

Erasmus+ Exchange

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I did my Erasmus+ exchange at **Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa (FCUL)**, Portugal. It instantly puts a smile on my face when I think back about it. Although going abroad is not set aside for everyone, I cannot imagine ever having doubted engaging in this experience.

The university (FCUL) is a quite cosy place and situated on a very large campus, literally called campo grande. The site is easily accessible via metro and bus (no tram, nor train). The facilities are relatively normal, nothing too fancy but it does the job. There are numerous spots where you can study around the campus and you can find coffee machines at almost every corner with 30 cents for a coffee. So coffee lovers, watch out because your coffee addiction might just get a little more difficult.

What struck out for me is that the figurative distance between professors and students is very small. Even smaller than the VUB! Don't hesitate to ask them questions or help regarding their course. Or anything else about the University or campus life, for that matter.

I took a total of **4 courses**. Two out of the 4 courses I initially chose on my Learning Agreement, I ended up changing within the first few days of my arrival. So, don't break your head about which courses to choose because it is very likely you'll end changing it anyways.

Biomaterials, 6 ECTS

Although background knowledge about physiology is no requirement, it is definitely a plus for this course. I did not benefit from this myself but by investing some extra time to master the basics, I managed to get a quite decent final grade. The course is relatively dense and demands quite some work throughout the semester. You'll have to participate in several group works, two of which include a presentation. The teacher of this course is very kind and funny but can be very strict and demanding. She is a very good professor nonetheless.

Corrosion and Materials Stability, 6 ECTS

The teacher of this course might be the kindest one I have met so far. There are two exams, the first one around the month of November and the second one during the normal exam period in January. If you manage to get a good grade on the former, the latter is a piece of cake. Also, you'll have to submit a paper on a topic of your choosing, together with the colleagues you'll be working with.

Chemical and Associated Industries, 6 ECTS

A course is often as good as the person by whom it is taught. In this case, it's chaotic! For this class you will be assigned a field in industry, ranging from chocolate to perfume, about which you need to write an essay, as well as give a presentation. Also, you will be participating in some company visits.

Portuguese Language Course, 6 ECTS

For me personally, this was the most satisfying class. Being able to engage in basic conversations with locals was of major importance to me. Note that these classes are not provided by the FCUL but by the Faculty of Letters instead (Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa). If you wish to attend this course, you simply need to go to the building next to FCUL, fill in a form and pay a fee of 75 euros.

Before going abroad, almost every student I met told me he or she fell in love with their Erasmus city. This was not different for me. **Lisbon** was, and is, the definition of an eye-opener in my opinion. My foreknowledge about the capital of Portugal was practically nonexistent. Yet, over the five-month period of my stay there, I learned plenty. Not only about the city and her inhabitants, but also about the Portuguese lifestyle and especially myself. Although I literally and figuratively discovered a lot, much remains hidden, as Lisbon gives away her secrets little-by-little. Step-by-step. Tile-by-tile.

Lisbon, I'll be back!