

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name**

Balu Suresh

Year and term for exchange

Aug '18 to Jan '19

Exchange university

Newcastle University

Degree programme

Masters in Architecture

Experience Worth going for !

Before departure

.. I was looking forward for a different experience and a change of my comfort zone. Since I'm a non EU student and I thought it would be great to try out various way of educational approach towards Architecture. I chose Newcastle University because of its great quality of tutors and also its in the UK (English Speaking country). From a personal point of view I always wanted to travel to the UK since I have heard a lot about the country from my friends and colleagues, Exchange semester t thought was the prefect opportunity. I wanted to compare and Experience the Studio culture in the UK and I was really excited for that. Since I'm from India I needed a Student visa for the travel. So I applied for the Visa 3 months before my day of travel to the UK, Later I got a Short Term student Visa which was valid for 6 months

Upon arrival

I reached a week before my courses started. I would say it was worth going a week before because there where a lot of student introduction activities happening at the University organised by the student union. I was given a calendar with all the information and the guide for the city. This helped me to organise myself

Financials

I received almost the 75 percent of the scholarship money from KTH 2 weeks before my travel for the exchange. Compared to Sweden Newcastle was really cheap in all means. I will realise from the first time when you pay your Uber driver. The groceries and the housing where comparatively cheaper than expected.

Accommodation

I actually researched about the accommodation on Facebook before my Travel. I found a page called "Erasmus Living" this is a private company runs by few older students of the city. They have really good options of housing. Their rents are comparatively lesser than the ones offered directly by the Newcastle University. I'm really happy with their hospitality and you could sign the contract for just 6 months with one month deposit. I highly recommend.

University and studies

I had my best time in Newcastle university. Very informative classes. To be honest I would say the courses where a bit intense compared to the ones in KTH. For my studio we literally had 2.5 months for the whole semester and this consists of the main studio and one seminar. Towards the end the submission was a research paper for the seminar.

Courses

The course structure was pretty similar to the ones at KTH, only thing was it started late and hence there was only 2.5 months for the semester, I guess it's a usual UK school timings. We had very detailed course reviews every week for the design problem and Wednesday we had seminars focussing "Tools of architecture thinking" This course is really a brain storming session for ideas and thought which we could relate to the main design problem. The credit system was almost similar with KTH.

City and country

I was quite surprised with the city. Thinking that Stockholm was such a small city, on reaching Newcastle it surprised me because I found it smaller than Stockholm. Beautiful city and really outgoing people all around the city. The people are so welcoming and the hospitality was superb.

Leisure and social activities

University had a bunch of sports activities including rugby, football, gym etc. Newcastle is also famous for its night life, the cafes and pubs are very impressive and cheap. Stockholmers will definitely love it.

Other recommendations and observations

My suggestion is try to get accommodation via "Erasmus Living", Its not as cold as Stockholm. I found the experience was worth it and definitely recommend doing Exchange at Newcastle University.