

My ERASMUS experience at Staffordshire University



Image Source: <https://studyabroad365.com/2019/03/28/study-in-staffordshire-university-uk-tuition-fees-cost-of-living-admission-process/> (accessed : 07.06.20)

Arrival and Accommodation:

My year abroad started on the 11th of September 2019, when I took a flight to Manchester. At the airport I was welcomed by the international student office and a group of other exchange students.

The ERASMUS students were then divided into groups according to their accommodation and driven to Stoke-on-Trent, a small city in Staffordshire. Meeting people and making friends was very easy as there was a common room with games, a TV, a play station and a pool table in our accommodation. There was also a little courtyard with tables and a grass pitch where we could eat and play outdoor games. My accommodation was organized through GreenPad, an agency recommended but not owned by the university. I was very happy with their service, the accommodation was close to the university and a supermarket, the rooms were clean, the staff very friendly and if anything did not work it was fixed within a week.

Socializing, making friends and university life:

The first week was a welcoming week for all the new students. We played games, discovered the area and got to know each other. Then, in the second week, the course started. There were only ever 30 people (or less) per lecture which made for a much more personal teaching style. Lecturers and students were all addressed by their first names and everyone had a personal tutor to discuss their progress and difficulties with. The lecturers and other staff at the university were all incredibly kind and supporting. While looking for an internship for example, one of the international student office officials contacted several people around the world to recommend me as an intern. I also had a very difficult time just before Christmas due to some personal difficulties and one of my lecturers took me aside to make sure I was alright.

Due to the array of societies and social events offered it was fairly easy to socialize and make friends with the locals. They were all extremely friendly and talkative, to a point where I had to make sure I brought my headphones to the gym so I could get through my workout without stopping for a chat every 5 minutes.

Staffordshire and Travelling:

Stoke on Trent itself is not known for being particularly pretty or homey, however affordable trips to the lake district, cities like Manchester, Oxford and Birmingham or Alton Towers (the biggest amusement park of the UK) were organized on the regular.

Difficulties:

I faced some difficulties as well; however, they were all minor and definitely worth the experience.

I had some issues with the time table as there was a confusion on the exact courses I would be able to do during my stay. This led to some additional paperwork and me booking my accommodation for too long which I could not change and thus had to pay for out of my own pocket.

Additionally the ERASMUS money I received did not quite cover the rent and as only a part of it is given in advance it is important to save up some money before the stay.