

Guide for future Erasmus students in Wrocław

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The aim of this guide is to help computer science students from the University of Murcia that have decided or are deciding about going to study to the Wrocław University of Science and Technology (aka Politechnika Wroclaska). Hereinafter I will refer to it as PWr. Finally, note that this guide is based solely in my personal experience.

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Courses Enrollment

Probably the main issue that occupies your mind if you are considering coming to this university is, “can I study there all the subjects that I want?”. The simple answer is no. You must keep in mind that every university is different, especially when we are considering different countries. In addition, the problem worsens if we consider that you need to find the subjects in English, because usually only a fraction of the available subjects are offered in English. Nevertheless, in the case of PWr you can find equivalent subject for almost all the subjects of our study plan. However, before getting into detail you need to understand what are the main structural differences of this university so you can realize why is not so simple.

Open Courses

Unlike the University of Murcia, in PWr the offered subjects change every year. This issue is an impediment for making a permanent list with the offered subjects. It is true that many subjects keep unchanged along the years, but many others appear and disappear. For that reason, when considering the possibles subjects for the Learning Agreement (LA) you should spend time not only checking the subjects of previous years but contacting the international coordinators of the faculties of PWr.

In the following links you can usually find the courses initially offered in English for both bachelor and master level.

- Bachelor pwr.edu.pl/en/students/study-in-english/bsc
- Master pwr.edu.pl/en/students/study-in-english/msc

Another characteristic of PWr is that there are different study plans for pursuing computer science. There are two main faculties offering computer science studies. One is the Faculty of Computer Science and Management, and the other is the faculty of Electronics. You must search for subjects in both faculties.

Nowadays, the coordinators of the faculties are:

- Jan Kwiatkowski, Faculty of Computer Science and Management
 - Email: jan.kwiatkowski@pwr.edu.pl
 - Webpage: www.ii.pwr.edu.pl/~kwiatkowski
- Anna Kolman, Faculty of Electronics
 - Email: anna.kolman@pwr.edu.pl

Notice that it can change in the future so I encourage you to check if the coordinators are still the same and contact the right coordinators asking about which subjects will be offered in English next year, for both master and bachelor level.

Incompatibilities and extra subjects

There is one detail that is not obvious for most of students. Unlike in your home university, when you go to another university trying to take the equivalents subjects of your study plan, it is sure that the subjects will belong to different years and probably some to master and some to bachelor. This means that some subjects can be overlapped and therefore incompatibles. If this is the case, you should be prepared to change your LA. For that reason is good to have alternative subjects to try to balance this issue. Do not discard the possibility of taking in your home university subjects of following years.

Extramural Courses

Finally, there is a possibility that a subject hasn't been opened, maybe because it was optional, and you cannot study it. Nevertheless, exists the possibility that the coordinator will talk with the professor and he will open it in an "extramural way". This concept depends heavily on the coordinator since he will set the rules for passing. For that reason I cannot explain very well which will be the usual approach.

Course Structure

Unlike in Spain, in PWR the subjects are not merely divided into theory and labs. In PWR a subject can have different parts and the only part that appears in every subject is lecture. Simplifying we could explain the aim of each part as follows.

- **Lecture.** Equivalent to the theory in Spain. You have a lecture of the subject once a week of 2 hours. Usually you will have an exam at the end of the semester, although partial tests are possible.
- **Laboratory.** Equivalent to the labs in Spain. Basically you will have a list of exercises that can be started in the lab and that usually you will need to send to the professor as well as a report.
- **Classes.** This part is based on doing exercises regarding the topics covered in the lecture. Here you will have more interaction with the professor and you will familiarize yourself with the kind of exercised that will be covered in the subject.
- **Seminar.** In this part basically you need to prepare a presentation of around 20 minutes about a specific topic of the subject and expose it on the assigned date. Sometimes it will be done in groups. Notice that you will also assist to other's presentation.
- **Project.** You need to develop a project, it can be in groups or individual and send it to the professor at the end of the semester.

Odd and even weeks

The different parts of the subject will have a fixed schedule every week. However, in some cases you will have some part of the subject only in even or odd weeks, which is the same as saying once every two weeks. Notice that usually this doesn't apply to lectures.

Courses Details

Being Erasmus

Maybe you are wondering if because of being Erasmus students you will have easier exams or the professor will demand less effort from you. I can say that, except in rare cases, usually you will be treated like Polish students. This is even more common now that Polish students attend to English classes with foreign students.

Obligation of assistance

Although the obligation of assistance to class depends on the subject there are some main patterns. In most cases, it is not obligatory the assistance to lectures, although in some cases it can be positively considered and get extra points at the end.

About labs they are almost always obligatory and only a few absences are allowed. Regarding classes and seminars it is also usually obligatory to assist.

Exams

On the one hand, regarding the exams and theoretical part I would say that is easier in PWr. This is due to the nature of the exams. Although the topics covered can be quite similar, the kind of knowledge required for passing is different. This is because unlike the University of Murcia, here the tests are usually based on multiple choice questions and short open questions, and have a duration no longer than 1 hour and a half. While in the University of Murcia, the tests usually contain practical exercises that required a deeper understanding of the topics. Therefore I can say that here less effort is required.

Labs

Regarding the lab we also find big differences. The main is that big projects are not so common. And if they will be requested they will be enclosed in the "Project" part of the subject, but not in labs. But in any case the projects usually are of smaller size than in Murcia, although you will have less support of the professors to make them.

About the practices in the lab, usually you will just receive a list of exercises that will be required to send to the professor with a report. It is important to note that usually the professor will not give you enough information to do the task, so searching for information from the Internet is a must.

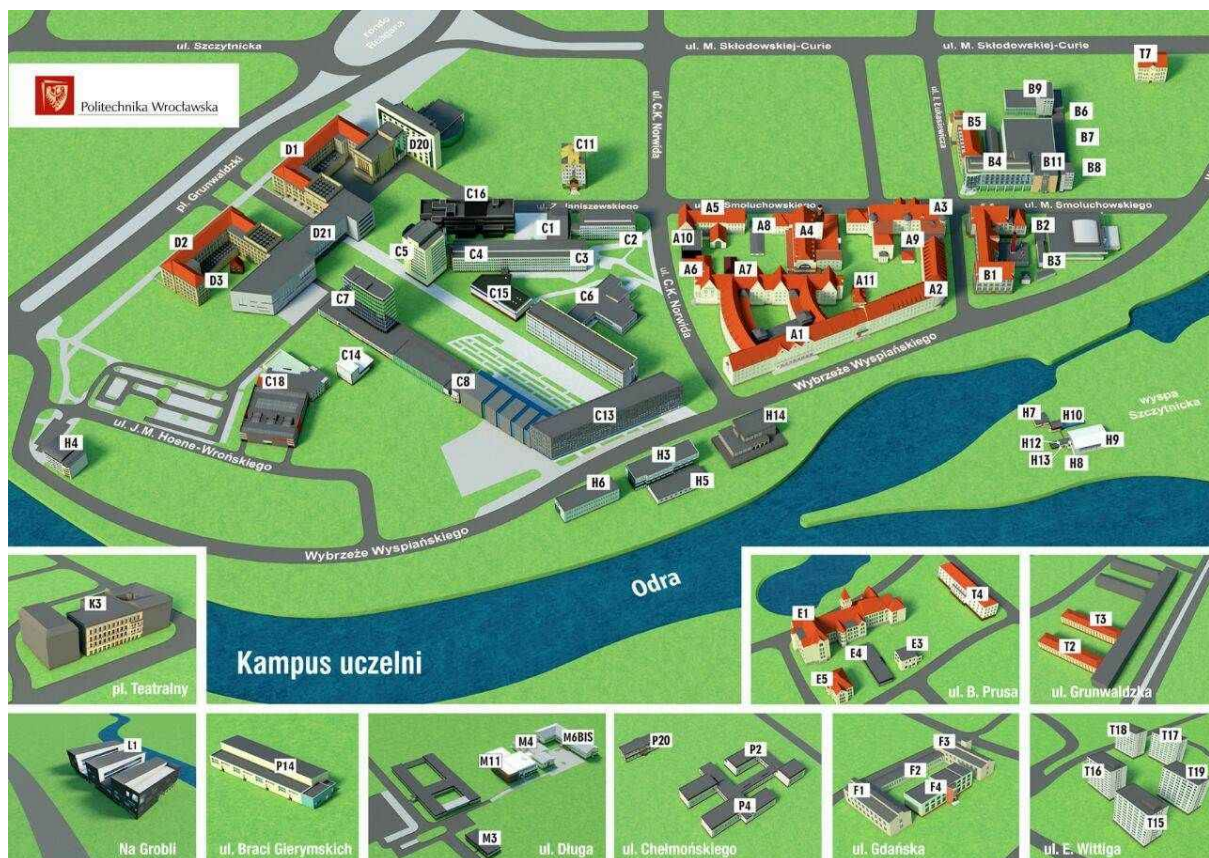
Exams from previous years

In PWr, it is not common to give to the students access to exams from previous years. This can be a big drawback for a student from the University of Murcia who is used to use exams of previous years to prepare the exams. The main reason why they are not published is because they are mainly multiple choice and this questions may appear without changes in future exams. However, in some cases Polish students will have access to exams of previous years through pictures. Therefore I encourage you to contact with them. Also they usually create a Facebook group where they will share information about the subject.

University



Google Maps view of PWr main part of the campus.



Scheme of PWr campus and buildings

University's tools

There are some common tools that are used to organize your subjects, the content uploaded by the professors and some more things. Nowadays, there are three main platforms.




JSOS


You will get an account in JSOS before arriving to PWr. Here, you will register your personal information. However, the main utility of JSOS is to have a record of subjects as well as their schedules. This way, even if there are changes in the schedule due to free days or class changes you will always know at what time and where do you have each class.

Another functionality is that you will get mail notifications, from your professors and from PWr. Usually the ones from PWr will be in Polish, but if it something important probably you will be notified in English. Moreover, in JSOS the professors will record the grades that you obtain in each subject. jsos.pwr.edu.pl

[illegible]

Example of schedule in JSOS




Session time: 14:02



WROCLAW UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Your data

Index


Classes

Applications

Finances

Messages

Help



Start
Messages
Inbox

Visit as a student
W08 • INFAN • ST-II-WYM • (Active)

Messages

New message

Inbox
Outbox
Temporary messages
Bin

Inbox

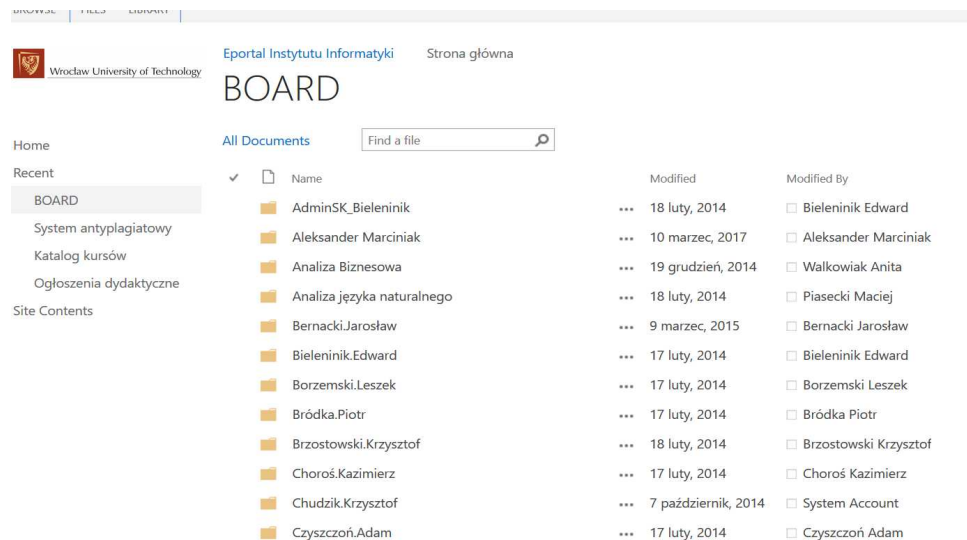
Move to bin
Mark as read
Mark as unread

From	Subject	Date and time	Priority
Politechnika Wroclawska	Wprowadzenie nowej oceny	2018-01-31 07:43	Normal
Politechnika Wroclawska	Ankietyzacja	2018-01-30 13:52	Normal+
Wydział Informatyki i Zarządzania	Wpis do grupy zajęciowej	2018-01-30 11:55	Normal
Wydział Informatyki i Zarządzania	Wypis z grupy zajęciowej	2018-01-30 11:55	Normal
Wydział Informatyki i Zarządzania	Wypis z grupy zajęciowej	2018-01-30 11:53	Normal
Wydział Informatyki i Zarządzania	Wpis do grupy zajęciowej	2018-01-30 11:53	Normal
Wydział Informatyki i Zarządzania	Wypis z grupy zajęciowej	2018-01-30 11:53	Normal

Message Inbox in JSOS

Board

In the Faculty of Computer Science and Management it is common that the professor will have a folder in Board that is a shared SharePoint folder. Here is the most common place to find the lectures' slides, labs' lists and exam results. The slides are usually uploaded after the lecture while the lists are uploaded before the session. Because the folder is almost public, you will have access to the folders not only of your subjects but of every subject hosted there.



Screenshot of Board

Personal Webpages

Finally, another common way that the professor uses to share content and information with students are their personal webpages. In that case, it will just depend on the professor who will probably tell you at the beginning of the semester.

Living

To live in Wrocław you have two main options: living in a dormitory or living in a shared flat.

Dormitories

The PWr has a few dorms associated with it. These dorms are called TX since they are a set of buildings with names like T6 or T22. Notice that the numbers are random and don't expect to find 22 buildings. These buildings are different from each other and you will be assigned to one of them randomly if you ask for living in these dorms. As I said, the assignment is random, so even if two people from the same university send the request at the same time it is likely that they will be assigned to different rooms and buildings.

In all the dorms the kitchen is shared for all the floor. Basically you will find a table, taps and four fires. Washing machines are also shared in each floor.

Each dorm is composed of blocks of rooms that share some elements. These are the characteristics of the blocks of every dorm.

T16 block:

- 2 rooms for 2 people
- 2 rooms for 3 people
- 1 toilet, 1 shower and 2 sinks, shared
- 1 fridge, per room

T15,19,22 block:

- 2 rooms for 2 people
- 1 toilet, 1 shower and 1 sink, shared
- Small shared space with fridge, countertop and wardrobes.

T17 is currently under repair.

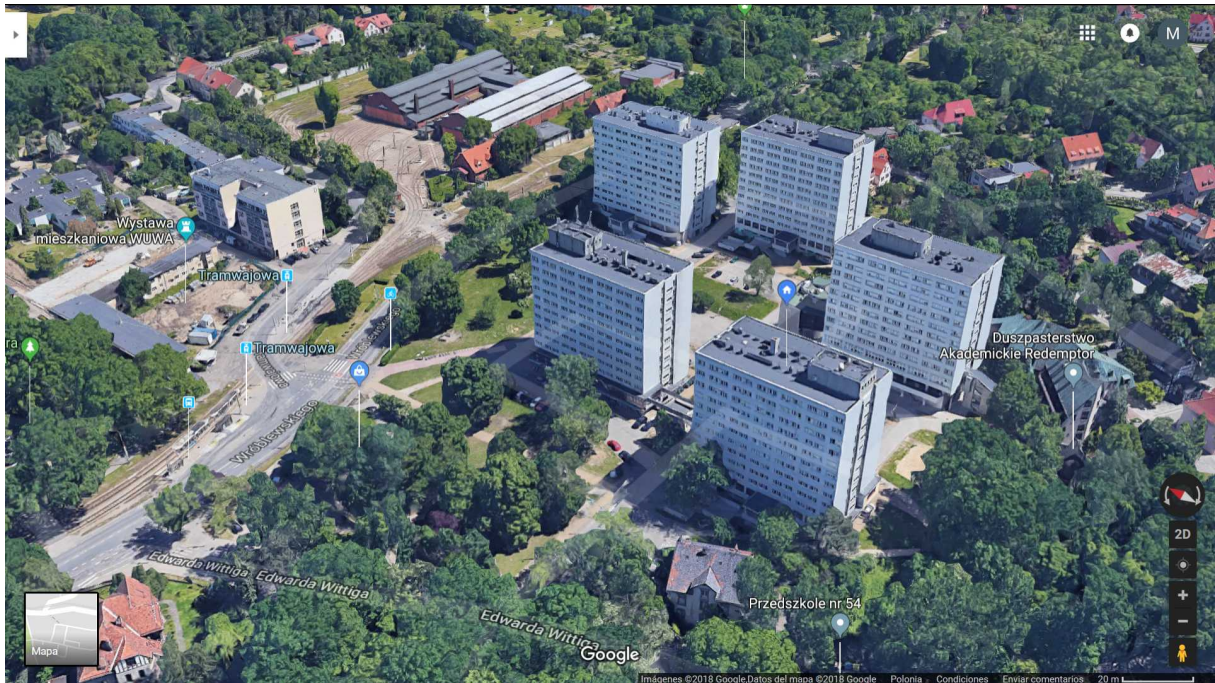
T2, T3, T4, T6 and T9 are usually for Polish students and I don't know about the characteristics.

I should point that although the main dorms (T15, T16, T19 and T22) are located together, the others are in different locations. If you live in T15 or any dorm in the area, you will find the tram very near. The tram stop is 3 stops of distance from University. Actually, you will find 4 trams and 2 buses doing that route so it is unlikely that you will be waiting for more than 6 minutes.

The price of the rent of the dorms goes from 90 to 120 euros approximately.

Smoking is not allowed.

If you want to investigate about the place, taking a look around the location of T15 is a good beginning. goo.gl/maps/o7KRTiyxYMz



Google Maps view of T15,16,17,19,22. Tram stop can be seen in the left.



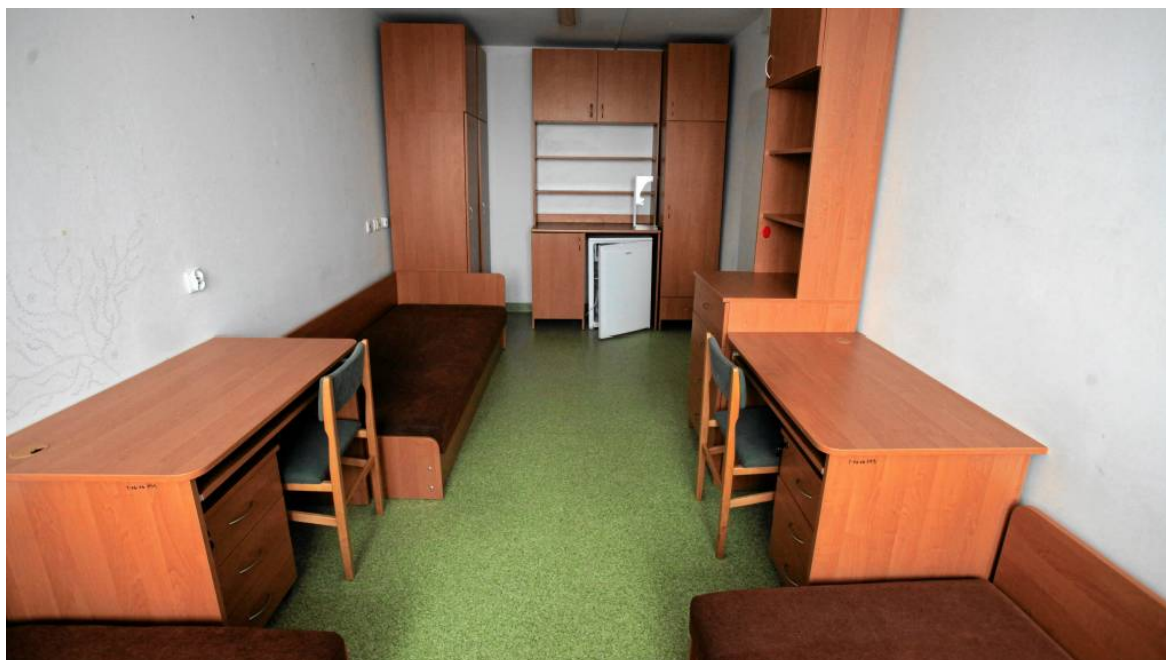
Photo of T16 and other dorms in a sunny day



Double room. T15.



Room, bathroom, shared space and kitchen. T19.



Triple room. T16.



Kitchen. T16.

Entering and visiting

There are some rules in the dorms that can be interesting to know. For example, to enter to the building you will need to make use of your student card that will be used to electronically open the door. This means that with your student card you can only access to your own building. If you forget you can always ask the person in the reception to open you if you have any way of proving that you live there.

However, the main issue with this is when you want to go to other's people dorm. Until 22:00 visits are allowed (if you stay later you will need to pay) and you can leave your card in the reception and take it back when leaving. But this can be tedious nevertheless. And doesn't solve the problem of staying later than 22:00. Therefore, is a common tactic to try to go inside when someone else is opening the door. Although if the person in the reception notice that you are doing this he/she will deny you the entrance.

Reception

An important detail is that the people responsible in the reception they almost never know English, only Polish, so don't expect to communicate with them very much. It can be a problem especially if you forget your card or if you have some inquiry.

Kitchen and gas

The kitchen as you already know is shared by the entire floor. The kitchen contains 8 fires and 2 ovens, all work by gas. If the gas is let opened there will be an alert activated by the gas detector that will play a voice message in all the rooms of the building warning about the gas detected and requesting you to leave the building. However during my stay almost all the alarms where because of people smoking inside the rooms, so most of people just ignore them. However, after alarm the gas is disabled for some time and it can last even some days. Notice that this alarms mainly happen in T15 during my stay.

Regarding the kitchen again, you should know that it usually gets very dirty but fortunately it is cleaned every morning (except Sundays). I recommend you to be careful and clean your mesh.

Heating

All the rooms are provided with a heating machine. It is enough for keeping it warm, and even hot.

Washing

Every floor contains a room with usually 2 washing machines and 1 dryer as well as a clothesline. Unfortunately the clothesline is usually full and you will need to hang out the clothes in your room.

The washing and heating machine is not free of charge. To use it, you need to charge your student card with money through this webpage: pralnie.org. Once you have money in your card you can use it to activate the machine. You need to pay 2,40zl minimum and you can use it for 1 hour. More time will be charged with a different rate. Do not ever forget to log out from the machine because otherwise you will be charged and other people won't be able to use it.

Flats

Living in a shared flat is another feasible option to live in Wrocław. However, the main difference is the cost of renting. A shared flat is usually at least twice the price of dormitories. It is not common to find a flat for less than 200 euros. Specially if you don't want to share room. Also, you should consider that it is recommended to find a flat that is close to the university or to a tram stop that connects you with it.

First days

I am sure that you are wondering how will be the first days once you arrive. Well, this is very important to know in advance since you can feel lost at the beginning.

Dormitory

If you have been assigned to live in a dorm, it makes sense to go there when is allowed to check in. In 2017 it was allowed from 25th of September. However, you can consider the possibility of staying in a hostel until it is open and start visiting the city.

When you arrive to the dormitory you will need to make to go to the dorm office and do the check in. Usually you will get a form in the reception, although they will not help you if they don't speak English. After doing a queue you will go into the office and be asked for your data, explained about the contract and assigned to your room. This year we received a blanket for our room during the check in.

About the assignment, usually they will put together people of the same nationality, although it is not obligatory. If you go with a friend to do check in there is a reasonable chance that you can ask for the same room, especially if you arrive the first days.

After that you will come to your room and realize that is emptier than expected. You are not given sheets neither a pillow. Therefore, be prepared to go soon to IKEA or a similar place and buy all what is necessary. The same applies for dishes, cutlery, or anything else.

Once you prepare your new home for living the next step will be to start with university. However, during the days between the check in and the start of classes you can start to get the people and the city. During the year 2017 the introduction day was on 2nd of October.

Introduction day

In the introduction day all the international students gather in a huge auditorium to receive some basic information from different people of PWr. Usually the main topics are the main advantages of the University, the different groups and projects that is has, some experiences from students and some basic information about living in Poland. Furthermore, it is likely that you will receive some merchandising from the university.

After that, you will be separated in different groups according to the faculty that you belong to. This way, you will receive another talk by the international coordinator of your faculty. He will give you information about the own faculty. Mainly he will talk about the courses offered and especially about how to proceed to solve the problems that for sure you will have from that moment regarding the courses that you have chosen. Furthermore, usually he will be responsible of giving you the student card that is the most important element that you will need during your stay in Wroclaw.

Night Life

The normal days for going out at night were (for Spaniards mainly):

- Monday, Akademia, [Facebook Page](#)
- Wednesday, Melanz, [Facebook Page](#)
- Thursday, X-Demon, [Facebook Page](#)

Public and private transport

Tram and bus bonus 45 euros for 5 months.

Uber, way cheaper than taxi. Between 10-25zl for moving through the city.

Travelling

Polskibus polskibus.com/en/index.htm

Goeuro goeuro.com

Skyscanner skyscanner.com

Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

facebook.com/esnpwr

Health service

You need your European Health Insurance Card and ID card. I can recommend this clinic in Parkowa 46: goo.gl/maps/pkQho67pr2F2

Miscellany

- Most of Polish people don't speak English, especially if they are not young. If you go the supermarket, any office, street, or many other places don't expect to speak in English. However in restaurants and international franchises it is likely that someone will speak English, especially in the center.
- Food is quite different compared with Spain. Some normal things that are very hard to find (or impossible): fried tomato, oregano, long bars of bread, basic butchery (salchichon, chorizo, mortadela, espetec, jamón, etc.).
- Be careful when ordering or buying water because it is very common to drink water with gas (gazowana).