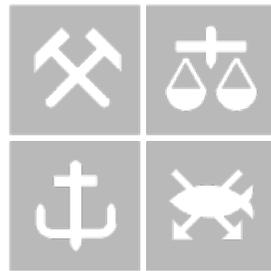


LAPPEENRANTA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

NHH



NORGES HANDELSHØYSKOLE

**Exchange report: Norwegian School of Economics**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE EXCHANGE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. NHH.....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1. ORIENTATION WEEK.....	3
2.2. LANGUAGE COURSES.....	3
2.3. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND EXAMS.....	3
<b>3. PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND SERVICES TO THE EXCHANGE STUDENTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1. HOUSING.....	4
3.2. HEALTH SERVICES .....	5
3.3. INTERNATIONAL SERVICES .....	6
3.4. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION AND PAYING WITH CARD .....	6
<b>4. REVIEW OF COMPLETED COURSES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1. NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE III: NORWEGIAN BUSINESS AND SOCIETY .....	7
4.2. BEHAVIORAL BUSINESS STRATEGY .....	7
4.3. BRAND EQUITY AND PRICING .....	7
<b>5. BERGEN .....</b>	<b>8</b>
5.1. FREE TIME ACTIVITIES.....	9

## 1. PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE EXCHANGE

Preparing yourself for the exchange in Bergen is fairly easy as Norway is one of the Nordic countries. In fact most of the preparation I did was reading about Norway and the city itself. All the formal things that I needed to do was to fill in an application form for NHH, preselect my courses, apply for student housing, take care of my travel insurance and buy flights. I did not have to apply for a visa or a residence permit, I just simply made a notification for Ministry of Foreign Affairs that I will be moving to Norway. I also recommend you to change some kroners, since you might need it for buying a bus ticket etc. In case you intend to do some hiking (highly recommended) you should pack warm, wind-proof clothes and a pair of hiking boots with you. Since it also rains a lot, rain boots are a must as well as an umbrella or a raincoat.

I travelled to Bergen with SAS, but there are other possible airlines as well. Anyone travelling to Norway and having a connecting local flight has to check in their luggage again and go through security. I had a one-hour layover in Oslo before my connecting flight to Bergen and I suggest having an hour or more to change flights - checking in your luggage again can be a hassle. In Bergen it was very easy to find your way to the university and student accommodation. What made the trip a bit harder was that we had to pick up our keys from the Student Center (located in the center but up a few steep hills) before going to the apartment and with all the luggage it was a trouble. That day it also happened to rain a lot, so you can only imagine my relief when I finally arrived to the student accommodation. You can make your way to the center/student accommodation either by taking Flybussen, which is a special airport shuttle from the airport and it goes both to the center and to Handelshoyskolen (NHH busstop). It costs approximately 15 euros. But if you want to save money, it is easy to get to the center with public transportation, Skyss, and then in the center change into a bus, which goes to Handelshoyskolen.

## 2. NHH

Norwegian School of Economics (*Norges Handelshoyskolen*) was founded in 1936 and it is the oldest school of economics in Norway. It is one of the best, if not the best, school of economics in the country and its “rival” school is BI in Oslo. The school has a very international profile with professors from various countries, exchange students and foreign master’s students. The school has various partner universities around the world and it’s part of CEMS. Student life in NHH is very lively, and there are frequent parties for both local and exchange students.



NHH campus

## **2.1. Orientation week**

The orientation week started 15th of August, a week before the beginning of the courses. NHH had organized programme for the whole week. During the daytime more formal programme took place, such as presentations about NHH, course registration, guilds and clubs, health services, student housing, and Norwegian language and culture. The first day we were divided into smaller tutor groups, and in the evenings our tutors organized programme for the groups. We also had mutual programme, where we could meet other exchange students. In order to attend all the evening events and parties it was mandatory to buy a bracelet, which gave access to all the parties, which included a pub crawl, toga party, sports day, freshmen party, but also non-alcoholic activities, such as a boat ride with a dinner and rafting. NHH also has its own club called "Kjellaren", where some of the parties were thrown. The course registration was also done during the welcome week, but there was a possibility to make changes later on.

## **2.2. Language courses**

NHH provides three Norwegian language courses: Norwegian I, Norwegian III and Norwegian III: Norwegian economy and society. All of these courses are not organized every semester and since this fall Norwegian II was not provided, I decided to choose Norwegian III. It was a more advance course but I think it is suitable for people who have already studied Swedish. I also visited Norwegian I and in my opinion it might not be challenging enough for people who already know Swedish, since it is a very basic course. In addition to the language courses, it was possible to attend discussion groups, where we could practice our Norwegian with the local students.

## **2.3. Academic calendar and exams**

The courses kicked off right after the welcome week. In the first week of teaching it was possible to "shop" as many courses as possible, and after attending the first lectures decide which ones to take. It was possible to withdraw from a course up until mid-

semester. The lectures ended in November, after which we had time to study for our exams. The exams were organized from late November until late December. I had my exams in the end of November and the beginning of December, so I had two weeks to study. There were no holidays during the semester, however the schedules were fairly flexible.

The courses, which include a term paper, have a shorter exam for 3 hours, while courses without a term paper have a four-hour exam. Sometimes the instructions from the supervisors were quite short and unclear, but overall the exams work almost the same way as in Finland. Exams are written on a special exam paper, which makes three copies (one for you to keep and two for the exam supervisors) and using a ballpoint pen with ink is mandatory. One of my courses had an electronic exam, which meant that I wrote the exam on my own computer in the exam hall. Before the exam you were asked to download special software on your computer, which blocks all the other applications during the exams.

### **3. PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND SERVICES TO THE EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

Most of the student services were provided by SIB, which is the student service organization in Bergen. SIB is in charge of the housing, health services, and gym. Regarding your courses and exchange related things it was easy to contact the exchange coordinators.

#### ***3.1. Housing***

Housing was organized by SIB. As there were more exchange students as normally, it took a while to get the accommodation, but there were no problems with that. SIB has apartments all around Bergen, and most of the student apartments are studios with own or shared bathroom and a shared kitchen but there are also family apartments available.

I lived in Hatleberg, which is the closest student accommodation to NHH. Additionally, there are available options in the private market and many Norwegian students going for exchange are looking for sub-tenants. The average price for a room is 400-500 euros, including the Internet. An additional 40 euros had to be paid for electricity each month.



View from my window

### **3.2. Health services**

Health services were provided by SIB. I used the health services twice and I always received excellent service and I didn't have to wait too long for my appointment. SIB covers all the charges exceeding 500 NOK, although I had a travel insurance, which covered also my medical bills. The average price for a normal visit to a doctor is around

300 NOK. I also used the dentist services, which operated in the same location as the doctor. The prices were student friendly.

### ***3.3. International services***

Contacting the exchange coordinators was always very easy and they replied fast. It was possible to ask about course selections or any general issues regarding the exchange. They also highlighted that we could contact them anytime we have an issue or a concern.

NHH also has a special International Committee, which organizes events for the exchange students. It is possible to join the committee, as well as the school's multiple other clubs. The events organized by the International Committee last Fall included beer pong tournament, cabin trip, mountain hike, curling, world dinner, and farewell dinner.

### ***3.4. Local transportation and paying with card***

Travelling in Bergen is easy and busses run regularly. The public transportation is organized by Skyss and it is possible to purchase a monthly travel card for students, which is 460 NOK per month. NHH is located quite close to the center and the travel takes about 10 minutes with bus. The travel card can be purchased at Skyss office in Bergen Storsenter or by using a mobile app.

International debit and credit cards are accepted in most places. However, sometimes a Norwegian debit card is required, for example when buying a movie ticket online or paying in a hospital, so I advice you to have cash with you at all times. Nordea works great in Norway and it is possible to withdraw money without any extra charges at Nordea ATMs.

## **4. REVIEW OF COMPLETED COURSES**

### ***4.1. Norwegian language III: Norwegian Business and Society***

The course was conducted in Norwegian and it included both grammar and studies on Norwegian society and economy. We also studied special vocabulary for economics and politics. The course included class discussions about current topics. At the end of the course we had an oral exam and a listening exam. We also did a couple of smaller essays and a final report, which was about 5 pages long. The course was 7.5 credits. Overall, this was a great course and I learned a great deal about the society in Norway and the Norwegian language itself.

### ***4.2. Behavioral Business Strategy***

This was the first time that the course was taught. Since the field of behavioral business strategy is new there were many concepts, which were interrelated. Overall I think this is a good course for students majoring especially in management, HR and marketing. The course handled how companies can utilize their knowledge on human behavior and heuristics to influence people's behavior and finally business outcomes. The theories were also applied in real life situations, such as bargaining situations, incentives and performance, contract design, and decision-making processes in groups. This course was 7.5 credits.

### ***4.3. Brand equity and pricing***

This course handled the basics of brand equity and brand management. The course also handled how to measure brand equity and how to make pricing decisions. The professor used many real life examples and encouraged us to participate during the lectures. The course included a term paper, in which we were asked to choose a certain

brand and study its brand associations and request certain brand extensions. We also had a three-hour exam on the main topics of the course. This course was 7.5 credits.

## 5. BERGEN

Bergen is situated in Hordaland County, on the west coast of Norway. It is the second largest city in Norway and there are approximately 280 000 inhabitants. In the greater Bergen metropolitan area there are about 420 000 inhabitants. King Olav Kyrre founded Bergen in 1070 and due to its strong tradition of trading and fish industry it served as Norway's capital in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The weather in Bergen is relatively mild because the Gulf Stream warms up the sea and the seven mountains surrounding Bergen protect it from cold winds. Bergen has been said to be one of the rainiest cities in Europe, but there are many sunny days as well. However when it rains in Bergen, it really rains, so be prepared!



Bergen center

As you might have guessed, the price level is a bit higher compared to Finland, but in my opinion, not significantly higher. Food is a bit more expensive and you can expect to pay around 1.3 times more on your usual shopping than in Finland. Clothes are in the same price range, with only a few euros price difference. What's the most expensive thing in Norway is eating in a restaurant and buying alcohol and cigarettes. Eating in a restaurant is normally around 20 euros, with one main course and a non-alcoholic drink, while one beer can be up to 10 euros in a bar.

## 5.1. Free time activities

Bergen is a lively student city with two big universities, NHH and University of Bergen. During the weekend the center is always full of people and there are many things to do. International committee organizes parties regularly, mostly during the week, but on the weekends you can find many bars and clubs in the center. However, since alcohol is very expensive and bars close already at 2.30am, I did not party that much. Luckily many exchange students are excited to explore Norway and its breathtaking nature, so you will have something to do every weekend.



Tourism is relatively high in Bergen and there are many great spots to visit. Especially during the summer months you can see almost more tourists than Norwegians in the city. Bryggen, which is a World Culture Heritage site, is the most visited attraction in Bergen. However, you can also take Floybanen up Mount Floyen or a cable car up Mount Ulriken. These are also very popular and fairly easy hiking routes. Fjord cruises are also

popular but they can be very expensive, 100 euros or more. There are also museums in the city, the historical Hanseatic museum and the art museum KODE, where you can see paintings of Edvard Munch as well as from other Norwegian artists.

We often spent our free time going to the movies or training at the local gym. SIB offers sport services around the city, but close to Hatleberg student accommodation there is a gym, which also offers classes. The gym is only about 20-30 euros a month and it

includes both the gym and the classes. Going to the movies is about 15 euros, so almost the same price as in Finland.

Hiking is also very popular among Norwegian people as well as among the exchange students. Bergen has seven mountains surrounding it, so it is possible to spend your weekends hiking. However, hiking should be done early fall and later spring when the weather is more suitable. I also recommend exploring other cities and towns outside Bergen. I did a road trip to Trondheim with my friends, and on the way we saw amazing Norwegian landscapes and national parks, including Jotunheimen. We also took the train from Bergen to Oslo (and back), which takes about 7 hours but is really worth it due to the scenery. If you book it well beforehand you can get the trip cheaper. We paid only 50 euros for a round trip to Oslo.



*View from Rundemannen, one of the seven mountains*



*Landscapes from the roadtrip to Trondheim*