

STAP Experience Report

Tampere University, Finland

Fall term 2024, 1 Aug 2024-31 Jan 2025



Bachelor Management Economics and Social Sciences

Completed Courses:

Finnish Society and Culture (SOC.100) 5 cr

Student's Well-being and Life Skills (TAU.PSY.000) 1 cr

Nordic Welfare Societies (SSR.COSOP.050) 5 cr

Human Rights Law (HAL.JOIK.218) 5 cr

Introduction to Socially Sustainable Societies (SOS.020) 5 cr

Finnish 1 (LANG.SUV.001) 3 cr

E-mail adress:



Testimonial:

"My experience as an Erasmus student at Tampere University provided invaluable insights into social policies, sustainable development, and the Nordic welfare system. I wholeheartedly recommend it as a destination to learn, unwind, and connect with people from around the globe." - Malin, BSc. Management, Economic and Social Sciences, Tampere Universities

Travelling

When I received the notification that I had been accepted to Tampere University in Finland, one of my first thoughts was that using green travel to get there—a destination about 2,000 km from Cologne—would be quite challenging. Nevertheless, I did some research and was delighted to find out that, although time-consuming, it is quite feasible and not much more expensive than flying there with a large suitcase.

For my outward journey, I decided to take the route through Sweden and spend two days sightseeing in Stockholm. On Saturday, August 10th, I took the ICE from Cologne to Hamburg, where I switched to the night train. I slept for most of the 12-hour journey and arrived well-rested in Stockholm at 10 a.m. the next morning. After two nights in a nice hostel and exploring the city's many beautiful sights, I woke up early on Tuesday morning and took public transport to the harbor, where the ferry to Finland awaited me. The 11-hour ferry ride flew by, thanks to the breathtaking views of the countless small islands along the Swedish coast, the sunny and windy ocean vistas, and the free onboard entertainment. This journey was one of the most enjoyable I've ever had. From there on, the last two hours from the ferry port in Turku to Tampere by train were no problem.

If I were to make this journey again, there are a few things I would do differently:

1. Travel with a smaller suitcase. Tampere has a fantastic selection of affordable and high-quality secondhand stores, as well as a recycling room with free items, so it's best to pack only the essentials. If necessary, you can also ship a package. My large, heavy suitcase barely fit into my narrow cabin on the night train and was exhausting to lug around.
2. Book the night train early. The Hamburg-to-Stockholm night trains are very popular in summer, so early booking ensures better deals.
3. Double-check train tickets in Finland. Make sure your train ticket is from Turku harbor to Tampere, not just Turku city center.
4. Download the necessary apps beforehand. The 'Tuudo' app allows you to display your Finnish student ID for discounted tickets, and Tampere's local transport app, 'Nysse,' is helpful for navigating public transport.

For my return journey to Germany, I chose a different route, taking the ferry from Helsinki to Travemünde. Although the journey lasted about 30 hours, it was relaxed and affordable if you book a bed in a shared four-bed cabin. Since the ferry arrived late, around 9 p.m., I decided not to travel home immediately. Instead, I took the train to Hamburg, stayed

overnight in a hostel, and enjoyed the Christmas markets before taking another ICE train home.

For this route, I recommend the following tips:

1. Plan your route to the ferry port carefully. If traveling directly from Tampere to the port, it's more convenient to get off the train before Helsinki city center and take a bus to the port.
2. Bring enough food. While food is available for purchase on the ferry, it's much cheaper to prepare your own meals.
3. Choose a hostel near Hamburg train station. For example, the 'Generator' hostel is conveniently located and offers luggage lockers, which are helpful if you check out before your train departs.

Green travel to other countries is also an option during your stay in Finland. FlixBus offers direct connections from Tampere to Riga (Latvia) and Tallinn (Estonia), and you could even travel to Vilnius (Lithuania) if you have the time. FlixBus prices are affordable and include the two-hour ferry ride. With an ESN Card, you can get a 10–15% discount on journeys, which I highly recommend! ESN also organizes great trips to Lapland or the Lofoten Islands in Norway. If you're traveling within Finland to places like Helsinki, Oulu, or Rovaniemi, train connections are a great option.

Living in Tampere

Finding accommodation was very easy. I registered with the student housing provider TOAS and applied for a furnished room as soon as possible. Since most of my courses were at the city center campus, I requested accommodation close to the city center and was fortunate to get a room in Lapinkaari. Lapinkaari is a student dorm that houses up to 150 international students. While this might sound overwhelming, it was manageable because each of us had our own private bathroom, microwave, and fridge. Sharing a kitchen with 30 people on each floor could be challenging, but it wasn't too bad since I ate at the university cafeteria almost every day (including Saturdays). With only a 30-minute walk to the university library (Linna) and the main campus building, and a five-minute walk to the lake, it was an ideal location.

The university facilities were excellent. The library and other buildings were modern and accessible 24/7 with a student ID card. The four cafeterias offered nutritious, tasty meals (including bread and drinks) for under €3, with vegan and vegetarian options always available. For €50, I got a SportUni membership, which included exercise courses and access to all university gyms.

The range of university courses was diverse. Some required mandatory attendance, while others could be completed independently by reading books and taking electronic exams or submitting papers. Some courses involved learning diaries or project work. The electronic exams could be booked online at a time of your choosing.

Initially, I found this flexibility a bit overwhelming and ended up changing most of my preselected courses. However, the university's extensive offerings allowed me to choose interesting courses, particularly on sustainable development and social sciences. Courses like Socially Sustainable Societies, Nordic Welfare Societies, and Finnish Society and

Culture provided valuable insights into the Nordic welfare system and policies for reducing inequality. The Human Rights Law course complimented my prior knowledge of economics and sociology by offering an overview of how United Nations human rights institutions work. Additionally, the Student Mental Wellbeing and Finnish Language courses were great compliments to my academic experience.

Overall, I highly recommend Tampere University for Erasmus students interested in sustainability, nature, and snow. While Tampere isn't a large city, it offers plenty: charming cafés, scenic walks, student parties, board game cafés, museums, ice hockey, and countless saunas.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me!