



University of Southern Bohemia, Czech Republic

Yukino Nomura

I'm studying linguistics at the University of Southern Bohemia in the Czech Republic. The university and dormitory are surrounded by nature with very clean air. I am able to see horses in the campus!

The Czech language is more complex and difficult than English, especially grammar. For example, when my friend calls me my name changes to "Yukiko". For a while I didn't realize this was a grammar problem. Czech is more interesting to me than any other language I've ever learned. If you have a chance to learn a new language, I can honestly recommend Czech!

Czech Republic has many good local cuisines. I especially like "svíčková" (Beef sirloin with cream sauce) above all the others. However, most Czech cuisines are very oily and therefore, I sometimes miss Japanese food!

The most surprising thing that I saw in the Czech Republic is that people were buying two-liter beer bottles. We don't have that in Japan and so I found it very unique. I think the people of Czech and Kochi have very similar personalities. For example, when we meet someone for the first time, we don't share much of our privacy. But we drink a lot of alcohol and gradually open our minds.

Four months have passed since I came here. I've gained confidence in speaking English and Czech. If you can't decide whether to study abroad, please just think how lucky you would be, and how great the memories will be for the rest of your life.



Hanze University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands

Moe Nishimura

I have been studying Marketing Management at Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen, the Netherlands, since February 2019. This

university values developing knowledge, skills and practical experiences, therefore, they offer not only lectures but also projects to learn how to apply theories to pragmatic issues. For instance, one of the projects I have done with group members is to write a research report about a company chosen by ourselves. In order to do the project, it was mandatory to contact the company and get cooperation because the company's data was essential to do internal and external analysis. With a conclusion based on the actual data, students get experience to practice what they learn. Also, there is an interesting lesson called 'Design Thinking' which has a real client. The client gives an issue with some information, and students try to make a prototype for them to solve it through their survey and analysis. The group with the best prototype in each class gets a chance to present it to their client. Such a bonus system would motivate students to work harder.

Besides studying, there is something new to learn in daily life. One of them is the difficulty to live in a foreign country which is not an English-speaking country. As a matter of course, almost all things are written in Dutch such as official documents, products, and announcements in public transportation. To give an example, Dutch railways are often changed because of maintenances. Then they announce some important information in Dutch but foreign people cannot understand what they say. I fully realized from such experiences that English has a limit. This was a good chance to learn some Dutch. Fortunately, the Netherlands is one of the top-class countries where people can speak English very well so it is not too difficult to communicate with others.

There is just one more thing I think is a fascinating point about studying in a EU country. Travelling within the EU is a piece of cake which is a great feature about studying in Europe.



Beijing University of Foreign Studies, China

Airi Chikamori

I went to Beijing Foreign Studies University for a year studying abroad. The university is known as the best language university in China, accepting more than a thousand foreign exchange students.

To make a long story short, firstly, it was quite a challenging year for me to stay at the university and in China. In the end, however, the year surely empowered and changed me.

During the year, I attended linguistics classes and Chinese classes as a student in the School of English. Exchange students usually only attend Chinese classes. But as I also wanted to improve my English and to see how Chinese students learn English to find any distinction on English education, I chose to join the School of English and to attend both classes.

In the linguistics classes, I took sociolinguistics, history of English, comparative studies on English and Chinese, and basic skills like public

speaking, narrative writing, and listening.

Chinese lessons were likewise impressive. There were students from all over the world. We influenced each other and tried our best to speak and improve our Chinese.

In terms of discovery, the way Chinese students learn English was quite different from that of Japanese students. Japanese students tend to be required to "input" knowledge, whereas Chinese students are not only required to input but also output. This may be because of the university I attended, but I found it really interesting to see.

When the semester just started, I was very nervous and unconfident in my language ability. What I was learning was much more academic than I thought it would be. I almost became depressed for the first several months.

What was lucky for me was I made friends from various countries including China, which taught me their cultures or customs and to broaden my perspective. They always encouraged me, saying be confident, which enabled me to keep moving forward.

The year was never easy, and was probably the most challenging in my life. Still, what I learned, and whom I met all broke my shell, and they became my treasure.



Fresno State University, California, U.S.

Rena Nagayama

I am currently in the US to study linguistics and American culture. The reasons why I want to learn American culture is because I have studied English most of my

life and the English education was based on American English, but I realized that I do not know much about American culture.

What I found is that you cannot define American culture. Most people think that Western music, hamburgers, French fries, or pizza is American culture. However, some Americans have Asian blood, so they have Asian culture and they might speak Asian languages. There are also people who have European or African blood. You can tell that America is a place where people from all over the world live together. For this reason, "American culture" is quite different from Japanese culture and it can be Asian, European, Mexican, or African or whatever each person's roots are. Also, I found that being different is a great thing in the US and that makes me so comfortable. Here it is normal that every person is different and no one says anything bad about being different. I feel very comfortable to live here and study what I love, and I enjoy being myself in the U.S.

Another thing I found is that you cannot live by yourself and we have to help each other out. America is a huge country and transportation is not as good as in Japan. Americans often offer a ride to those who cannot drive. Moreover, they help me more than they should when I don't know what to do. Since then, I try to do my best to help others and that has made me a better person. I feel that I have gradually become mature and calm. Living in the US is not easy for me, but this situation gives me a great effect.



Gothenburg University, Sweden

Kaiju Matsuda

Ciao!

My name is Kaiju Matsuda. I am studying at University of Gothenburg, Sweden as an exchange student from August in

2019 to June in 2020. I would like to share my study abroad experiences and I would be glad if my story will be helpful for future students who want to go abroad. I will talk about my classes and my leisure time in Sweden.

During the first semester, I took four courses relating to Gender and Globalization which are comparably seen as progressive issues in Sweden. When it comes to studying, I tried to take a seat in front during the classes, and to speak up without hesitation. My unique way to break the ice in the first class was to say something interesting or funny such as a quick joke, known as "Ippatsu-Gei" in Japanese, so that I could literally blend right in with foreign classmates and feel comfortable in the classroom. I strongly recommend future students to do the same thing!

In addition, I mostly spend my free time hanging out with foreign friends, going to a bar, enjoying "Fika" which is one of the most important Swedish cultures. People usually go to a café with somebody they know well, talking and chilling out over a cup of coffee and a piece of cakes. I also enjoy traveling around other European countries at a surprisingly affordable price. One of my goals in this exchange life is to make as many as new foreign friends as possible through traveling.

Keep in mind not to lose your wallet!

Merci!

For more information on study abroad opportunities,
visit the Center for International Collaboration.

Celebrating International Exchange: KU Students Experience Study Abroad at Universities Around the World

We are always experimenting with these center pages, and this year we decided to use this space to profile our Kochi University classmates who are studying abroad in various countries around the world. We asked KU students who are currently studying in the Czech Republic, Norway, China, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the U.S. to send us their stories. We hope you get something good from their experiences and words of wisdom, and that our readers will come to understand how valuable it is to experience study abroad at one of our partner universities.



Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Rei Maeda

In Norway, there is a variety of people and, to my eyes, a fresher atmosphere than in Kochi. I lived in Norway as an exchange student for half a year. The reason why I decided to study in Norway is that it is not easy to go there. A further reason is that I really wanted to go to a cold country because I was born in the hot prefecture of Kochi in Japan. In addition, I had always heard about the high level of English education in Europe.

Joining the exchange program was an opportunity to get to know the European education system. I chose the program "English language and literature", which includes courses in English grammar and phonetics as well as English literature and culture. Currently, there are no other Japanese students in my university. At first, I was upset, because I had never experienced this kind of situation before. However, for me this is a good opportunity to communicate with other people in English. I spent a great time with friends, talking about various topics like culture, foods and more.

One of my teachers told me, that 'today never comes back, that's why you have to enjoy the time now.' I was really impressed when I heard that! Now, I can tell all the people who want to try something new, just "Give it a shot". The most important thing is to try, even if you miss the chance.



South Bohemia University, Czech Republic

Noa Okamoto

I am mainly doing cultural studies at South Bohemia University. The reason that I decided to study in Czech Republic is because I wanted to put myself in an unfamiliar environment and to know how I can live in that situation. What intrigued me most was the people, their habits, and their culture. Not only did I have no idea about Czech people before I came, but also, I had no idea of what kind of place the Czech Republic was. Though it seemed difficult to live in the local environment, I thought it was a good opportunity because I can learn a variety of things This wouldn't have been the case if I went to countries that I already knew about. The best thing about studying in a European country was that I could meet students who have different points of view, because each of them are from a variety of countries and different backgrounds. And that was the exact sort of experience I needed.

In my classes, I was trying to express my opinion as much as possible, even if I didn't have much confidence in it. It was also helpful to build my confidence in terms of thinking and action. I am really satisfied with my stay in Czech because I could meet lots of people, experience different cultures and, more than anything, I can feel that my way of thinking has changed in a good way.