

# Exchange report

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Tietotekniikan koulutusohjelma

I applied for exchange to Avans, University of applied sciences. It is in 'S-Hertogen Bosch and more commonly known as Den Bosch, Nord-Brabant, Netherlands. My exchange period officially started 01.09.2015 and ended 26.01.2016. During the time I participated European project semester (EPS-program). As a result the main focus of my exchange was working for project in multicultural team in real company.

When I first arrived to Netherlands on August 23. I did not have an apartment. Nevertheless I was not worried and I was sure I would find an apartment soon enough. Eventually it became clear that finding an apartment was not as easy as I expected. And in the end it took me more than two weeks to find permanent accommodation for the rest of my exchange. Although I first have struggles with accommodation, I learned a lot from that period and made a couple new friends in the process.

After that my life became easier since I did not have to carry all my bags from place to place. Therefore I was fully able to concentrate to studying and learning my new way of life in fresh environment. At the time we already had had school for a week and we had chosen the companies where everybody was going to work. The competition between students was fearless and everybody wanted the best projects. Luckily I got in to the project I wanted, but not everyone was so lucky.

I got into company called Everest with three EPS-students. Two of them were from Netherlands and their background were computer sciences and multimedia design and one from Germany with multimedia design background.

The company we got into is business engineering company that translates complex business issues into innovative and practical ICT solutions for financial service providers and central government. Our task was to offer them something new and innovative in a form of Virtual Reality as known as VR.

For first two months our schedule was as following: three days at the company eight hour days and two days at school studying courses. After that we had four days at the company and one day at school. At the company we used software development methodology SCRUM and we divided our project into small sprints of two weeks. Sprints are the basic unit of the development in scrum. It is basically fixed duration that the appointed tasks should be finished upon.

Our days at the company started with stand-up meeting. There we discussed about the current progress of our project and every one of us had to answer these simple questions: What I did yesterday? What will I do today? And is there something that could prevent us from reaching our goals? After the stand-up we started conducting our user stories that are tasks that we had evaluated earlier in the sprint planning session.

Most of the time I was working on the functionality of our VR-application. Basically I was programming scripts with visual studio or using components the game-engine Unity already provided and then added that functionality to the 3D-modeled objects that the design team of our project had designed. Nevertheless I also spend lot of time on research, documenting and testing our product. In the end we were able to hand out our final product in the end of January. It ended up to be VR simulation that we presented at school and at the company. In the end we put our product in Play Store.

At the company days went pass fast since our project was interesting, the team was great and the atmosphere at the company was chill. Only drawbacks I can say there was that lunch was basically only bread and some toppings and the not all of the emails were on

English. Overall I think the Dutch working culture is very effective and lay back at the same time and I think every Finn could learn a something new from it.

At the school that we did not have that much we had couple micro courses. We had compulsory courses from Project management, Team Building, Business Idea & Problem analysis/solving, SMART requirements, Visualization & product design, Sustainability, Quality management, English language & communication skills, Dutch language and Cross-cultural behavior. I think all except the language courses the main tasks were done in a group of few people and it found out to be really interesting since everyone was from different culture and with different college background. I also went to optional course about Dutch language and I was able to achieve certificate of Dutch language.

The school facilities were modern. They had SMART-boards in every class and 3D-printers, laser-cut machinery, photograph equipment and such that the students were free to use if they reserved time beforehand. They had Apple computers on top of the Windows one and there was a bar inside the school that I found to be hilarious considering my Finnish school background. After all I ended up to drink with most of the teachers there in the end ceremony.

The school arranged some activities during the time I was there. We went to see the Delta works that are the famous dams in the Netherlands. We also went to see Heineken factory that was little bit disappointment, but they offered delicious drinks on the side. We also went to Dutch design week to Eindhoven during the course Visualization & product design where I saw lot of interesting design. On top of that the school offered us some snack and drinks couple of time in the local restaurant. It was new and pleasant experience since you could socialize with teachers and students in a chill environment. In addition the school arranged evening in really nice facilities where we all cooked together our national dishes and then ate and drink altogether. Side note to those drinks: There is really delicious Belgium, German and Dutch beers in every pub, bar, restaurant and shop.

In addition to school and work I found the Netherlands to be proud, layback and modern culture. The best thing about Netherlands is cycling. You can literally cycle everywhere if you want and you can find the most random kind of bikes for all kind of purposes. Nevertheless the public transportation is also very fluent and mostly on time. There is also lot of culture that you can find all over the country and countless of parties to attend to. If you listen to techno or house this country is literally your paradise since most of the music is techno or house. Myself I am not a big fan of techno or house, but I found my kind of music easily since there is so much to choose from.

To summarize my experience in Netherlands: It was a pleasant experience. I made punch of new friends from all over the Europe and learned a lot about different nationalities. I strengthened my skills in various ways and it feels like that the whole experience made me wiser, stronger and many ways more ready to encounter the challenges that lie ahead. I would totally recommend going exchange since it will be an experience that you will remember your lifetime.