



Exchange semester in  
Vaasa Finland



B.Sc. Business Administration  
Hanken School of Economics Vaasa, Finland  
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# Contents

- Application process ..... 1
- Housing in Vaasa..... 1
- Courses at Hanken..... 1
  - Orientation course (1cr)..... 1
  - International Business (6cr) ..... 2
  - Advanced course in Excel and VBA (8cr) ..... 2
  - Project Management (8cr)..... 2
  - Circular.now (5cr)..... 3
- Life in Vaasa..... 3

## Application process

Following my nomination by the University of Cologne, I was quickly notified via email by the exchange coordinator at Hanken to upload the required documentation to the Mobility Online platform. After the upload and examination by the university, I was formally accepted by the institution. In addition, I applied for the ERASMUS+ program to secure additional financial support for my stay. To receive the scholarship, I was required to submit an online learning agreement (OLA) and a grant agreement, which outline all courses I wished to take at the receiving university and general information about myself and my stay. The University of Cologne provides comprehensive and detailed information in advance to ensure a smooth process.

## Housing in Vaasa

The student housing market in Vaasa is not highly competitive, and VOAS, the student housing organisation, is well placed to assist students in securing accommodation. I would recommend VOAS apartments, as they are affordable, located near the university, and offer the opportunity to live together with friends. During the application process, you will receive an email informing you of the possibility to apply for a VOAS apartment. It is advisable to act promptly to ensure the availability of a place. VOAS offers shared apartments for all students, but you cannot select your roommates or the size of the shared apartment. The apartments usually have a size of two to three persons. Additionally, there is an option to order mattresses, pillows, blankets, or cutlery in advance and free of charge from Hanken.

## Courses at Hanken

### Orientation course (1cr)

During the initial days of the program, a compulsory orientation course is offered, which provides a comprehensive overview of Hanken's academic writing guidelines and related topics. Addressed topics will include academic referencing, the legal use of AI, and navigating the Hanken online library. The examination is a multiple-choice online quiz, which can be retaken as often as necessary to pass. The course is only graded pass or fail

and does not have to be recorded in your OLA. Additionally, the course must be completed within the first two weeks at Hanken.

### **International Business (6cr)**

Participation in the International Business course offered a thorough exploration of international business dynamics. The course focused on management, organisational and political economic perspectives, providing valuable insights into the key issues faced by multinational companies. The course's objective was to equip students with the ability to articulate and apply concepts, models, and strategies related to international business and management. The course incorporates three case studies, accounting for 30% of the overall grade. Additionally, there is a group assignment, where students are required to analyse a self-picked multinational company. This component accounts for 40% of the grade. Finally, students must take an online multiple-choice quiz on the course material, accounting for 20% of the grade. The remaining 10% are comprised of lecture attendance points. The course is not time-consuming, and the assignments and quiz are manageable.

### **Advanced course in excel and VBA (8cr)**

This course is exclusively available in an online self-study format. It consists of twelve exercise sheets, which teach the efficient use of Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) in Excel. These exercise sheets are voluntary and there is no requirement to submit them to the professor. Completing the exercise sheets is beneficial as it helps to understand how to code in Excel and is a valuable training exercise for the exam. The exam is an assignment comprised of nine exercises, similar to the use cases from the exercise sheets. The exam questions are uploaded early in the semester, allowing students to begin working on them immediately. There is more than enough time to answer all questions. Furthermore, the professor offers the option to submit work at any time before the deadline, after which it will be corrected and returned. The course is time-consuming, but it is well controllable if all twelve exercise sheets are completed in advance and AI tools are used to explain code.

### **Project Management (8cr)**

Project Management is also an exclusively available online self-study course. In order to prepare for the exam, it was mandatory to read 12 relevant

chapters of the book "Project Management, a Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling and Controlling" by Harald Kerzner. The course focused on defining projects, human aspects of Project Management, control and follow-up projects, as well as knowledge exchange. Additionally, there were voluntary exercises for the Project Management Software Project 2024 from Microsoft. These exercises covered the fundamentals of utilising project management software in a practical setting. The course concluded with a final examination that constituted the entire final grade. The exam consisted only of essay questions. The most effective preparation method is to focus on previous exam questions because the new exam is based on those questions.

### Circular.now (5cr)

Circular.now was again only offered as an online self-study course. The course comprised two parts, both mandatory for successful completion. The first part of the course is an independent study of the course material on the MOOC platform. To complete the MOOC platform, it is necessary to pass a multiple-choice test. The second component of the course is an essay. The MOOC component focuses on the concept and significance of the circular economy, exploring it through four distinct subject areas, emphasising multidisciplinary collaboration and systems thinking. The essay component required the analysis of a company's circular strategy, which proved to be engaging and enjoyable. While the course demands a significant time investment, the multiple-choice test and essay sections are well-manageable.

### Life in Vaasa

First and foremost, I will provide some general information about Vaasa as a city. My semester abroad spanned from the end of August to the end of December. During that time, it rarely rained, and clear days prevailed. Statistically, Vaasa is also the sunniest city in Finland. The temperature range during this period was notable, ranging from a high of +25 degrees in August and September to a low of -17 degrees in December. As winter approaches, the days become shorter, with less sunlight during the day. Therefore, it is advisable to make the most of the remaining sunlight and go out, when the sun is shining.

I would now like to address the unique contributions of Hanken and the exchange tutors to my semester abroad. The university and the tutors invested a lot of time in their exchange students, providing guidance and assistance from the beginning to the end of our program. For instance, the tutors provided transportation from the airport, supported the move to our VOAS apartments, and prepared the rooms for our arrival. In the coming months, they organised social events, trips and sporting activities, which students were welcome to join. The level of support and integration they provided was instrumental to our student life in Finland. In addition, Hanken organised a variety of events for us, which were very well received. During the semester, we participated in activities such as Laser tag, Volleyball, Paddle tennis and many more. We also had the opportunity to attend welcoming and farewell dinners, which were organised by Hanken and funded by them. The professors were also understanding of our exchange student status. In the event of a class absence due to travelling, a compromise could almost always be made to ensure the submission of our required coursework.

Finally, I will describe my experience as an exchange student in Vaasa. Initially, I was sceptical about whether the city could offer anything interesting, given its size. However, I was quickly proven wrong. As previously mentioned, the Hanken exchange program and dedicated tutors ensured that we were fully integrated into the Hanken student community. We established numerous friendships with Finnish students and participated in activities and events that were not typical for Erasmus students. Hanken, despite its relatively small size, fosters a strong sense of camaraderie among its students. In the event of any questions regarding the courses or weekend plans, there was always a Finnish student available to help, and they took pride in providing support. The student life in Finland differs from that in Germany. Each university has multiple student unions, which organise social events for all students to attend. The most popular of these events were the Finnish Sitzes. Each Sitz had its unique theme, such as Oktoberfest, Wild West, Casino Royale and more. Sitz events are well organised parties where all students come together to sing and drink. These events also incorporated activity games between different tables, fostering a sense of friendly competition and camaraderie. In addition to the social events, I also had the opportunity to travel extensively. My travels took me to the breathtaking Lofoten Islands in Norway. The nature was truly unique, and I would highly recommend a visit if possible. The most notable locations were

Reinebringen, Ryten, Haukland beach and Henningsvaer. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to visit all the capitals of the Baltic states. Talin, Riga and Vilnius had beautiful old towns and interesting histories, which we enjoyed exploring. My most recent trip took me to the Finnish region of Lapland. There, we were going on an arctic ocean tour, followed by a traditional sauna experience with a culinary exploration of Finnish cuisine. We also visited a husky farm and participated in a husky sledding tour. To conclude the trip, we participated in a snowshoe hike through the national park in Saariselkä, with polar lights above our heads.

To summarise, my semester abroad in Vaasa was one of the best times of my life. I believe the key factor contributing to this special experience was the incredible integration of us foreign students into the local student community. This ensured that we were not limited to interactions with Erasmus students, but instead had the opportunity to engage in the finish student life. The university provides comprehensive support for exchange students and the courses are well controllable. If you are interested in experiencing a new culture while also having the opportunity to travel and visit the Nordic countries, Vaasa and Hanken are an excellent choice for you.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me: [lucasdeutscher@gmx.de](mailto:lucasdeutscher@gmx.de)