

Saint-Petersburg State University

EXCHANGE STUDENTS REPORT

TO BE FILLED OUT ELECTRONICALLY (in English or Russian)

The international experience you have gained while the exchange period at St. Petersburg University is the unique practice you will remember all your life. It can also help other students when they are planning for their exchange. To make sure that prospective students have a chance to learn from your experience we ask you to submit the **Exchange Students Report**.

Please complete this form and send it to Academic Mobility Office e-mail : e.petryanina@spbu.ru. Thank you.

When filling in this form try to remember the sort of things you wanted to know before your arrival to St. Petersburg, please be honest in your responses and try to avoid plain yes/no answers.

Host faculty at SPbU	Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences.....
Exchange Study Period	Autumn 2015/2016.....
Home Institution	Leibniz Universität Hannover, Germany.....

Do you give your permission to publish the information provided in this report on the internet (anonymously)?

(yes/ no) yes, anonymously, please. _____

General Opinion

What's your general opinion about the exchange period at Saint-Petersburg University?

I think that everything went very well and that it was a good experience for me. The whole exchange was very well organized by all the persons engaged. There even were opportunities provided for getting to know other people, the city and the region. My classes at my faculty were very rich and I learned a lot.

Academic and Administrative Issues

What's your opinion about the courses that you took while on exchange? Are you satisfied with the level of teaching, courses content, usefulness of the topics discussed?

I chose Russian language classes, a class on nationalism in theory and history, a class on the Cold War and a class on Russian literature and culture. The level of teaching predominantly was high, sometimes demanding but rewarding. I chose classes related to Russia as well as to my subject History and I am very satisfied with what I learned for my studies as well as for my exchange. The topics helped me to better apprehend the respective parts of the Russian culture.

Did you take Russian language course? If yes, please, write down your opinion about it.

I took a class on conversation and one on grammar. We were only a few students so that both classes were excellently adapted to fit our needs. Both classes were rich in variety, interesting and useful for improving my language skills.

Are you satisfied with the administrative organization of your exchange period? Was all the necessary information provided to you in time? Was the administrative staff helpful? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the administration of the exchange programme?

All the necessary information was provided in time and the administrative staff was always helpful. The information about the students exchange programme on the homepage (spring 2015) was good, only the classes taught in English language were not complete and also not up to date. It would be good to have the latest version of the course catalog easily accessible online for non-Russian speaking students.

Accommodation

Please describe the accommodation option(s) that you used. What's your opinion about it?

I was accommodated in the dormitory for international students in Kapitanskaya. I liked the apartment with a shared kitchen because my roommates were very friendly. It would have been nice, also to be in contact with Russian students. The international dormitory fosters to stick with other international students.

Living expenses

How much would you say you spend in a month in Saint-Petersburg? Which expenses should the exchange students be prepared for? Where would you recommend to shop near the University and eat out?

I spent about 500 Euro or 35 000 Rubel each month, including the accommodation fee, insurance, going out and grocery shopping. When relatives or friends came visiting me, I sometimes stayed with them in a hostel, which is expensive. Exchange students should be prepared for that because guests are not allowed in the dormitory. For eating out I recommend the "stolovaya" of the student's faculty, if there is one. In the city center it is also possible to eat in a cheap "stolovaya", but I would recommend the more tasty and also not so expensive "business lunch" at the "Market Place" at Nevsky Prospekt during lunchtime on weekdays.

Transport and Travel

How comfortable and expensive did you find the local transport network? Was it easy to get around to the University?

It is a bit demanding to get the student travel card but it is worth getting it. It is not expensive to get around and to get to the University with the student travel card (only 850 Rubel per month). Getting to the University takes about 45 minutes by bus. It may be necessary to change buses one time and, in winter, you never know, if it is hot or cold inside the bus. During the rush hour it may be quite crowded. But buses go regularly and reliably and the metro goes frequently so that the local transport network works very well. Only at night no public transport is running so that a taxi may be needed sometimes when going out.

Did you travel during your exchange? Where? Did you organize the travel yourself or used a travel agency? How expensive was it? What would you recommend to the foreign students who want to travel around Russia?

I only did day-trips around Saint Petersburg. I traveled by train ("electrichka") to the sea and to Pavlovsk, by bus to Krohnstadt and by "marshrutka" to Peterhof and Pushkin. I used a guidebook for information when needed.

Personal Safety and Medical Care

Did you find St. Petersburg safe? Do you have any safety advice for other exchange students?

I found St. Petersburg safe. I would only advice to take care of one's personal belongings in order to avoid thievery and to be careful about the road traffic.

Did you apply for medical care in Saint-Petersburg? Please, describe the medical facilities in Saint-Petersburg? Do you have any advice on medical care for other exchange students?

Fortunately, I did not need medical care. So, I did not get to know medical facilities.

Social life on exchange

Did you take part in any extracurricular activities organized by SPbU or student organizations (Student Union, Study Angel, Friends Forever)? Which?

I took part in some activities organized by the Student Union. We went to a concert together and I got to know an ethnological park about architecture of Northern Russia.

How would you describe the activities organized? Which did you like the most and why? Which didn't you like and why? Do you have any ideas for improving the organization of the events? Do you have any suggestions about the activities you would like SPbU to organize for the exchange students?

I liked both events, the concert and the ethnological park. The responsible persons as well as the other participants were very friendly. The ethnological park was really amazing and our guide gave a lot of interesting information about the monuments.

Did you apply for a buddy? Did you like your student buddy? Please, explain your answer. Did you find him/her helpful? Do you have any suggestions on improving the buddy programme?

Yes, I applied for a buddy and I liked her very much, she was eager about helping me. She helped me a lot with the bureaucratic requirements like the documents for the registration or the admission to the internet in the dormitory. She also showed me the way to the university and how to get there by bus. She was open for all my questions and had some handy tips for me.

Do you have any suggestions on what to do at your free time? What events did you like the most (ot only among those organized by SPbU)?

At my free time, it was important for me to do sports, especially as it was winter and often quite dark even during daytime. I went swimming and could also use the sauna of my fitness center. This, I can recommend for staying healthy.

I liked to go out with friends, for example for listening live music in a bar. Being in Saint Petersburg one should definitely get to know the Mariinsky or the Mikhaylovsky Theatre and enjoy ballet, concerts, theatre or opera there. I very much enjoyed ballet performances at each of the theatres. I also liked going into the cinema and see movies in Russian language with English subtitles (in the Avrora Kinoteatr or in the Angleterre).

As long as it is not too cold, it is also very nice to visit the beautiful parks within the region of Saint Petersburg (Pavlovsk, Pushkin, the Summer Garden...) and Krohnstadt. I visited most of them during the beautiful Russian autumn time.

Other Comments

Do you have a blog where you wrote anything about your life in Saint-Petersburg and/or SPbU? If yes, please, share the link to it. Do you give your permission for giving the link to your blog to the prospective exchange students coming to SPbU in order to improve their knowledge about life in Russia?

No, I did not have a blog.

Do you have any further comments?

People in Saint Petersburg often are really helpful and cooperative and the city is a great place to go to.

