterias and many places to study.

About the classes, the difficulty also depends on the courses taken, but overall, the workload is easy to manage, and with the majority of the course requirements being assignments and presentations, most of the cohort didn't have any midterms or final exams. About the electives, we had around 15 subjects to choose from, which also naturally gave us a great mix of CEMS exchange students, first-year home students and students from other NUS masters, while for the mandatory GL where the exchangees were all together.

The uni gave us a great schedule opportunity, where most people could fit their classes in two-two and a half days (usually Monday-Tuesday) and the rest of the week could be spent on travelling and exploring.

CEMS life

I have really enjoyed my time in the CEMS Club Singapore, and they made sure that there were regular events and opportunities to get to know each other. However, a clear disadvantage of Singapore's CEMS Club is that the vast majority of the CEMS students are exchangees, so in opposition to Budapest's, where there are many enthusiastic home students who want to make the exchangees feel welcomed, sharing tips & tricks and local hidden gems, here, we had to discover these all for ourselves. Nonetheless, the fact that we all were in the same shoes had created many bonding experiences.

This semester, we had around 40 CEMS students. This was an ideal size of a cohort, as it is not too much but you can still find your friend circle. There were many organic factors that have created cliques though, like nationality (out of the 40, we had around 8 German-, 6 Italian-, 7 Chinese-, and 6 French-speaking people), housing (many people intentionally or unintentionally lived in the same apartment complexes), and previous connections and friendships, which made it harder from time to time to be included in some of the spontaneous activities.

Beyond this, however, the social life was very diverse and enjoyable and the social team tried their best to organize a great variety of activities. For example, as Singapore is a mix of cultures, we had the chance to discover different traditions and cuisines together, but we also made some sightseeing trips and hikes here and there. Although nightlife is not very active nor very affordable, we had drinks together from time to time as well and there was a party people circle too. Furthermore, due to Singapore's size, we also made a lot of trips together abroad, and you could always find a travel buddy no matter where and when you went.

Accommodation

In a nutshell, it won't be difficult to find an accommodation in Singapore, but it will be quite expensive; in return, however, you are likely to have at least a swimming pool and a gym in your apartment complex.

It's important to note that while on paper, applying for on-campus student dorms is possible, in reality, the chances to actually get it are very-very low. Many of these are very cheap compared to regular housing, and can come with meal plans too, so it can still be worth a try. One of my friends tried his very best to get in, not only applying, but reapplying and writing multiple emails about it asking to be considered, and he ended up getting in, but being the only one from the whole cohort. So while it is not impossible, one should plan with having to find accommodation themselves.

When searching for accommodation many people recommended PropertyGuru (has both a website and an app). I also recommend Casa Mia if you are looking for even cheaper options, but be prepared that they are very slow when it comes to giving back your deposit. Searching for the right accommodation can sometimes be tricky though: some of the options are only available for people spending at least half a year or even longer here, so finding a 3-4-month lease option eliminates a few of the possibilities.

Unfortunately, rent is definitely the biggest cost of the semester, so having a whole apartment is more or less impossible, as renting a room itself is already very expensive, ranging between S\$1000-2500. The lower end is only possible if one stays at the landlord and settles for less well-equipped rooms and facilities, but a high-quality condo can be rented for 1400-1900 SGD. So overall, a small windowless room with a single bed on the outskirts of the city would cost "only" around S\$1100, while a room with a queen-sized bed and windows closer to the city center would be rather S\$1600-1900. One important thing is that these prices are usually negotiable, and thus it shouldn't be hard to decrease the price by a few hundred dollars.

An additional factor to consider could be renting it with other CEMSies, which could definitely bring you closer to people (and also the party), which would of course make things less flexible.

Regarding location, as Singapore is very small, most places are fine in terms of distance but still commuting 1 hour to the uni can be soulless. The things to consider would be the proximity of the city center, the Business School of NUS, and the airport. Renting accommodation along the green, East-West metro line or the yellow, Circle Line can be ideal. Because of these, staying on Clementi Road, or in Holland Village or Queenstown could be the most ideal or optionally, the Downtown is a good option along the Blue Line.

Getting around the city

Getting around in Singapore is quite easy: the city itself is quite small, and it has a web of metros and buses, covering every part of the city, therefore, it shouldn't take too long to get to anywhere (most things are reachable within 1-1.5 hours). All of the public transportation options have touchpay, meaning that it's enough to carry your physical or digital debit card and tap in and out, however, I suggest obtaining a transport card since making journeys are cheaper this way. Public transport is quite expensive, with bus and metro rides ranging between S\$1 and S\$3 a ride, and using a bank card makes it slightly more expensive. Despite Singapore's modern and citizen-friendly infrastructure, there are no nightbuses, so between around midnight and 6 am, taking a cab is the only option, making nightlife even more expensive, however, if you can split the ride with someone(s), one ride typically cost only around 3-6 SGDs per person.

For taxi, the two main apps are Grab and Gojek, (not only in Singapore, but around many countries of the region) with the first being the most popular, especially because of it being a super app, so people can not only order a "grab" with it, but also food, clothes and medicine too, and it's commonly used for payments as well. Cabs can be relatively expensive, but if you can share it with 3-4 people, it can be worth it over (the normal rates of) public transport.

Travel around

While Singapore is amazing as it is, most tourists would spend a few days here only, and understandably so, as the core sights here could be covered over a long weekend (max 4 days), and South-East Asia has a lot more to offer.

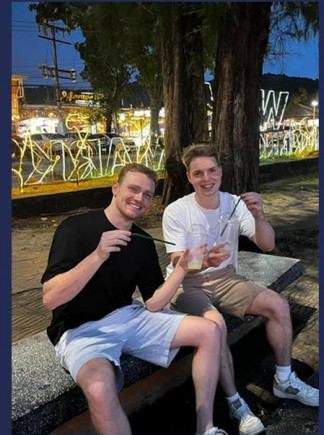
In Singapore, the must-sees are the Gardens by the Bay (lightshow at the Supertrees at night take place two times a day) and all its sights (misting at Cloud Forest at every even hour), the Marina Bay Sands (watershow at the skyline at 21:00 and 22:00), the Merlion, the Botanical Gardens, the Chinese Indian and Arabic districts. The Boat and Clark quays are where the bars and some of the clubs are located, and regarding clubbing, Marquee is famous, having world class DJs from time to time, Zouk is the locals' favorite, Ce La Vi having the best views, and Dashi Go-Go. Singapore's animal parks are also outstanding, as besides a regular zoo, they also have the Rainforest Wild, the Bird Paradise, the Night Safari and the River Wonders too, each offering slightly different experiences. The city has many national parks as well, which can be ideal for a walk (they usually call them hikes but it's nowhere near to what we are used to), like MacRitchie, Bukit Timah or the Southern Ridges, and (parts of) the Rail Corridor or the East-West trail can be a nice challenge too. Regarding beaches, Sentosa Island (this is the "holiday Island" with many beaches, and many attractions) and the East Coast are famous.

There are many places ideal for a daytrip or weekend getaway from Singapore, with Johor Bahru (JB) being the most popular, as it is only one regular bus away, and it's quite cheap to stay, eat, do shopping, or have some wellness and spa activities. Additionally, there are many little islands in Indonesia like Batam or Bintan which are just a few-hour ferry ride away. Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur or Melacca can also be ideal for weekend trips, and usually it's cheaper to go by bus.

Flying out of Singapore is also relatively cheap, prices are comparable to flights in Europe (actually many times cheaper because the baggage fees are less), however the distances here are usually bigger. Food and accommodation are also cheaper than European prices, so travel altogether can be affordable with planning. Typical destinations include Indonesia (Bali, Ijen, Surabaya), Thailand (Bangkok, Krabi, Phi Phi, Phuket), Vietnam (Da Nang (Hoi An - lantern festival every 14th day of the lunar month), Ha Long, Ha Giang Loop), South Korea (Seoul, Jeju), Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Myanmar, Philippines (Cebu, El Nido - usually CEMS Club organizes the recess week trip here), Japan (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka), Cambodia, or even Australia. While most of them are visa free (Cambodia is an exception), most of them also requires a pre-filled form before you enter.

I think Singapore itself is very nice and has a lot to do and see, but what makes it a popular exchange destination is definitely the countries nearby, and although travelling throughout the semester can be costly, it is definitely an experience of a lifetime.





University

Keio University is a very prestigious private university in Tokyo. It has students from very prominent families, and some people would consider it a bit posh. In Japanese, there's a widely known term called "Keio boy," which refers to the typical rich, player-type guys who often attend Keio.

CEMS plays a relatively small role in university life, and not many Japanese students apply to the program, partly because English proficiency is generally lower than what we are used to in Europe. There are interesting classes you can take, but I wouldn't say they are very demanding. Your experience can vary a lot depending on which classes you choose, as they are offered by three different faculties. The Graduate School of Economics is generally considered more difficult, with exams at the end of the semester, while Media Design is more relaxed and less exam-heavy. In the Business School, you usually work together with MBA students, and the courses are more project- and coursework-based. Side note: I really recommend taking Japanese, it was amazing and also useful in daily life!

CEMS life

CEMS life is quite unique in the sense that there are no "home" students, since everyone spends both semesters abroad, and the cohort is quite small. In my case, we were only 12 people, but if you're lucky like I was and get an amazing group, it actually has many advantages over larger cohorts. We were able to organize programs very organically, travel across Japan together, and became close friends very quickly. I wouldn't really describe it as a CEMS club—we were more like a friend group doing whatever we felt like.

Accommodation

I lived in one of the dorms provided by Keio, and I can really recommend it. I basically had a hotel-like room just for myself, with a bathroom, fridge, and everything except a kitchen, which was shared across the floor. There was also a cafeteria where you could buy very cheap breakfast and dinner during the week.

The dorms are located near the Hiyoshi Campus, which means about a 30-minute commute to central Tokyo. A side note: Tokyo doesn't really have one city centre, but several, so you'll need to travel anyway. I chose the dorm because I wanted to avoid a morning commute to university, which is possible if you don't have early classes on the Mita campus. Also, the administrative side of living in the dorm is much easier than renting.

It might seem like the dorms are far from the city, but due to the very convenient transport system, you don't really feel it. However, if you see yourself going out partying in Shibuya often, I would recommend renting something closer, as trains don't run after midnight and taxis can get quite expensive.

Getting around the city

The only really expensive part of living in Tokyo is transportation. Whether within the city or across Japan, you'll definitely spend more than you'd like on trains. On the plus side, they are always on time, very clean, and extremely convenient, with frequent service. If possible, try to avoid commuting during rush hours in the morning and afternoon. Being pushed into trains and standing like sardines is a very real and regular experience at those times.

Travel around

I'm someone who loves exploring and going on new adventures, and Japan is perfect for that—you simply won't get bored. Whatever you're looking for, you'll find it. Dreamy tropical beaches, surfing, or scuba diving? Go to Okinawa. Ancient cities and history? Kyoto is your place. Big city vibes? Tokyo or Osaka. Amazing ski resorts? Nagano, Niigata, or Hokkaido. And everywhere you go—great food and great atmosphere.

My personal favourites were Kyushu, as well as Mie and Wakayama prefectures. I highly recommend getting lost in the countryside and staying in ryokans and visiting onsens. You might have the chance later in life to visit the more popular and accessible places, but now you have the time to go beyond that.

I truly had the time of my life there and took every opportunity to explore as much as I could. I also organized all the trips for our cohort, so if you need any recommendations, feel free to text me. (@polli_auguszt)





REST OF THE WORLD

AUSTRALIA, The University of Sydney

University

Most classes for business students were either 9-5 ones (only for a quarter semester), or half-day workshops (for the full semester). The former required more listening, the latter focused more on active participation. In general, classes required you to read about, or even prepare writings/questions/observations about the topic before the class took place. Workshops also usually required journals or posts about the overall experience etc. after each class.

Some classes relied on more regular tests/blogs/exercises, others more on end-term exams. All exams were open book.

The University buildings themselves (at least the ones you will likely go to) are clean and modern, with plenty of spaces/cubicles to study alone or with your group. There are many libraries as well, especially on the main campus.

I really enjoyed the class 'Managing People and Organisations'. We tried out simulations, we discussed many different issues in groups, we relied heavily on our own perspectives and ideas, and the class overall had a really nice atmosphere.

CEMS life

The club hosted various social events, especially in the beginning of the semester. There were chances to meet CEMS USYD alumni as well.

Accommodation

During my semester, I was fortunate enough to spend my time at an acquaintance's place. However, the university offers multiple dormitory options, which vary in price. Friends abroad also recommended flat-share, but those should be found way ahead in advance.

As to where you should stay, it depends on where your classes would take place. However, as business students you will mostly be situated in the Business School building near Town Hall, and sometimes the Abercrombie building near Redfern. For this reason, I think the best option for accommodation would be near the Central station if you want to spend less time travelling. However, the northern, or beachy areas are a bit calmer if that's what you're looking for.

Getting around the city

Public transportation is usually reliable within the city. I mostly used the trains, which run very often (5-10 minutes during the day), however the trams and buses cover more areas. Buses are much cheaper than the other two, but they can be quite late. Before your student ID arrives, you will need to pay full amount (you can use your credit card which you will need to tap on and off the vehicles). After that, you can order a concession Opal card, with a reduced fee of 50%. In total, with additional cruising and travelling, I spent approximately 120-150 AUD a month. (There is a maximum amount you can spend a day, after that all rides are free. Also, on some holidays you can travel for free as well.)

Travel around

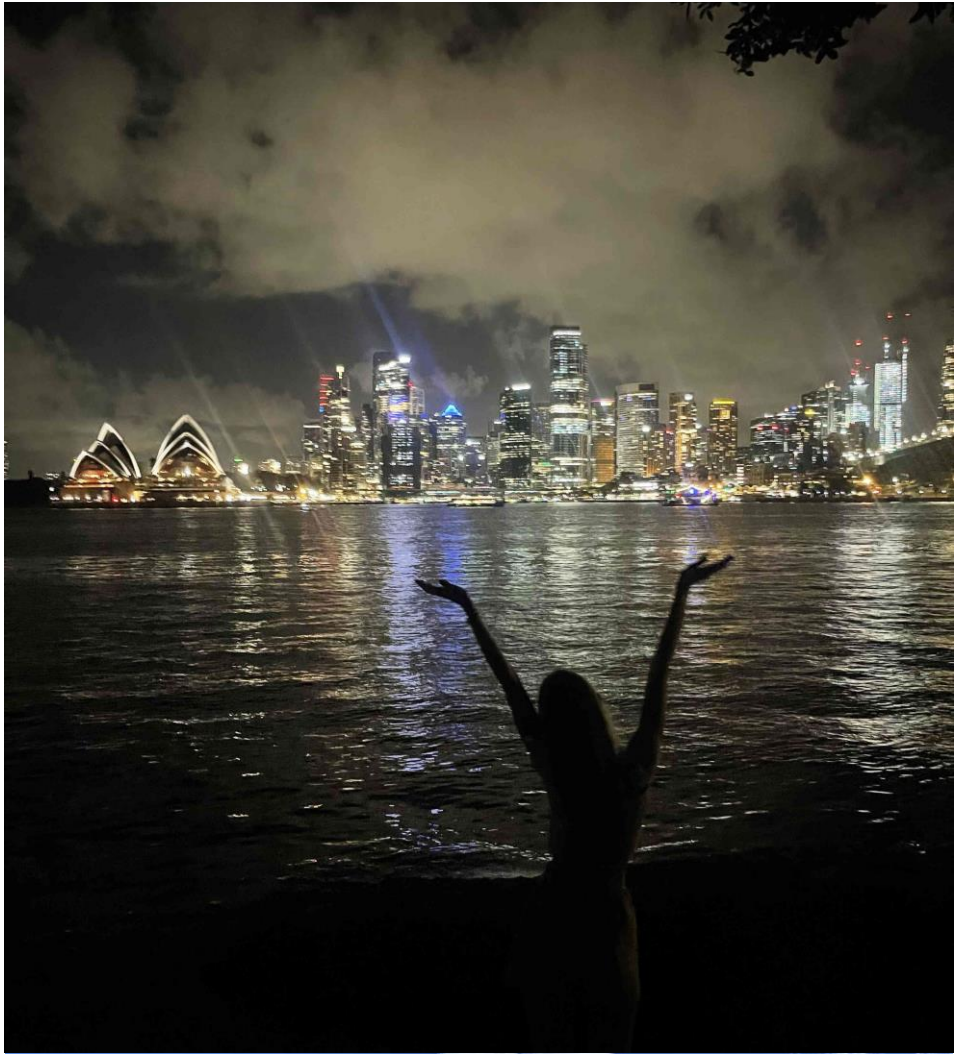
I think the most popular ones, such as the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge, and Bondi beach are all worth seeing. But since Sydney is so huge, there are countless sights to see. I personally loved the Northern beaches and the Dee Why area. Manly beach and Watsons Bay are both great for longer hikes with beautiful sights. The Blue Mountains are also definitely worth to see, with many different paths for shorter and longer walks.

For longer trips, I can recommend visiting Tasmania, which has a diverse landscape and many animals you can see in the wild (not the scary ones). The Great Ocean Road is also a great trip alongside the coast near Melbourne.

In any case, be prepared for unexpected rain and always use sunscreen/hats!

Other tips

It's never too early to start preparing for your flight, Visa, and accommodation options!



CHILE, Universidad Adolfo Ibanez

University

The university is located an hour away from the city, approachable by free transfer buses. Not many activities at the university, but many freely organized programmes. I recommend taking Non-market strategy and Negotiations.

CEMS life

There were activities, but less than in Budapest. This was not necessarily a problem, because Chileans are very welcoming, so there were many activities organized randomly, where everyone could participate, so I think it is different but you have the same amount of opportunities.

Accommodation

I had a room in a 6 person house in Las Condes, near los Dominicos, where one of the shuttle bus departs. The uni did not provide housing. I paid 320.000 pesos per month (330 euros).

I recommend Las Condes, Providencia, Vitacura and maybe la Reina. The city center is considered dangerous, don't live there.

I went there without having a room, I stayed in hostels and airbnbs. It was fine, but I don't recommend it. Visit this site: compartodepto.cl

Getting around the city

On public transport there are no passes for exchange students, so every time you have to buy a line ticket. This costs around 1.5 euros. Many people don't buy tickets. Chileans usually have a car, and if you become friends with them, they take you home.

Travel around

Hiking. More hiking. Go to Atacama, go to Patagonia, surfing, and if you can, visit the surrounding countries. Many people did hikes in the Torres del Paine national park, my advise is to go 100%, but start planning as early as possible, because you have to book campsites as well.

Other tips

Our group didn't even try to get the student visa, because the ones who tried did not get it even after we left the country, and it was just hustle and money paid for nothing. You don't need it, but only if you leave the country (the tourist visa is valid for 90 days, so if you are there for longer, you must leave).

Some Chilean websites don't accept foreign cards. This could be an issue, especially if you want to buy flight tickets from Chile. Our groupmates were really kind, they helped us even with this.

Chileans don't like heating, at the beginning of September it was really freezing, so take warm clothing as well. Students don't dress up as professionally as in Budapest, so you don't need many clothes.

Ask me anything (Fanni Szabó), my whatsapp: +36302631847



