

Evaluation of traineeship

This evaluation will give the University of Aalborg important information in regards to your traineeship in a foreign country. The evaluation will be used to help future students who wish to try a traineeship abroad.

International Office

1. Personal data

Name: Henni

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Study programme at AAU and semester of travel: European Studies (MA), 9th sem

2. Traineeship

Name of the company / organization (and country): East and North Finland EU Office, Belgium, Brussels

Starting date: 1.9.2016 End date: 31.12.2016

Did you find the length of the traineeship:
Too short

Please elaborate: I feel like I could have given the company much more if I had stayed there a bit longer. I learned a lot and benefited from my stay a lot even now, but I wish I had had more time to use my freshly gained knowledge at work.

What was your main motivation for doing an internship?

I was eager to gain more professional experience and widen my professional network. I was also excited to put my academic knowledge to practical usage and gain a better understanding of both the EU and it's legislative procedures as well as how the Arctic issues are dealt with in Brussels (both relevant for my studies).

Please describe your main tasks as an intern, as well as evaluate these tasks:

The tasks varied a lot. I attended many seminars, workshops and meetings and wrote reports of them. I also updated our website and social media regularly as well as hosted guests and helped in various administrative tasks.

What is the subject of your trainee report?

Lobbying on behalf of the European Arctic at the heart of EU.

Please provide a short evaluation of the traineeship from an academic point-of-view:

I learnt a great deal of the EU and how various policies are formed there. I got a very clear practical understanding of the work done by the Commission, the Parliament and the Council, thanks to the various meetings I attended at all the bodies. I also begun to understand how the various lobbyist organizations affect the policy-making in Brussels. But because of the big work amount there was way too little time for project writing. It is a huge work load to have on top of long working hours at work.

3. Information and support

Who was your contact-person at the company/organization? Janne Uusivirta, a senior advisor

How did you go about establishing a connection with the company / organization in the first place?

I saw they were looking for an intern at their website so I sent in my application.

How were you received as a foreign intern?

I am Finnish, as were the other workers as well.

Did they arrange any of these upon your arrival?

a welcome meeting an information meeting nothing

Please elaborate: The first day was super hectic with a lot of meetings, but I did have individual meetings with all the people who worked there during the first week I believe.

How well and to what extent did you integrate with your colleagues at the company / organization?

Very well, I felt like I was 100% part of the company and treated equally.

4. Accommodation

How were the practical arrangements managed (accommodation etc.)?

I was lucky since my internship had arranged everything for me and the other trainee. We both lived at a place called the "ICA" in Brussels, it was like a dorm/hotel/center for master's

degree trainees in Brussels.

6. Language preparations and gains

Which languages did you use while working? English and Finnish.

Did you receive any additional language lessons?

no

If yes, for how many weeks did the lessons last?

How many hours a week?

Please give a brief evaluation of how your linguistic skills benefitted from your traineeship:

Both my professional Finnish and English got better. I wrote many reports and read many as well, the language skills just naturally developed through working.

7. Economy

Was the traineeship unpaid? If yes, how did you finance your stay?

SU loans grants

other (what?): _____

If no, how much were you compensated with each month? I got "Finnish SU" approx. 300 euros a month, plus got the ERASMUS grant for the stay, so I guess I had about 500 e a month to use.

Total expenses per month (DKK): about 500e I guess, I did not have any left when I returned.

Break down of your economy (DKK):

Travel: Varied every month. Around 1000-3000 kr I guess.

Rent (per month): A deal with the internship place.

Living expenses (food, laundry, etc.) (per month): Varied, 1000-3000 kr maybe

Insurance: Some thousands of DKK for the stay.

Transport (per month): Varied, 1000 maybe tops for stay

Total: Hard to say

Other expenses: _____

How much more did you spend each month abroad compared to your expenses if you had stayed at Aalborg University? (DKK per month): I think I spent more in Aalborg.

Are there any grants you would recommend other students to apply for?
ERASMUS grants definitely.

8. Personal gains and evaluation of internship

Please consider the value of your internship from an academic point of view?

It really gave me a practical understanding of what goes down in Brussels and how people interact there. It is a very important experience for anyone studying European Studies.

Please consider the value of your internship from a personal point of view?

Very high, both personally and professionally.

Please give a short evaluation of the traineeships benefits from a social point of view:

Again, a great experience. From a networking point of view, Brussels is the place to be.

Did you experience any serious issues or problems during your internship?

If yes, how did you solve them or how were you helped in solving them?

The work was super stressful especially in the beginning and it was very stressful to try and find time and energy for project writing on the side. I went to the gym to try and relax and met with friends. During the year of my internship, I lived in three different countries, so the year itself was really stressful.

Are there any things about the internship that you especially appreciate??

My colleagues at work and their support. They made sure I would get to see how things work and attend as many meetings I could.

Please make a short, overall evaluation of your internship:

Great, but demanding. You should prepare yourself for long working days and challenges, but in the end it is very beneficial to go, both professionally and personally.

Would you like to be contact person for students who may be interested in a traineeship in the same company/organization?

I can, although the workplace only applies for Finnish students.

9. Date and signature

Date: 25.1.2017