



Master studies in the United Kingdom

Before departure

When the application period for exchange studies opened, I was excited about how many different universities around the world I could apply for. I chose to apply for exchange studies in the United Kingdom because I wanted to attend a university with high English proficiency and experience British culture. I read the old travel reports, and Newcastle sounded like a smaller and more vibrant city perfect for a student. As well, the semester periods were aligned perfect with the semesters back home. I was provided a student VISA by the university, since the United Kingdom is not in the EU, but I did not need it to pass the border. I only needed the passport. Before arriving in Newcastle I had to choose some courses I were supposed to take during the semester.

Upon arrival

I arrived the day before the introduction week. Newcastle University arranged a welcome at the airport for all incoming exchange students and offered free transportation to the accommodation. During the first week there were a lot of welcoming activities, providing information about registration processes and recommendations for the upcoming semester. Apart from the academic introduction, there were activities during the evenings to meet new people and guided trips to familiarise yourself with the city. The second day I was there, the student union arranged a big welcoming party for all the exchange student, where I met some of the friends I would spend a lot of time with.

Financials

I applied for the Erasmus scholarship, which covered most of the cost of accommodation. The cost for food was in general lower than in Stockholm, and you could save a lot of money going to the bigger supermarkets like Aldi, Lidl or Asda. Eating on restaurants and going to cinema etc, was in the same price range as back home. I recommend to have some money saved up because the accommodation was paid in one large payment for the whole semester.

Accommodation

The University offered accommodation in corridors, but I chose to find housing by myself. I applied for accommodation from a company called Erasmus Living, which I recommend. They provide various types of houses for students staying at least one semester. The house was a twenty minute walk from the campus, and was just outside the city centre. I lived together with six other exchange students in the house whom I got along with very well

University and studies

The University was very big and included all types of academic backgrounds. Back home I took the environmental track at SUPD, thus I tried to find courses that were related. With the help of an appointed supervisor, I managed to change one of the courses that I previously had chosen. The courses I attended were either 5 credits or 10 credits each. The lectures were often two hours long with a small break after the first hour.

Courses

CME8055 - Energy storage and sources

Background on energy storage like conventional batteries, photovoltaics and fuel cells. The course covered energy production with biofuels and various types of applications of energy storage applications in the transport industry. This course consisted of lectures 4 days a week for two months time, and then 1-2 months of time for revision. At the end of the semester, there was one big exam for the course content. Really recommend this course if you like independent study and have an interest in renewable energy production for transport sector.

ACE3000 - Globalisation: Processes, Patterns and Challenges

The course provided an understanding of global challenges of the 21st century, and the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation. The course was based on seminars once a week and an exam in the end of the semester. Before each seminar, we were given a task to do, often a literature review which were to be discussed during the seminar. The tasks were quite time-demanding but gave a good background before each seminar.

SPG8024 - Quantifying Energy Decision Making

This course gave an overview of energy production systems, both conventional and renewable. The lectures were combined with seminars and tutorials where we practiced energy calculation and cost-benefit analysis. As a final part of the course, each student was given an individual project on an energy system. The purpose was to implement everything we had learned from the course and make a cost-benefit appraisal. This was the best course I attended.

SPG8007 - Renewable Energy: Technology for Circular and hydrogen economies

The course covered various kinds of engineering aspects for hydrogen production and bioelectrical systems. It was a combination of regular lectures and group work in pairs. The course was examined by a pass/fail group presentation and an individual report.

City and country

The city was much smaller than Stockholm, and you could reach everything by walking. Newcastle is a student city, with a lot of activities to do outside of studies. During most weekends parties were arranged for exchange students as well as day trips and tours within the city. During the weekends a

company called Lundgrens Tours arranged trips to cities around the United Kingdom. I attended some of the trips, and can really recommend going on the three-day trip to the Scottish highlands. Newcastle is close to the coast, only a 30 minute ride with the metro from the city. There is a small beautiful town called Tynemouth, with a lot of beaches where students go surfing when the weather is nice.

Leisure and social activities

The university offers a lot of societies and sports clubs for the students. I joined the table tennis club, we had sessions twice a week. I noticed that it was not many exchange students that joined the societies, but I recommend joining the society or club because it is a good way of meeting the British. The student union constantly post activities on their website, and it is almost impossible to go a day without doing anything. The university had a brand new gym that was available for the students for 90 pounds for the whole semester.

Sustainability

I travelled to Newcastle by airplane, since it would be inconvenient to go by busses and train. In Newcastle, there is a great opportunity for public transport, both metro and busses. Since the city is relatively small I recommend buying a used bike or walking everywhere. All materials for course content were available in the school library or through the canvas, there was no need to buy any new books.

Other recommendations and observations

Enjoy your time, it passes by very quickly. Newcastle is in the middle of the UK, which makes it perfect for exploring the rest of the country.