

Universitetet i Tromsø – Norges arktiske universitet

Exchange start semester	Autumn semester 2023
Study level	Graduate (Master)
Home faculty at GU	Faculty of Social Sciences
Studies at GU	Human Rights

Courses during exchange

- IND-3025: Introduction to Indigenous Studies
- HIF-3620: Indigenous Revitalization – Languages, Literature and Arts
- HIS-3005: History of Indigenous Peoples – Indigenous people, ethnic minorities and the multi-cultural society in the North

Main difference compared to studying at GU

The difficulty in receiving aid and adaptations for my disability; how the courses were organised, as we had to take three courses at the same time; and the organisation and type of the final exams we had to do, as they occurred in the span of three weeks and two of them were hall exams (even though they were in the fields of history and humanities).

Arrival, orientation and housing

The university had an orientation week, which I didn't participate in fully, but I did attend their nature excursion which was a treat. They also had a much appreciated newsletter which provided students with many tips on events and activities happening in the city, at campus and in the nearby nature areas. Tromsø is a very active city compared to others I know, and there were a lot of scenes and groups in which one could get involved. I quickly made friends with another Swede, who lived next door to me, and eventually other international students as well. I'm used to moving around, so I didn't have a lot of trouble settling in. Having arrived early, I had a lot of time to explore before the semester began in earnest.

Finances

Even though I lived in student housing, the rent was the highest I have ever paid. Going out to eat was also very expensive, but the campus did have cafeterias where meals were cheaper for students, as well as weekly events with low cost or free food. Likewise, the cost of groceries was high. I also experienced their healthcare, which was more expensive than Sweden's. In terms of spare time activities, however, there was a lot to do for free or for a low fee.

Life in a new country/culture

My experience was both good and bad. I had amazing times spent on hikes and shorter walks in the one-of-a-kind landscapes, I met interesting people from all over the world, I found the local society to be mostly pleasant and friendly, and I became involved with local political organisers and activists towards the end of my stay which was the most fruitful experience of them all, for both my education and my soul. But there were things about Norwegian society that I found very challenging, and at one point I thought I might have to cut my studies short and return home. The student housing became almost uninhabitable because of the construction sites right next to and below it, which caused me major health problems from the stress and lack of sleep. Neither the municipality or the student housing administration saw the issue in this, so they did virtually nothing to mitigate the situation for me and my neighbours. I attribute this to the highly bureaucratic culture and the Norwegian laws which (in practice) allow for construction noise to go on in residential areas from 07:00 in the morning to 23:00 at night, six days a week. This is definitely something to keep in mind when finding a place to live in Norway.

Overall exchange experience

As mentioned above, my experience was both good and bad. I tried many new things and made many new connections. The university was not as well-organised as I was used to, which is an opinion most, if not all, students I have talked to have agreed with. As a disabled student, finding out what the procedures were to receive aid and adaptations felt like a maze. I usually didn't know if my requests would be honoured until last minute. Still, I very much enjoyed my time abroad and my studies at UiT, even though I thought more than once that I might not make it through.