



IT University Travel Report

Dear Student, this is a template – the aim is to inspire other students who may wish to follow in your footsteps. You are free to give your report the shape you want and to go beyond the questions. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not.

Note that by filling in and sending the report you automatically consent to publishing it on ITU student.

Host university: NOVA Lisboa IMS

Study Programme at IT University: Global Business Informatics

Exchange agreement or Free mover: Exchange agreement

Courses studied abroad: “Data Analysis”, “Data Pre-Processing”, “Personal Development II”, “Business Strategy and Digital Transformation”, “Hardware and Software of Information Technologies”, “Market Research”, “Ethical, Social and Legal Aspects of Artificial Intelligence”

Period studying abroad: semester (autumn/spring): Autumn 2023

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: Andreas Koefoed Larsen, akol@itu.dk

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at the university (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

Coming from Denmark and ITU, it was very different to study at NOVA IMS. At NOVA I had 7 different courses, compared to 3 back home at ITU. This also meant that I had far more classes to attend – from Monday through Friday. However, there is little to no preparation or reading for the lectures, which meant more time off when I wasn't at lectures. Unlike ITU, and especially GBI, there are more hand-ins during the semester in addition to presentations and smaller midterm tests. Most of these activities contributes a percentage to the final grade.

One of the first thing we noted when we had our first classes was that both other ERASMUS students and the Portuguese students were younger than the average ITU student. It also seemed that there wasn't the same respect for the teachers and professors as we have in Denmark as it was common for students to talk loudly during lectures. However, this was mainly for the first few weeks, as the students got quieter later on.

The university hosted two welcoming events: one at the university and a city walk. For the city walk, we were grouped together with a handful of other ERASMUS students, giving us a nice opportunity to meet them. In addition, there were also several events hosted by the Student Union such as a festival, an ERASMUS dinner, and several parties. We went to a handful of them, which presented good opportunities to meet the other students. In the end, we mostly ended up socializing with other ERASMUS students, with some of them coming from the masters. In addition, we also found friends elsewhere, through connections from Denmark or through the people we met down there.

At NOVA IMS I took 7 courses:

Data Analysis (6 ECTS), which I would highly recommend. While it was challenging, I learned a lot. Closely related, I also took Data Pre-Processing (4 ECTS) which gave some great tools for working with data and visualizing it with tools such as PowerBI. Business Strategy and Digital Transformation (6 ECTS) was a nice brush up on the classic tools learned earlier at ITU, with the addition of a perspective on digital transformation. In the course Market Research (4 ECTS), the teacher used a lot of time to familiarize herself with the students, which I didn't care that much for. In addition, it was basically a course on creating a good questionnaire. Hardware and Software of Information Technologies (6 ECTS) is not something that I would recommend any GBI student to take unless they really want to get technical and understand the basics of computers. While I have certainly learned something from that course, it's not something I'm going to use in the future, and it was unnecessarily hard. I also took Ethical, Social and Legal Aspects of Artificial Intelligence (2 ECTS) which gave a reflective and critical perspective on AI in society. Lastly, I took Personal Development II (2 ECTS) – a very easy course where you have the possibility to write a cover letter.

I have acquired more technical skills at NOVA IMS which I really enjoyed. However, any future students should be aware that most of the learning is structured around rote learning (udenadslære) where the goal is to answer correctly at a multiple-choice quiz without being super critical or reflective.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

Most of my motivation stemmed from me having my sabbatical years during Covid. At that point, I wasn't able to travel and experience an extended stay in another country so when the possibility came to go on exchange, I took it. I was looking forward to experiencing a new culture, meeting new friends, and trying new activities. To be honest, the academic side of the stay wasn't the priority for me.

The stay did meet my expectations – I got to live in a new culture away from family and friends, where I got to meet new people from all over the world. I got to try new things such as surfing and experiencing a new country. Luckily for me, the academic level was lower than ITU, which allowed us to take trips around the country, going out and socializing, and just have a far more relaxed semester than at home. And a big plus was that we got to extend the summer into the end of October!

Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

Academically, I attained knowledge within working with data – both preparing and cleaning the data, but also doing analysis on it, which is relevant for the direction I want to take my education. Personally, it was nice going out of one's comfort zone and to be able to socialize with different cultures. Some things are radically different from Denmark, which helps you appreciate the things back home. I also got new friends – both from Denmark and ITU, but also from other countries. Lastly, the exchange semester also gave me a chance to relax – no student job, very little reading during the semester, and the possibility to go the beach in late October. The semester definitely refreshed my energy, making me ready for the rest of my education.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:

The process was fairly simple and facilitated by the Exchange Department at ITU. I wasn't stressed at any point as the deadlines were spread out over the spring. I would recommend going to the workshops that ITU hosts as all necessary information will be given there.

The ERASMUS department at NOVA IMS did give the final confirmation a bit late, but they were very helpful with any doubts or questions throughout the process.

We also experienced some scheduling conflicts with some of our courses when we arrived at the university but that was figured out and we applied for pre-approval of new courses.

My recommendation would be to just do the tasks when you get them, rather than letting them bundle up and become too much.

One thing I would note, is that I wouldn't move my address out of Denmark if possible. Some of the other ITU guys who also went to Lisbon moved their address out of Denmark, which caused trouble with both banks, insurance, and the ERASMUS scholarship.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?

I mainly used the resources found on ITU student, such as the travel reports and earlier pre-approved courses. In addition, I asked friends and family about recommendations about going on exchange and also about Lisbon and Portugal. I even got some recommendations from the students who went a year before me at Scrollbar one time.

For information regarding the courses, I mainly used NOVA IMS' website.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

It was a little bit hard and chaotic to find accommodation. First, I started in the various Facebook

groups that exist. However, especially in the summer there are a lot of applications for the handful of rooms and apartments that get posted, so you have to be quick. In addition, it didn't seem that safe to transfer a deposit and a months' worth of rent to a random Facebook profile, so I ended up searching on websites such as <https://www.uniplaces.com/>, <https://housinganywhere.com/>, and <https://www.spotahome.com/>. In the end I had luck finding an apartment on Uniplaces that was perfect for me and one of the other guys from ITU. However, you have to pay a large fee to the platforms – but you can find discount codes on some the ERASMUS Facebook groups (such as **UA25HOME** for Uniplaces and **TAKE25** for Spotahome – both giving 25% off). While we were lucky and didn't have any problems with the booking and move-in process, this is not always the case, so be cautious!

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

The most significant expense I had was probably rent. The apartment was fairly expensive as we paid 700€ each. Other than that, flight tickets were also expensive – especially the first flight going down there as it was booked late. I went home for Christmas and New Year with Easyjet for around 300 kr. each way (excluding checked-in baggage!) – so definitely check them out. Shopping in supermarkets were cheaper than Denmark, so was eating out.

Other major expenses included transportation, wine, beer, food, surf rental, and a trip to Madeira – but all worth it!

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

I only got the ERASMUS scholarship, as I didn't apply for anything else. In hindsight it would have been smart and nice to apply, and hopefully get some, but I got by without them just fine. I did use a good amount of my savings during the semester but that was something I was expecting.

Recommendations for other students:

We lived right next to a metro station (Intendente) which made it easy for getting around the city and to uni. Get a Navegante card – it can be used to go to so many places such as Carcavelos, Cascais and Costa de Caparica. The ordering process is a little bit old school, but you get a discount if you're 23 or under. Otherwise, Bolt and Uber are super cheap and easy to order.

If you have the possibility I would definitely recommend going to Madeira and renting a car. It is such a beautiful island with possibilities for hikes, snorkeling, and canyoning.

The Facebook groups "Danskere i Lissabon" and "Danskere i Portugal" is a nice resource for finding dentists and things like that if you need it.

Food:

Trinca, Caja – Pasta Fresca Italiana, Bhetghat, Fauna & Flora, Bombombom, Tomorrow at 9 cafe, Pizzeria Maria, Da Prata 52, The Bifanas of Alfonso, Manteigaria, Prado, Ponto Final

Bars and clubs:

Casa Independente, Lounge, BACARO, RUDE, SOBRIO LX, Musa da Bica, The Queen Ale, Miradouro de Santa Catarina, Black Sheep, Imprensa.