

Erasmus Experience Report – University of Inland Norway, Campus Lillehammer

1. Host university, time and study program

I completed my Erasmus semester at the University of Inland Norway (Campus Lillehammer) in Lillehammer, Norway.

I studied there during my fifth semester of Business Psychology. The exchange was done voluntarily and not as part of the mandatory internship project of my degree program.

During my stay, I attended the following courses:

- **Environmental Psychology**
- **Health Psychology**
- **Norwegian Language Course for Beginners**

At the host university I attended three courses: Environmental Psychology, Health Psychology, and the Norwegian Language Course for Beginners. The two psychology courses were not officially recognized by my home university, as they did not match the exact module structure of my Business Psychology program. However, I deliberately chose them because they allowed me to gain additional academic credits and deepen my knowledge in important areas of psychology. This is particularly valuable for future academic development, especially when applying for Master's programs, where a broader and more international academic profile is highly beneficial.

The Norwegian language course, on the other hand, was recognized as a language module by my home university. This was very important for me, as it ensured that my Erasmus semester was formally integrated into my degree program and that I met the requirements for receiving Erasmus funding. In general, it can be challenging for students in specialized programs such as Business Psychology to find many fully recognized courses abroad. Often only a limited number of suitable modules are available. However, since only one recognized course is required to qualify for Erasmus funding, choosing a language course is a very effective and reliable solution. For this reason, I can strongly recommend future exchange students to consider taking a language course at their host university.

Although my home university does not have a formal partnership with the psychology department of the University of Inland Norway, this did not restrict my course choices. INN uses a very open course registration system for exchange students: once admitted, students can choose courses across different departments largely freely, independent of their home degree program. Psychology courses are therefore generally open to exchange students from different academic backgrounds. Since these courses have limited capacity, places are allocated if demand is high, with students who study psychology being prioritized. This is not a formal prerequisite, but simply a way of handling oversubscription.

Within this framework, I selected Environmental Psychology and Health Psychology because they fit very well with my academic interests and my background in Business Psychology, even though they were not formally recognized by my home university.

2. English-taught courses and recommendations

The University of Inland Norway offers a wide range of English-taught courses, especially in psychology. All psychology lectures are taught in English and are well structured, well organized, and academically engaging. I can confidently recommend all psychology courses, as they provide a good balance between theory and practical application. I did not attend any business or economics courses during my stay, so I cannot assess their quality. However, based on my experience in the psychology department, the overall academic standard of the university is high.

Planning an exchange semester can be far more stressful than many students expect. There are many forms to fill out, deadlines to meet, and uncertainties regarding course recognition. In my case, finding suitable modules was particularly difficult because of the specific structure of my Business Psychology program. There were moments when I seriously questioned whether I should go through with the exchange. However, once you keep moving forward and continue submitting the required documents step by step, the process becomes manageable. Looking back, I can say that pushing through this phase of doubt was absolutely worth it.

From my own experience, I would also encourage future exchange students to stay open when choosing their courses. At first, I considered taking Event Management simply because it sounded interesting. Later, I decided to focus more on psychology instead, as it felt more meaningful for my academic development. However, since my exchange semester was voluntary and only one course needed to be formally recognized, this flexibility allowed me to make that decision freely. In this situation, it can be very rewarding to choose courses based not only on formal requirements, but also on personal interest and curiosity. When the host university offers such an open system, it is worth making use of this freedom and shaping the semester in a way that feels both enriching and enjoyable.

3. Detailed description of the attended courses

Both psychology courses, Environmental Psychology and Health Psychology, followed a similar structure. Each course consisted of regular lectures as well as smaller seminar sessions. In the seminars, students worked on a project that lasted throughout the entire semester. These projects were completed in randomly assigned groups, meaning that students could not choose their group members. This encouraged collaboration between students from different countries and academic backgrounds. Over the semester, each course required two to three written assignments and one final group presentation. All of these were graded on a pass or fail basis. In order to be allowed to take the final written exam, all assignments and the presentation had to be passed. The grading system was designed to ensure that students seriously completed their tasks, rather than to create excessive pressure. As long as the work was done properly, passing was very achievable.

The final exams for the psychology courses were written on campus but conducted digitally on the students' own laptops. For this purpose, a special secure browser had to be installed in advance. The International Office organized an additional information session in which everything was explained in detail, so the technical side was well supported. Having a laptop was therefore absolutely essential. Attendance was mandatory for the seminar sessions, but not for the regular lectures.

The Norwegian Language Course for Beginners was also well structured and very student-friendly. The course included two written assignments that had to be passed in order to be

allowed to take the final oral exam. There was mandatory attendance, and only a limited number of absences were permitted. The language course was one of the most enjoyable parts of my semester, as it not only fulfilled the formal language requirement but also helped me integrate more easily into Norwegian daily life.

4. Application and Preparation

The application process for the University of Inland Norway was very straightforward. I simply followed the standard instructions provided on the website of my home university and the host university. No additional tests or special requirements were necessary. After submitting the required forms, the acceptance process was smooth and uncomplicated.

Once I had been officially accepted and enrolled, I had to confirm my place by sending a short confirmation form stating that I would indeed take up the offered study place. This had to be done within a relatively short time frame, but the process was simple and quick. Shortly afterwards, the International Office contacted me and provided me with access to a Google Drive folder containing an extensive Google document with all relevant information for incoming exchange students.

This document was exceptionally well structured and extremely helpful. It included detailed instructions on what to do before arrival, depending on the semester of arrival, what to pack, how to dress for the Norwegian climate, and what to bring with you. It also contained practical advice on how to get from the airport to Lillehammer, how to navigate the city upon arrival, and which applications are essential for everyday life in Norway.

For example, it explained which apps to use for public transportation tickets, how to register as a student in the national systems, and how to use platforms such as Canvas for courses and Entur for transport planning. All of these details were clearly explained step by step. By simply reading through this document carefully, it was possible to prepare everything in advance, which made the arrival and settling-in process very smooth.

Thanks to this level of organization, there was never a moment where I felt lost or uninformed. The Norwegian system is extremely well structured, and the International Office makes sure that students always know what to do next.

In addition, the two coordinators of the International Office, Kine and Lisa, were incredibly supportive. They were always friendly, patient, and quick to respond. I contacted them several times with questions about Erasmus procedures and administrative details, and they always replied helpfully and in a reassuring manner. Their support made the entire preparation phase much less stressful and gave me a great sense of security before and during my stay.

5. Accommodation

Finding accommodation in Lillehammer was also very easy. Student housing is organized by a company called SINN, which operates several student residences across the city. After being officially registered as an international student, I received an email from the International Office with instructions on how to apply for housing through the SINN website. On this platform, students can choose according to their personal preferences, such as living close to campus, close to the city center, or near supermarkets. There are many housing options available, including single apartments, shared flats, and different bathroom arrangements. This makes it easy to find something that suits individual needs.

6. Costs

There are no tuition fees in Norway, which makes studying there very attractive. My monthly rent was approximately five hundred and twenty euros. Food is significantly more expensive than in Germany. I usually cooked for myself and spent around three hundred euros per month on groceries. As I am vegetarian, I noticed that the selection of vegetarian products was more limited than in Germany. Meat is especially expensive, which is important to know for students who eat it regularly. The cheapest supermarkets are Kiwi and Rema 1000, which I would strongly recommend.

7. Study life and leisure

Student life in Lillehammer is very active and welcoming. The university offers a wide variety of student clubs, including sports clubs, choir, and other social and cultural groups. Every Wednesday there is a student event at the campus café, such as movie nights, quizzes, or creative activities, often with free snacks. Every Thursday there is karaoke night at Paddy's bar, which is always well attended and a lot of fun. Academically, the weekly schedule is relatively relaxed. Most students only have classes on about three days per week, and lectures usually last around one and a half hours.

8. Traveling in Norway

One of the greatest advantages of studying in Norway is the opportunity to travel. Due to the flexible schedules and occasional free weeks between course phases, it is easy to take short trips. Trains and buses to nearby cities such as Oslo, Hamar, and Trondheim are affordable, especially with student discounts. For longer distances, flights with Norwegian Air youth tickets can be very cheap. I would especially recommend visiting Tromsø, Bergen, and Trondheim. Tromsø is particularly unique, as it is located in the Arctic zone and offers an experience that is completely different from anything in Central Europe.

10. Final recommendation

Overall, my Erasmus semester in Lillehammer was an incredibly enriching experience. It helped me grow academically, socially, and personally. Although the application process and the high cost of living were challenging, the benefits clearly outweighed the difficulties.

So, I would recommend to go! Even when it feels scary. Join events, clubs, Fedderuka, and everything you can. Leave your comfort zone. You will meet amazing people from all over the world, and you will not come back the same person.