

RELAZIONE SU MOBILITA' ERASMUS STUDIO
REPORT ON MOBILITY ERASMUS STUDIO

PARTNER UNIVERSITY: University of Birmingham (UK)

Qualità dell'Università e dei corsi di studio seguiti

Quality of the University and the courses of study followed

The quality of the courses I followed was relevant. This was due to professors, module structure and delivery, availability of working material and efficiency of the academic timetable.

Holding professional as well as academic roles, professors had a great experience in the fields of their subjects which caused their lessons being theoretical and practical altogether. Besides, they had in common a great passion for their subjects that sparked in us students interest and curiosity and induced them to support and promote our studying during and after classes, through private zoom calls or dedicated 'office hours'.

Then, in regard to the courses I have attended, the structure and overall organization of the modules throughout the semester was also efficient, with courses being delivered on campus, in adequate structures and students being provided with a great amount of working material on the reference platform. On it, each week, students could find video recordings of the main topics which would have been discussed the following week; this helped us staying on track with the course content and induced our participation during classes. Some courses, according to their contents, integrated seminars with workshops during which topics were revised and our interaction encouraged, for topics to be appreciated with much more efficacy.

As for the academic timetable, for most courses, examinations are carried out throughout the module delivery, which means there is a shorter time-lapse between lessons and tests/exams. For instance, during the module of 'Applied economics and Statistics', the first exam was planned mid semester and concerned the first part of the course contents, then two weeks of lessons followed before another examination and so on. This inevitably encouraged our focus and effort during lessons and increased our understanding of the contents to a great extent.

Although I am satisfied with the overall quality of the courses I followed, the frequency and the amount of hours of lessons per week was low compared to those of our UniFi courses which has some relevance in terms of course quality. Another offer that lacked was that of seminars and academic events which would have enhanced the quality of the courses.

Organizzazione degli uffici e disponibilità dei docenti

Organization of offices and availability of teachers

Offices have been quite efficient in their organization and support services. They were usually available and gave me tempestive assistance both via email and in person. They lacked organization on one occasion, when I found myself removed from a course I had agreed on my LA and the academic semester had already started; however, due to my initiative and persistence, they eventually agreed on the most appropriate solution to fit my academic objectives and to benefit my formative experience at Uob.

As for professors, they have been extremely diligent and always available to provide for advices and support. They not only waited an extra 15 minutes after lessons for us to interact with them, they were also very responsive and proactive via email as they tempestively informed us on any change of schedule, reminded us of exam dates and gave us other useful information. The University of Birmingham has also set up a system of weekly 'office hours', usually recurrent once per week, during which professors hold private consultancies with students, on initiative of the latter; I greatly recommend to use this tool, as it not only helps one revising or clarifying contents but also makes one understand the British academic system, what does it focus on and which are professors' expectations which is crucial to improve performance during exams. Lastly, professors have proven to be very supportive when coming to writing reference letters which I needed for further studies.

Servizi a disposizione degli studenti

Services available to students

The university of Birmingham offers some of the greatest student services to be found among UK universities. Students at UOB benefit from a series of services on and off campus.

As regards individual services, a tutoring system that operates through periodical meetings is provided to give students additional academic support to that of professors. Then, a series of events, as well as private consultancies, are set up to preserve and promote students' mental wellbeing. With the same aim, students are given the possibility of delaying their deadlines -benefiting from an 'extension period' of maximum one week- in case of proven difficulty.

Then, Uob extensively promotes community integration through the Guild of Students, a student association which stands for students' rights and manages a variety of services, from language classes to recreational activities and events and societies' gatherings. Societies themselves enhance students' experience as they provide for activities and events themselves; for instance, as an international or exchange students, one can participate to the informal themed-meetings they organize on and off campus or join their city tour, or a day trip according to the schedule they have planned. This is a great way to feel and be part of the community, especially at the beginning of the exchange.

The university also grants students exceptional structural facilities, as students have plenty of study spaces all around campus and not only in their subject-area-dedicated building. Then, they have a supermarket, a food court, a green study and recreational space, a library cafeteria, a Starbucks' and Costa's one, a Bar/pub, a Sport and fitness building which they can easily access thanks to student discounts, a shop, a stationery and a grand library -where you can also use printing facilities and borrow books. Besides, in regards to access to academic materials, students can additionally or alternatively use the website 'FinditBham.com', where a number of journals, academic articles and books is digitally available.

Lastly, Uob organizes weekly, monthly events, ranging from the welcome week, the Ramadan week, the Student festival, a Color run, a Student Fair, Literary cafes, Cultural discussions, yoga sessions and so on.

Students living in university accommodation can benefit from further initiatives as free food available around the halls of residence or open cinema nights etc.

Esperienza in generale (città, accomodation, prezzi, servizi, cibo, etc.)

General experience (city, accommodation, prices, services, food, etc.)

The city of Birmingham is lively and offers good services in reference to transport, food and events but it is not cheap and not safe in some areas.

Many pubs and bars can be found all around the city and, Birmingham being an international city, restaurants' and cafes' are quite numerous and offer a variety of foods from all over the world. Birmingham also hosts the biggest library in Europe, which is located in the city center and easily accessible by bus from university areas. Overall, there are some events one can enjoy in addition to those offered on campus. However, this mainly concerns nightlife, whereas during the day, apart from a few museums and exhibitions, not many activities are to be found off campus.

The city is big and there are some areas that are not safe, especially the city center and neighboring areas. However, the campus area, the Student residential area of the Vale Village and the neighborhood of Harborne are an exception. Selly Oak, another student residential area, is not the safest at night but it is generally largely populated by students, so with due attention moving around should not be a matter of concern.

As for prices, they are quite high in and off campus with a coffee being sold for 3£ and an average meal being worth easily 20£; with trains being expensive as well, I have found the best means of transport to be the bus (1£ for a student daily ticket); Uber and Bolt offer great deals as well and are always available all around the city.

As regards accommodation, the university offers affordable halls of residence located in the Vale village, a student residential area mainly populated by Uob students, and in Selly Oak. If not guaranteed a place at one of its residences, the university help students find private accommodation in Selly Oak or in the city center. I have experienced the university accommodation of Tennis Courts located in the student village of The Vale. In terms of affordability, safety community interaction and convenience (distance to university and to the city center), it was the best choice. However, for a more local experience, I would suggest to choose an accommodation in Selly Oak, as there are located most student pubs, restaurants and supermarkets and the neighborhood is just a short walk to the university, unlike the Vale village. Furthermore, most 2nd and 3rd year students rent accommodation in Selly Oak, therefore an exchange student may experience the British community and society lifestyle better if based there.

Consigliaresti questa esperienza ad altri studenti? Si/No, perché?

Would you recommend this experience to other students? Yes / No, why?

I would recommend Erasmus at the University of Birmingham to those willing to experience an international environment in their academic and social life.

Attending courses at Uob involves accessing a different didactic approach compared to that of our Italian universities; classes of hundreds of students are designed to be small-sized, so to promote interaction; there, learning flows through listening, reading but mostly applying contents to real scenarios which is

greatly inspiring and effective, especially for students with an adequate theoretical background. Therefore, my advice would be to plan this exchange on the 3rd year of Bachelor's, so to get an adequate theoretical preparation at Unifi and then integrate it with the more experiential form of education offered by Uob.

Finally, coming to the social component of this experience, this consists in a lifetime rare opportunity to meet people from diverse cultural, academic and personal background from all over the world which poses challenge, yet stimulates a great open-mindedness, curiosity and drive towards personal and professional growth.

RELAZIONE SU MOBILITA' ERASMUS STUDIO

REPORT ON MOBILITY ERASMUS STUDIO

PARTNER UNIVERSITY: University of Birmingham

Qualità dell'Università e dei corsi di studio seguiti

Quality of the University and the courses of study followed

Quanto a come sono impartiti gli insegnamenti, è molto differente da Firenze. Il corso si sviluppa in 10 settimane al cui interno, le classiche lezioni frontali sono molte meno quantitativamente che non all' Unifi. Ne consegue che è privilegiato lo studio individuale che va oltre alla spiegazione anche a livello nozionistico con letture e articoli integrativi, talvolta lasciati anche al libero sentito dello studente. A d ogni modo il personale docenti è generalmente qualificato e disponibile e le lezioni di alto livello.

Organizzazione degli uffici e disponibilità dei docenti

Organization of offices and availability of teachers

Gli uffici e le varie sezioni sono molteplici, è abbastanza difficile a volte individuare a chi rivolgersi quando si ha bisogno di un documento. Tuttavia, il personale è molto disponibile e cortese, alla fine ho sempre reperito la documentazione che mi serviva anche perché alcune attestazioni sono di default nelle varie "aree riservate" dello studente senza che si debbano chiedere per email. Sicuramente la più grande pecca è che spesso sono molto lenti a rispondere alle mail, talvolta (sotto Natale e/o Pasqua) anche 15 giorni.

Servizi a disposizione degli studenti

Services available to students

Gli spazi comuni e il Campus sono fantastici. C'è molto verde ed è estremamente piacevole trascorrere tempo lì. Le aree studio in università non mancano e qualcuna è aperta fino a tarda notte. C'è la possibilità di fare sport e nella bella stagione hanno montato un cinema gratuito all' aperto ed uno street market.

Esperienza in generale (città, accomodation, prezzi, servizi, cibo, etc.)

General experience (city, accommodation, prices, services, food, etc.)

Birmingham è la classica città inglese di vecchio stampo industriale ma con molta architettura moderna. La città non ha molti siti di interesse però è in una posizione comoda per poter viaggiare per altre destinazioni. Non è una città molto sicura ci sono alcune zone dove è decisamente consigliabile non andarci ma anche in centro dopo la mezzanotte è sempre meglio non girare MAI da soli. A tal proposito l'autobus è veramente

molto economico diversamente dal treno che si dimostra proibitivo nella quasi totalità dei casi. Le accomodation della università non sono male, quelle private hanno un detto miglior rapporto qualità prezzo ma sconti il fatto di non conoscere altri ragazzi. Quindi nonostante tutto consiglio le accomodation dell'università dove sono stato anche io. Accomodation universitarie che sono gestite in modo completamente autonomo dai residenti: nel bene e nel male, ad esempio pulizia della cucina e corridoio che sono spazi comuni.

Consigliaresti questa esperienza ad altri studenti? Si/No, perché?

Would you recommend this experience to other students? Yes / No, why?

Senz'altro consiglierei questa esperienza e sono felice di averla fatta nonostante sia stata sicuramente in parte limitata dal covid. Perché ho potuto vivere a pieno la vita universitaria, conoscere gente da tutto il mondo e vedere realtà molto diverse da quelle italiane.

RELAZIONE SU MOBILITA' ERASMUS STUDIO
REPORT ON MOBILITY ERASMUS STUDIO

PARTNER UNIVERSITY: University of Birmingham

Qualità dell'Università e dei corsi di studio seguiti

Quality of the University and the courses of study followed

Altissima qualità dell'Università, ottima qualità di gran parte dei corsi

Organizzazione degli uffici e disponibilità dei docenti

Organization of offices and availability of teachers

Pessima gestione dell'emergenza COVID.

Servizi a disposizione degli studenti

Services available to students

Biblioteca, seminari, careers days, laboratori.

Esperienza in generale (città, accomodation, prezzi, servizi, cibo, etc.)

General experience (city, accommodation, prices, services, food, etc.)

Città giovanissima e internazionale situata in un punto strategico per visitare tutta l'Inghilterra, prezzi alti ma più economici di Londra.

Consigliaresti questa esperienza ad altri studenti? Sì/No, perché?

Would you recommend this experience to other students? Yes / No, why?

Sì.

RELAZIONE SU MOBILITA' ERASMUS

Qualità dell'Università e dei corsi di studio seguiti

L'Università era ben organizzata sia da un punto di vista di strutture che di disponibilità del personale. Per quanto riguarda i corsi, il metodo di studio adottato è diverso rispetto a quello adottato in Italia. Viene data più importanza all'apprendimento pratico che teorico e questo permette di comprendere al meglio alcuni concetti anche se, a mio avviso, questo porta a focalizzarsi solo su gli argomenti su cui deve essere presentata la relazione finale e non su tutti quelli previsti dalla materia.

Organizzazione degli uffici e disponibilità dei docenti

Gli uffici sono sempre stati disponibili per chiarimenti burocratici e allo stesso modo era possibile al termine di ciascuna lezione parlare con il docente per chiarire eventuali incertezze e chiedere informazioni per la realizzazione dell'esame finale.

Servizi a disposizione degli studenti

In Inghilterra le Università sono organizzate come campus in cui è possibile prendere parte a diverse iniziative e a feste per studenti (festa di benvenuto, mercatino delle piante, luna park) che vengono organizzate dall'Università. Questo permette di sentirsi parte di una comunità e incentiva gli studenti a passare più tempo nel campus.

Esperienza in generale (città, accomodation, prezzi, servizi, cibo, etc.)

La città di Birmingham è la seconda città inglese dove sono presenti non solo ampi centri commerciali ma anche ampi parchi, il tutto ben collegato da un efficiente servizio pubblico di trasporto (autobus, uber). Per quanto riguarda l'abitazione, ho soggiornato presso una casa privata con altri 3 studenti situata non

troppo lontano dall'Università. Relativamente al cibo, la cultura inglese è altamente diversa dalla nostra ma infondo una delle caratteristiche dello scambio Erasmus è proprio l'adattamento ad abitudini diverse tra cui questa. I prezzi invece sono leggermente più alti dei nostri per quanto riguarda l'acquisto di beni alimentari ma nel complesso rispecchiano i quelli italiani.