

From August 2024 to June 2025, I had the privilege of attending Inland Norway University (INN), located in Lillehammer, Norway. Lillehammer is a relatively remote city with a population of around 30,000, situated about two hours north of Oslo. It is best known for hosting the 1994 Winter Olympics, a legacy that remains a significant part of the city's identity.

Although I did not obtain a degree from INN, I completed 60 ECTS credits over two semesters, which is a mandatory part of my International Business Bachelor's program. There was a wide range of English-taught courses available, most of which were primarily attended by other exchange students. The two classes I particularly enjoyed were *Event Management* and *Snow Business*, both worth 15 credits each and more comprehensive in scope.

In *Event Management*, we planned and operated a sports event called the "Generation Games" held in Lillehammer. The course also included engaging lectures covering various aspects of event planning, from sports and concerts to cultural events, enhanced by guest speakers with practical industry experience. *Snow Business* offered an in-depth look into Norway's renowned winter tourism industry, covering the history of winter sports and how modern resorts successfully operate today. We also participated in frequent site visits to various ski resorts, where we even got the chance to ski ourselves.

Additionally, I also attended the classes *Strategy*, *Leadership*, *Brand Management* and *Investments and Financial Management*, all of which are worth 7.5 credits each. While these courses did not include sight visits or frequent guest lectures, they still encompassed frequent group work and assignments which need to be completed throughout the semester in order to pass the class, some of which will be graded. Overall, I was happy with all of the modules I took, I would however, especially recommend the modules that are worth 15 credits, as they offer a more in-depth look into their respective topics.

Exams in Norway can come in multiple formats, with the most typical one in my experience being a 3-4 hour supervised computer exam which will be held on campus. This was the case for 5 out of my 6 classes. Note that for these exams, students are required to bring their own laptops. Additionally, for *Event Management* I had a 4-day exam where the exam questions were made available on Monday and had to be answered and submitted by Friday morning. Generally, it can be said that the way exams are held differ from Germany in a few ways. The time is generally not an issue as students often are done 1-2 hours before the 4-hour deadline and questions are less and more open-ended in how they are supposed to be answered. This

shifts the focus more on questioning the students' understanding of the topics covered during lectures and less on memorization.

The application process was fairly straightforward. I began by researching various partner universities and selecting three preferred options for my year abroad. Fortunately, I was accepted into my first choice, which was Lillehammer. After a smooth application process with INN, I was able to apply for student housing, choosing from a variety of dorm setups (e.g., shared or private bathrooms/kitchens, or single apartments). Students will get notified in advance when the application process for student dorms begins, so it is advisable to ensure to apply as soon as possible to guarantee a spot in the desired dorm. Lillehammer, despite its size is fairly spread out and there are dorms in multiple locations. For instance, the campus is a few kilometers away from the city centre and the dorms that are located more central. The dorm closest to the campus is "Storhove", which will then on the other hand be a few kilometers removed from the city centre. However, busses come and go frequently during daytime and are generally very punctual, making traveling around Lillehammer pleasant and easy.

Renting on the private market is possible but generally more complex and more expensive, particularly for international students. My dorm rent was around 5,000 NOK, or approximately €430.

One important factor to consider when studying in Norway is the higher cost of living, which is about 20% more than in Germany. Additionally, students are expected to purchase lecture books at the beginning of each semester, which typically cost around 900-1000 NOK each (roughly €80-85) if bought new.

Life at INN consisted of around four 90-minute classes per week, along with frequent site visits to various destinations. Students are also expected to study independently using the course books. Overall, the workload was very manageable, allowing for ample free time to pursue other activities. The university offers a range of sports clubs and a small gym, accessible for a modest semester fee. Weekly student events are also held every Wednesday at the on-campus student café.

Among the many advantages of studying in Norway is the stunning natural landscape, especially around Lillehammer. For winter sports enthusiasts, there are numerous activities available, with the nearest ski resort just 15 minutes away by bus. Many winter sports events are held in the region, which students can attend as spectators or support as volunteers. I had

the opportunity to volunteer at one event, receiving perks such as clothing, merchandise, and discounted or free ski passes.

Norwegians, in my experience, are very kind and helpful, and most speak excellent English. During my stay, the institution transitioned from a university of applied sciences to a full university. I found the campus to be modern and the courses engaging and insightful.

Of course, there are also a few downsides to studying in Norway. The weather can be quite harsh, with temperatures frequently dropping below -10°C during the winter months. In Lillehammer, it's essential to wear spikes on your shoes due to the icy conditions.

Additionally, the long periods of limited daylight in winter shouldn't be underestimated, and taking vitamin D supplements is advisable.

While I personally enjoy Scandinavian cuisine, I can understand how it might not appeal to everyone. Eating out is also significantly more expensive than in Germany.

But for me, I can confidently say that I do not regret my choice of destination for my year abroad, and I had many memorable encounters and leave Norway with plenty of fond memories.

For those considering doing one semester abroad in Norway, I would recommend the spring semester, as Lillehammer truly comes alive in the winter months with everything it has to offer.