

Study in Lapland

Guidebook for International Students 2014–2015



UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND
LAPIN YLIOPISTO

Study in Lapland

Guidebook for International Students 2014 – 2015



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NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**Introduction
Chapters 1 & 2**

**University of Lapland
Chapter 3**

- Degree Programme students
- Exchange students

**Studying and living in Rovaniemi
Chapters 4 – 7**

Extras, Chapters 8 & 9

*) The guidebook includes specific information which is different for degree students and exchange students. The information at the end of the guidebook is general and is intended for all new international students. Please read the proper sections carefully!



1 Welcome to Rovaniemi!

The city of Rovaniemi is home to two institutions of higher education: the University of Lapland (ULapland) and Lapland University of Applied Sciences (LaplandUAS). This guidebook is designed for international students who have been accepted to study at the University of Lapland. We would like to extend you a warm welcome, and we hope this guidebook will help you with the process of becoming an international student.

The guidebook includes general and academic information about the University of Lapland. It is very important that you carefully read through the correct chapters and sections of this guidebook so you will know all the necessary practicalities and contact information. The guidebook contains important informa-

tion which you need to know before you leave your home country and after you have arrived in Rovaniemi. Practical advice and information about studying and living in Rovaniemi can be found at the end of the guidebook as well as a brief guide to Finnish culture. This information will help you get started in a new place.

We recommend that you read this guidebook carefully and also familiarise yourself with other information which the university may have sent you. Please note that you can find more information about the University of Lapland on the Internet at **www.ulapland.fi/english**.

Best regards,
The University of Lapland



ROVANIEMI – THE CAPITAL OF LAPLAND AND SANTA CLAUS'S OFFICIAL HOMETOWN

Rovaniemi is the administrative, cultural and educational centre of Lapland. Santa Claus has his permanent home in Rovaniemi and welcomes visitors at his office in his very own village on the Arctic Circle. Rovaniemi was granted a European Union community trademark as The Official Hometown of Santa Claus in 2009.

The population of Rovaniemi has been constantly on the increase since 2000, and the number of inhabitants exceeded 60,000 in 2010. Rovaniemi is a youthful student city, and

the number of students in the two universities is 10,000.

Rovaniemi offers good connections to Europe and the Barents region. The city has an international airport with a number of daily scheduled flights going via Helsinki all over the world.

Culture and arts are close to the hearts of people living in Rovaniemi. Finland's northernmost professional theatre, the Rovaniemi Theatre, as well as the Lapland Chamber Orchestra and various dance and music groups perform at the Lappia House, which was designed by world-renowned architect Alvar Aalto. The many visiting exhibitions attract friends of the



arts to the exhibition halls of the Rovaniemi Art Museum, the Arktikum, the Regional Library of Lapland, and a number of smaller galleries. The Arktikum also houses the Provincial Museum of Lapland and the exhibitions of the Arctic Research Centre.

The Rovaniemi business structure consists predominantly of services; tourism is one of the fastest growing industries. This explains Rovaniemi's position as a provincial administrative centre as well as why, after Helsinki, Rovaniemi is Finland's second most popular international tourism destination.

Rovaniemi is an Arctic meeting place for international companies, students, young peo-

ple, athletes, artists, researchers and tourists. The people of Rovaniemi have constructed a partnership network and cultural exchanges with various regions, the purpose of which has been to reinforce the diversity of peripheral regions and to develop a dialogue with both centres and remote areas.

We warmly welcome you to Rovaniemi!

Tuula Rintala-Gardin
Head of Tourism
City of Rovaniemi

2 *The Finnish education system*

The Finnish welfare society is built on education, culture and knowledge. We see education as a key factor in enhancing our competitiveness. The key aims of the Finnish education policy are quality, efficiency, equality and internationalisation. Therefore, the Finnish education system offers everybody equal opportunities for education, irrespective of domicile, gender, economic situation or linguistic or cultural background.

Our education system consists of:

- one year of voluntary pre-primary education,
- nine-years of basic compulsory education ("comprehensive school"),
- upper secondary education, comprising vocational and general education,
- higher education at universities and universities of applied sciences.

There are no restrictions on education in Finland: students completing one level are always eligible to continue their studies at the next level. The language of tuition is either Finnish or Swedish, as Finland is officially a bilingual country. Institutions of higher education provide close to 500 degree and non-degree programmes in English.

The Finnish higher education system consists of two complementary sectors: universities of applied sciences and universities. The mission of the universities is to conduct scientific research and provide instruction and post-

graduate education based on this research. Universities of applied sciences train professionals in response to the needs of the labour market and conduct R&D which supports instruction and promotes regional development in particular.

The system of personal study plans facilitates the planning of studies and the monitoring of progress in studies and supports student guidance and counselling

Universities of Applied Sciences

Degree studies at universities of applied sciences give a higher education qualification and practical professional skills. They comprise core and professional studies, elective studies and a final project. All degree studies include practical on-the-job learning. The extent of university of applied sciences degree studies is generally 210 - 240 ECTS points, which means 3.5 - 4 years of full-time study. It is further possible to take a university of applied sciences Master's degree after acquiring a minimum of three years' work experience. The university of applied sciences Master's takes 1.5 - 2 years, and is equivalent to a university Master's degree.

Universities

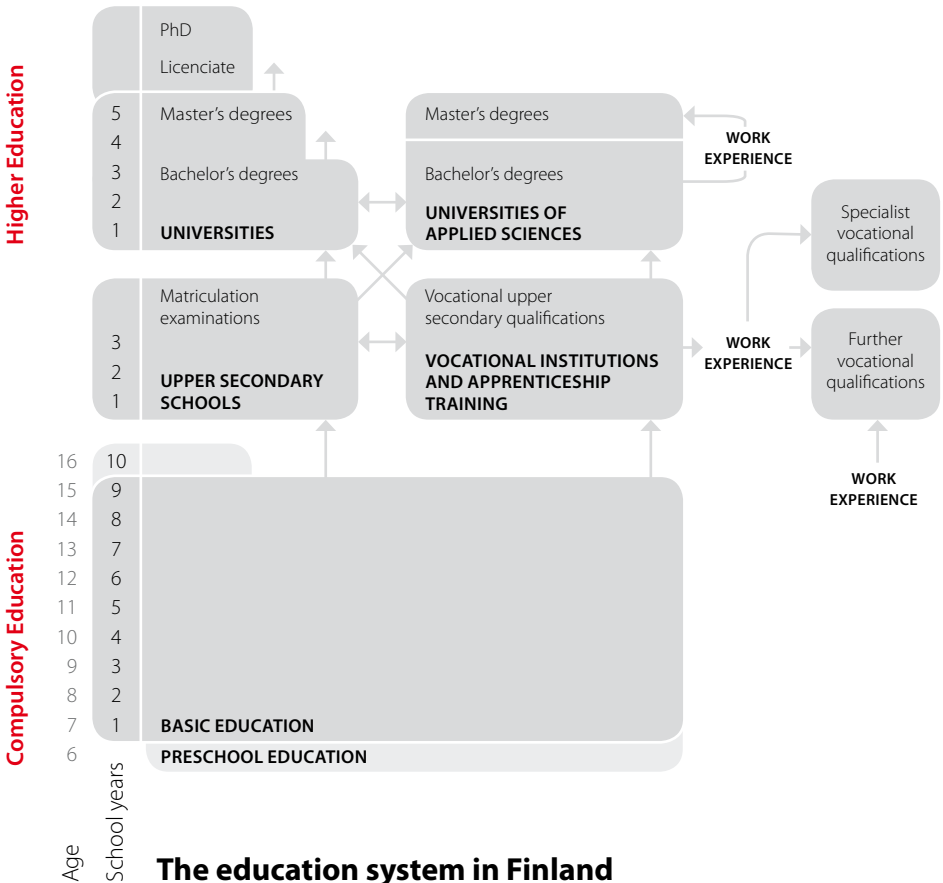
At universities students can study for lower (Bachelor's) and higher (Master's) degrees as well as scientific or artistic postgraduate de-

degrees, which are the licentiate and the doctorate. It is also possible to study for specialised postgraduate degrees in the medical field.

In the two-cycle degree system students first complete the Bachelor's degree, after which they may go for the higher Master's degree. As a rule, students are admitted to study for the higher degree. Universities also arrange separate Master's programmes with special student selection, for which the entry requirement is a Bachelor's level degree or corresponding studies. Studies are quantified in

credits (ECTS). One year of full-time study corresponds to 60 credits. The Bachelor's degree requires 180 credits and takes three years. The Master's degree requires 120 credits, which means two years of full-time study after completion of the lower degree.

Source:
 Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland
www.minedu.fi
 Centre for International Mobility CIMO
www.cimo.fi





3 The University of Lapland *– For the North – for the World*

Welcome to the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland—a great choice!

This guide is intended to help international students prepare for studies at the University of Lapland. We know from experience that living on the Arctic Circle presents its own set of challenges. It is quite a brave venture to move all the way up here. This has been our homeland for generations; we are here to help you find ways to not only survive but really enjoy your stay. The climate has always been harsh, and that has created a strong sense of com-

munity where people are dependent on each other. There are many things that have made Lapland well known in the world: the indigenous Sámi people, Santa Claus, the Midnight Sun, and the aurora borealis. After your stay in Rovaniemi we hope you also leave with the feeling that Lapland should also be known for its friendly people.

The main language of instruction at the University of Lapland is Finnish. Although we strongly appreciate international students who have learned some Finnish prior to their study

period, it is seldom possible for international students who will be staying here for only a short time to take courses taught in Finnish. Therefore, we offer a number of courses in English. In addition, some degree programs are given fully in English. You can find the latest course information at www.ulapland.fi/studies and <https://weboodi.ulapland.fi/oodi/>.

The young men and women who make up our student body come from all corners of Finland and the globe. Although our primary goal is to educate these future professionals and researchers, we also want our students to enjoy themselves while studying here. Our lively Student Union, combined with the numerous cultural opportunities and outdoor recreation and sports facilities available in Rovaniemi, help make this a great place to live.

Originally established in 1979 to provide higher education opportunities for people liv-

ing in northern Finland, the university has now become an important educational institution for the entire country. The University of Lapland has produced every fourth lawyer, every third university-educated expert in art and design, close to ten percent of the social scientists, and many talented educational professionals here in Finland. We warmly welcome you to our campus to join our vibrant community of 4,500 students, about 300 international students, and 600 staff members. With excellent student support services and modern facilities for living and study, the University of Lapland is the perfect choice for studying in the North. Congratulations!

Outi Snellman,
Director of International Relations
Jaana Severidt,
Head of International Student Services



3.1 University of Lapland contact information

UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND, Lapin yliopisto

Erasmus code: SF ROVANIE01

Erasmus Charter: 29314

Address: PO Box 122, FIN-96101 Rovaniemi, Finland

Tel: +358-16-341 341 (switchboard)

Fax: +358-16-362 941 (International Relations Office)

University www site: www.ulapland.fi

International Relations www site: www.ulapland.fi/intl

International studies www site www.ulapland.fi/studies

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Yliopistonkatu 8, 96300 Rovaniemi

Fax +358 16 362 941

International.relations@ulapland.fi

- Ms Outi Snellman
Director of International Relations
Tel. +358 40 501 0209
outi.snellman@ulapland.fi
- Ms Jaana Severidt
Head of International Student Services
Tel: +358 40 772 6510
jaana.severidt@ulapland.fi
- Ms Teija Sirola
International Coordinator
Tel. +358 40 484 4465
teija.sirola@ulapland.fi

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES COORDINATOR

Arctic Studies Program ASP

- Tel. +358 40 484 4195,
isc@ulapland.fi

STUDENT SERVICES

Enrollment for degree students

Yliopistonkatu 8, 96300 Rovaniemi

Fax. +358 16 362 930

ilmoittautuminen@ulapland.fi

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATORS

FACULTY OF ART AND DESIGN

- Ms Virpi Nurmela
Tel. +358 40 484 4396
Ms Marja Ylioinas
Tel. +358 40 484 4315
artinter@ulapland.fi

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

FACULTY OF LAW

- Ms Päivi Martin
Tel. +358 40 484 4040
educationinter@ulapland.fi
lawinter@ulapland.fi

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Ms Minna Nousiainen
Tel. +358 400 813 867
socialinter@ulapland.fi

STUDENT UNION

Membership issues and student card

Ahkiomaantie 23 B 96300 Rovaniemi

Tel. +358 40 578 4207

www.lyy.fi

lyy@lyy.fi

3.2 Faculties and Majors

Faculty of Art and Design

- Art Education
- Audiovisual Media Culture
- Clothing Design
- Graphic Design
- Industrial Design
- Interior and Textile Design

Faculty of Education

- Adult Education
- Primary Teacher Training
- Education
- Media Education

Faculty of Law

- Bachelor of Laws
- Master of Laws

Faculty of Social Sciences

- Administrative Science
- Applied Psychology
- International Relations
- Management
- Political Science
- Public Law
- Rehabilitation Science
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Tourism Research

Separate Units of the University

- Arctic Centre
- Language Centre
- Library

3.3 The University of Lapland's programmes for international students

International courses taught in English are an important part of the education provided by the University of Lapland, and are provided in all of our faculties. However, sometimes international students study alongside Finnish students and the teaching is partly bilingual. Where the teaching is in Finnish, guidance and directions are also given in English (for example in the Faculty of Art and Design).

Exchange students

Many of our courses which are taught in English are intended for the ever growing number of international students who travel to Rovaniemi each academic year. Exchange students are free to take courses from all of the faculties' major and minor programmes and the Language Centre, and can also choose from the non-degree programmes listed below. Some of these courses have been organized within, or between, faculties to provide students with an opportunity to complete thematically based non-degree programmes. However, in the Faculty of Art and Design, exchange students must choose one of the non-degree modules.

Non-degree programmes open to international students at the University of Lapland are:

- Arctic Studies Program
- Circumpolar Studies Program
- Gender Studies
- Global Education

- Intercultural Communication Programme
- Media Education – Bridging Studies

The Faculty of Art and Design offers the following non-degree study modules for art students:

- Art Education
- Audiovisual Media Culture
- Clothing Design
- Fine Art and Cultural Studies
- Graphic Design
- Industrial Design
- Interior and Textile Design

Degree students

The University of Lapland offers a variety of degree programmes at various academic levels that are open to international applicants. Some of these programmes may have a few courses in their curriculum that are offered only in Finnish. However, it is possible for international students to complete these degree programmes entirely in English with specialized study plans and teacher assistance. Degree students may also enrol in non-degree programmes, which can be used as a minor programme to complement their major degree programme. The degree programmes open to international applicants at the University of Lapland are:

Master's Programmes

- Applied Arts
- Clothing Design
- Comparative Social Work
- EMACIM: European Master in Tourism, Culture, and International Management

- Global Biopolitics
- Graphic Design
- Industrial Design
- Interior and Textile Design
- MICLaw: International and Comparative Law
- Media Education

Doctoral Programmes

- Administrative Science
- Adult Education
- Arctic Doctoral Programme Arktis
- Art and Design
- Education
- Gender Studies
- International Relations
- Law
- Legal Cultures in Transnational World (LeCTra)
- Management
- Media Education
- Political Science
- Rehabilitation Science
- SEMKNOW Doctoral Programme in Semiotics Studies
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Tourism Research

3.4 The System of Study

Studying at a Finnish university is sometimes very different from studying elsewhere. The possible combinations of major and minor

subjects are numerous, and students need to take responsibility for planning their own studies. At the beginning, it might be confusing to organise a schedule or coordinate all the courses. However, when students get used to the system, it is possible to create an individual study plan within a given framework. “Academic freedom” means various things: it refers to the independence of the universities, but it also refers to the individual student’s studies. Students are responsible for creating their own study plan and monitoring their own progress. Student and teacher tutors will help you get started with your studies. In the following sections, you will find some basic information about the system of study in the University of Lapland.

Courses

The basic unit of a study programme is the course. A typical course consists of a series of lectures and a written assignment or exam. Typically, lecture series do not last the whole semester. Often they are held within a period of one or two weeks. After the lectures students have at least two chances to take the written exam for the course. The first is usually held within two weeks after the end of the lectures and the second within a month. The student receives the grade for the course about four weeks after returning the assignment or taking the exam.

Please note that some courses may have a “book exam” only, meaning that there are no lectures and the student takes an exam based on individual study of a set of books from the curriculum. Please see www.ulapland.fi/studies

for more information on courses. There you will also find the aims and requirements for each course, the name of the teacher, schedule, etc.

Teaching methods

Lecturing is the most commonly used teaching method. However, lectures do not usually cover the entire content of the course, and students are required either to take a written exam or write an essay in order to complete the course. Other forms of teaching are seminars, workshops and exercises. Seminars consist of lectures at the beginning of the course and seminar meetings at which students present their seminar paper. A workshop is basically the same as a seminar but done as group work. Exercises are usually practical assignments and are very common in teacher training, for example. One popular teaching method is excursions, where students follow a planned programme and attend lectures. Excursions usually also include additional written assignments. The teaching method for a course may also be a combination of two methods; it is always mentioned in the course description.

Instruction in the Faculty of Art and Design can be divided roughly into theoretical courses, seminars, studio practice, workshops and projects. Theoretical courses are based on lectures and/or literature, and include written examinations and essays. In seminars, workshops, and studio practice, the number of students varies between 12 and 18, depending on the subject, and accordingly the number of places available for exchange students is limited. Fine art courses require 90% attendance and workshops 80% attendance for successful comple-

tion of the courses. All courses require independent work.

The university also hosts several visiting teachers each year. Information on their teaching is made available prior to the visits. Usually these courses can compensate for some parts of the courses in the regular curriculum.

Written exams

Please note that there is no specific exam period at the end of the semester; exams are held throughout the academic year. There are two types of written exams: course exams and general exams.

Course exams are held after the completion of a course. The lecturer will inform the students of the date, time and place of the exam. There are at least two possible dates, so that one can try again if one fails the first time. Advance registration is usually not required.

General exams for each faculty are held once a month. On these days, a student can take a book exam based on individual study of a set of books or other material from the course catalogue. Please note that when registering, the student must select the books he/she is planning to study according to the list provided in the course catalogue/Weboodi. In a general exam the student needs to cover all the selected books at once. The registration deadline is 10 days before the exam date; registration must be done through the WebOodi student information system.

In the Faculty of Law written examinations are held on general examination days. Please see the list of examination dates and the examinations which can be taken on each date



on the faculty web page. Exchange students should, however, always contact the tutor in charge of the course before taking any examination in order to negotiate about the required reading and the date and time for the examination. Please note that all students are required to register for the written examinations. This can be done using the registration form at least 10 days before the examination. You should bring the form to the study secretary or international coordinator in the faculty. Paper forms can be found in the faculty.

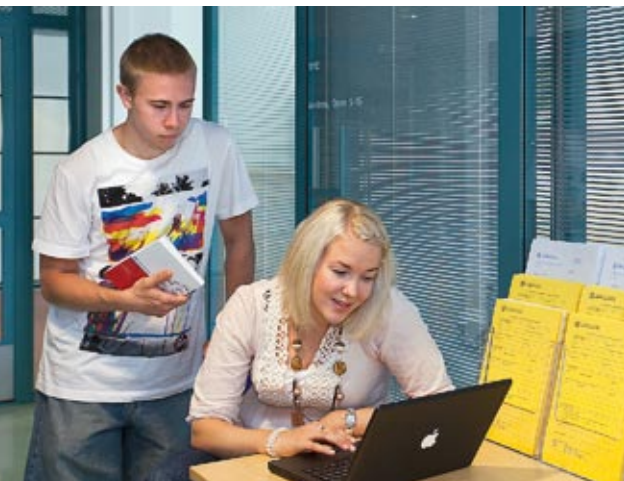
Programmes

There are three levels of studies: basic, intermediate and advanced, and two kinds of

programmes: major and minor. In major programmes students are required to complete basic and intermediate courses in order to get a Bachelor's degree and advanced courses in order to get a Master's degree. In short minor programmes, only basic level studies are required; in long minor programmes, both basic and intermediate level work must be completed.

Credits

At the University of Lapland, credits are used to define the extent of a given course. Lectures, exercises, seminars and other forms of instruction (e.g., the writing of essays, lecture journals, preparation for examinations, etc.), as



with credits awarded in due time, while other courses may extend over several study periods with credits being awarded at the end of the semester or the academic year. In accordance with the establishment of the European Higher Education Area, the University of Lapland has fully adopted the ECTS credit system.

The grading system

Finnish universities use numeric grading scales. At the University of Lapland, the scale used is from 5 (excellent) to 1 (sufficient). Please note

well as independent research, are all taken into consideration when the number of credits for each course is being calculated. Please note that a credit does not refer to the duration of a course, but to the estimated total amount of work required: that is, one credit represents approximately 26 – 27 hours of work by the student. The estimated work load for a full time student in one academic year is 60 ECTS credits, meaning 30 ECTS credits per semester.

Within the academic calendar some courses may be completed in less than one period,

that some courses are given only on a pass/fail basis without any further grading. In this case the mark 'pass' appears on the transcript. Every course and examination taken is recorded on the student's personal transcript. See the table comparing our grading scale with other grading scales.

The OODI Student Information System - Registering for courses and exams

Oodi is a national student information system that supports studies and teaching. Students

ULapland grading scale

European grade definition*

The US scale *

Excellent	5	A
Very good	4	B A-, B+
Good	3	C B
Satisfactory	2	D C+
Sufficient	1	E C
Fail	F	F F

(* = not official equivalents)

can check their personal data and credits, change their contact information and the conditions under which the data can be released for other use, browse study guide information, register for courses and general exams, order an “unofficial” transcript of studies to be sent by e-mail, enrol in the university, and pay the student union fee. It is also possible to give feedback on courses through the WebOodi system. You will get acquainted with the system during the orientation week, after which you can register for courses.

Student numbers and transcripts of records

Each student has a personal student number. Degree students receive their study certificate with their student number during the first days of their studies from the Student Services Office. Exchange students receive their study certificates with their student number during the first days of their studies from the International Office. This requires registration at the University. Students must use this number when registering for exams and on the exam answer forms.

The transcript is an official document in which students’ studies are recorded. In the transcript students will find all completed courses with credits and grades either on the 5-1 scale or pass/fail. The University of Lapland issues only one transcript for its students (studies in all faculties and units are recorded in one document). Students can get an unofficial transcript through the WebOodi system as an e-mail. The official transcript is given directly to students at the end of the exchange period

if all courses are recorded on the transcript. If not, the document will be sent by early February/mid July to the students or to their home university.

3.5 Important academic information

The 2014 – 2015 academic year

The academic year at the University of Lapland comprises two semesters. **The autumn semester is 1 August to 31 December; the spring semester runs from 1 January to 31 July.** The opening ceremony for the academic year is always on the first Monday in September. Teaching during the academic year is divided into five teaching periods.

Teaching Periods 2014–2015:

1. period: 25.8. – 25.10.2014 (9 weeks)
2. period: 27.10. – 17.12.2014 (7.5 weeks)
3. period: 7.1. – 28.2.2015 (7.5 weeks)
4. period: 9.3. – 30.5.2015 (12 weeks)
5. period: Summer school /
Possibility to take a monthly exam /
Holiday

Arrival

We recommend that you arrive on **Saturday August 30 or Sunday August 31, 2014** for the autumn semester and on **Monday January 5 or Tuesday January 6, 2015** for the spring semester. Your Finnish student tutor will contact you before your arrival, and you can arrange the first meeting together. Usually you will meet the tutor at your accommodation upon your arrival. Note that the tutors are

THE UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

August 1

September 1–5

September 1

December 17

December 31

Beginning of the autumn semester

Orientation programme for international students

Opening Ceremonies of the University

Beginning of courses

End of courses

End of the autumn semester

January 2

January 7–9

January 7

May 30

July 31

Beginning of the spring semester

Orientation programme for international students

Beginning of courses

End of courses

End of the spring semester

prepared to meet you on the dates mentioned above. If you wish to arrive earlier, please consult your tutor and remember to check when the tenancy agreement for your accommodation starts.

Instruction in the departments begins

- in the autumn semester:
during weeks 36–37/2014
- in the spring semester:
during weeks 2–3/2015

An Orientation Programme

of three to five days for new incoming international students is arranged twice a year at the beginning of each semester. It is highly recommended that the student arrives in Rovaniemi at the beginning of the semester in order to be able to participate in the orientation programme and optimise his/her study opportunities. Orientation for **international students** begins in the autumn semester on **Monday September 1, 2014** on the University campus, and in the spring semester on **Wednesday, January 7, 2015** on the University campus.

Important Forms and Deadlines

There are certain important forms which you must return to the University of Lapland's Student Services (for degree students) or International Office (for exchange students) **before**

your arrival. Forms and deadlines may vary depending on whether you are a degree student or an exchange student. Please check the table below to see what forms and deadlines apply to you.

	Degree Students	Exchange Students
Arrival Information	Send the Arrival Information Form to the International Office international.relations@ulapland.fi fax +358 16 362 941 by 29 July 2014 .	Send the Arrival Information to the International Office through SoleMove by 29 July 2014 / 2 December 2014 .
Confirmation of Accepting the Study Place	Send the Confirmation of Accepting the Study Place to Student Services, P.O. Box 122, FI-96101 Rovaniemi or by fax +358 16 362 930 by 29 July 2014 at 16:15 .	Confirm the Study Place to the International Office through SoleMove by 29 July 2014 / 2 December 2014 .
Registration and Student Union Fee	Registration as an attending or non-attending student for academic year 2014–2015 should be sent to Student Services, P.O. Box 122, FI-96101 Rovaniemi or by fax +358 16 362 930 by 29 July 2014 at 16:15 . Please note that you must pay the Student Union membership fee before enrolment by 29 July 2014 at the latest and include the receipt with the registration form.	Send the Registration Form to the International Office international.relations@ulapland.fi by 29 July 2014 / 2 December 2014 at the latest! If you have not sent your Registration Form by this date, your ICT user account will not be ready in the orientation week, and you will not be able to register for courses. In this case it will take a few weeks after your arrival.

Degree Students

Exchange Students

Certificates Bring the original certificates with you when you start your studies. The International Coordinator at the Faculty will check your certificates.

Student Card Pay the Student Union membership fee before registering. For more information see **www.lyy.fi**

You can pay and apply for the Student Card during the orientation week. For more information see **www.lyy.fi**

Accommodation Please read Section 4.3 Accommodation to learn more about accommodation options. Please note that it is very important to arrange the accommodation before your arrival!

Please read Section 4.3 Accommodation to learn more about accommodation options.

Online application at **www.das.fi**. For all housing-related issues please contact **Dasaspa@das.fi**.

Apply for DAS Housing as soon as possible! Online application at **www.das.fi**. For all housing-related issues please contact **Dasaspa@das.fi**.

3.6 The University of Lapland's Student Union (LYY)

The Student Union is a public corporation designed to uphold students' rights and make sure that the students' voice is heard everywhere at the university and in the surrounding society. **All Bachelor's and Master's degree students are automatically members of the Student Union** and must pay the membership fee before registering (Universities Act (645/97/40)). The fees for the 2013-2014 academic year were: 93 € for the full academic year, 49 € for the autumn semester, 50 € for the spring semester, and 15.10 € for the student card.

Membership in the Student Union is voluntary for exchange students. International exchange students are entitled to join the Student Union if their studies and stay in Finland last longer than 3 months, if the purpose of

their study is completion of a basic university degree (Bachelor's or Master's degree), and if their studies in Finland are free of any tuition fees. After paying the fee, the student receives the official student card and is entitled to subsidised lunches in University restaurants, services of the **Finnish Student Health Care Service (YTHS)**, services provided by the Student Union, discounts on train tickets and long-distance bus tickets, discounts at youth hostels, museums, theatres, concerts, swimming pools, shops, ski resorts, restaurants, etc.

Visiting and postgraduate students do not have to pay the membership fee, unless they want to have the Finnish student card. Visiting and postgraduate students are not entitled to the above-mentioned benefits but are entitled to counselling and services of the Student Union. For more information on the Student Union of the University of Lapland, please visit www.lyy.fi.



4 What do you need to take care of before arriving in Finland?

4.1 The residence permit

EU citizens

EU citizens and citizens of Liechtenstein and Switzerland do not need a residence permit, but they must register their right to reside in Finland if their stay lasts longer than three (3) months. Students register their right to reside in Finland at the local police department (poliisi) in Rovaniemi.

For the registration form and more information, see: www.poliisi.fi.

- Fill in the application form (EU1 registration form) and submit it along with the relevant attachments mentioned at the end of the form and on the webpage.

The Rovaniemi Police Department is located at Hallituskatu 1-3.

Citizens of the Nordic countries

If you are from another Nordic country (Sweden, Norway, Denmark or Iceland), you must notify the local register office no later than one week after the moving date.

For more information see: www.maistraatti.fi.

- Contact information of local registration office (maistraatti): Hallituskatu 5C

Non-EU citizens

A student who has been accepted to study at a Finnish educational institution must apply for a residence permit in advance through a Finnish diplomatic mission. The permit is to be applied for in the country in which the student resides legally. In practice this means the home country of the applicant, or the country which has granted him/her a residence permit.

Please check the information from the Finnish Immigration service on the following pages.



To apply for a residence permit, the student fills in the application form and submits it, along with relevant appendices, to the Finnish diplomatic mission. **Check the required appendices from following pages.**

The applicant must remain abroad while waiting for the decision on the permit application. The first residence permit is issued by the Finnish Immigration Service, which receives the application from the Finnish diplomatic mission. The application form for a residence permit and more information may be found on

the Finnish Immigration Service's webpage at www.migri.fi.

Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences and the University of Lapland provide the above information only as general guidance regarding residence permits and visa issues and are in no way responsible for official rules and regulations regarding their distribution. As immigration policy is subject to change, all international applicants should consult the Finnish Immigration Service for up-to-date information regarding residence permits and the rules and regulations concerning them.

4.1.1 Notice to Exchange Students (Non-EU)

from the Finnish Immigration Service/Immigration Unit (February 2014)

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR STUDY PLACE IN FINLAND!

Are you a citizen of EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland?

- If your answer is **'NO' and:**
 - you plan to study in Finland for more than 90 days, you will need **A RESIDENCE PERMIT.**
 - you plan to study in Finland for 90 days or less, you may need **A VISA.** Information on visas is available at www.formin.fi.
- If your answer is **'YES':**
 - you do not need a residence permit or a visa. Information on EU citizens' registrations is available at www.poliisi.fi.

THIS LETTER IS FOR ALL STUDENTS WHO NEED A RESIDENCE PERMIT.

What to do now?

Submit an application for a residence permit online at <https://e-asiointi.migri.fi>.

- Apply for your residence permit abroad, **not in Finland.**
- **Visit a Finnish embassy/consulate in person** for identification and fingerprinting.
 - Contact the embassy or consulate in advance to arrange a visit. All Finnish embassies and consulates are listed at www.formin.fi.
- If there is no Finnish diplomatic mission in your country, contact a Finnish mission in another country to confirm your visit.

- Your application will not be processed before you've visited a Finnish embassy.

Important to remember

Start preparing your application immediately after receiving your acceptance letter. The entire process may take several weeks. The application process is longer if you submit an incomplete application, so be sure to **follow the instructions on the next page of this letter**. Check out more information at www.migri.fi/studying_in_finland.

We process all residence permit applications based on studying as urgent. To follow the progress of your application, log on to your electronic account. You can also find updates on application queues at www.migri.fi. Remember that telephone or e-mail inquiries will not make the process faster.

If your application is approved, you will get **a biometric residence permit card**. The card is manufactured in Finland and delivered to the Finnish embassy. It's not possible to expedite the delivery of the card or collect the card from Finland. All students must wait for the residence permit card before coming to Finland.

Airline tickets should not be acquired in advance since the decision might not be ready before your flight to Finland.

HOW TO PREPARE A PERFECT APPLICATION?

Open an electronic account at www.migri.fi. Log on to your account and carefully fill in the form **OLE_OPI**. Be sure to fill in your name as it is in your passport, your contact details, the

date you plan to arrive in Finland and the duration of your stay.

Next, collect these mandatory appendices and crosscheck them from this list:

- **ACCEPTANCE LETTER FROM A FINNISH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION**
 - If your acceptance letter was sent to you by e-mail, include the forwarding e-mail from the school in Finland.
- **HEALTH INSURANCE**
 - Your insurance must cover **accident and illness related medical expenses both individually up to at least 100,000 EUROS**.
 - Make sure your insurance is valid on the date you plan to arrive in Finland and covers the entire time you plan to spend in Finland. The insurance must also be valid if you want to travel in Finland or the Schengen area after your studies.
 - The insurance must have no restrictions to the number of days within the validity period. Travel insurances are often valid for 90 days per trip -> not acceptable.
 - Acquire an insurance document which indicates the following information:
 - **Who is insured**
 - **What the insurance covers and what are the amounts of benefit**
 - **How long and where the insurance is valid**
 - Make sure **the deductible is no more than 300 EUROS**.
 - Don't terminate your insurance at any point! Otherwise you will be responsible

for the costs yourself if you fall ill or have an accident.

- **SUFFICIENT FUNDS**

- You must have **560 EUR** per month as a bank deposit or as a scholarship/grant.
- **A BANK STATEMENT FROM YOUR OWN BANK ACCOUNT:** Make sure the statement indicates you as the account owner. A shared account or a written guarantee of sponsorship from a private person is not accepted.
- **A CERTIFICATE OF A SCHOLARSHIP** granted by an organization, government or an educational institution. The certificate must indicate the recipient,

amount and duration of the scholarship. A bank statement is not necessary if the scholarship fully covers the requirement.

- **A PASSPORT AND A PASSPORT PHOTO**
 - Make sure your passport is valid for the entire duration of your stay in Finland.
- **IF YOU ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE,** attach a written consent for moving to Finland from both your guardians to your application.

If your documents are not in Finnish, Swedish or English, have them translated into one of these languages by an authorized translator. Take the originals of your **documents with you to the embassy.**

4.1.2 Notice to Degree Students (Non-EU)

from the Finnish Immigration Service/Immigration Unit (February 2014)

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR STUDY PLACE IN FINLAND!

Are you a citizen of EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland?

- If your answer is **'NO' and:**
 - you plan to study in Finland for more than 90 days, you will need **A RESIDENCE PERMIT.**
- If your answer is **'YES':**
 - you do not need a residence permit. Information on EU citizens' registrations is available at www.poliisi.fi.

THIS LETTER IS FOR ALL STUDENTS WHO NEED A RESIDENCE PERMIT.

What to do now?

Submit an application for a residence permit online at <https://e-asiointi.migri.fi>.

- Apply for your residence permit abroad, **not in Finland.**
- **Visit a Finnish embassy/consulate in person** for identification and fingerprinting.
 - Contact the embassy or consulate in advance to arrange a visit. All Finnish embassies and consulates are listed at www.formin.fi.

- If there is no Finnish diplomatic mission in your country, contact a Finnish mission in another country to confirm your visit.
- Your application will not be processed before you've visited a Finnish embassy.

Important to remember

Start preparing your application immediately after receiving your acceptance letter. The entire process may take several weeks. The application process is longer if you submit an incomplete application, so be sure to follow the instructions on the next page of this letter. Check out more information at www.migri.fi/studying_in_finland.

We process all residence permit applications based on studying as urgent. To follow the progress of your application, log on to your electronic account. You can also find updates on application queues at www.migri.fi. Remember that telephone or e-mail inquiries will not make the process faster.

If your application is approved, you will get a biometric residence permit card. The card is manufactured in Finland and delivered to the Finnish embassy. It's not possible to expedite the delivery of the card or collect the card from Finland. All students must wait for the residence permit card before coming to Finland.

Airline tickets should not be acquired in advance since the decision might not be ready before your flight to Finland.

Extending your residence permit

Remember to apply for an extended residence permit before your first permit expires. **Exten-**

sions can only be applied in Finland at your local police station, not abroad. For more information, go to www.poliisi.fi or contact your local police station.

HOW TO PREPARE

A PERFECT APPLICATION?

Open an electronic account at www.migri.fi. Log on to your account and carefully fill in the form **OLE_OPI**. Be sure to fill in your name as it is in your passport, your contact details and the date you plan to arrive in Finland.

Next, collect these mandatory appendices and crosscheck them from this list:

- **ACCEPTANCE LETTER FROM A FINNISH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION**
 - If your acceptance letter was sent to you by e-mail, include the forwarding e-mail from the school in Finland.
- **HEALTH INSURANCE**
 - **If your studies in Finland last 2 years or more:** your insurance must cover medical expenses up to at least **30,000 euros**.
 - After arriving in Finland, apply for a home municipality at your local registry office to be eligible for public health care.
 - **If your studies last less than 2 years:** your insurance must cover both sickness and accident related medical expenses up to at least **100,000 euros**.
 - Make sure your insurance is valid for at least one year from the date you plan to arrive in Finland and has no restrictions to the number of days within the period.

- Acquire an insurance document which indicates the following information:
 - **Who is insured**
 - **What the insurance covers and what are the amounts of benefit**
 - **How long and where the insurance is valid**
- Make sure **the deductible is no more than 300 euros.**
- Don't terminate your insurance! Otherwise you will be responsible for the costs.
- **SUFFICIENT FUNDS**
 - You must have **6,720 EUR** for one year (= 560 EUR/ month) as a bank deposit or as a scholarship or grant.
 - **A BANK STATEMENT FROM YOUR OWN BANK ACCOUNT:** Make sure the statement indicates you as the account owner. A shared account or a written guarantee of sponsorship from a private person is not accepted.
- **A CERTIFICATE OF A SCHOLARSHIP** granted by an organization, government or an educational institution. The certificate must indicate the recipient, amount and duration of the scholarship. A bank statement is not necessary if the scholarship fully covers the requirement.
- **A PASSPORT AND A PASSPORT PHOTO**
 - Make sure your passport is valid for at least one year from the date you plan on arriving in Finland.
- **IF YOU ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE,** attach a written consent for moving to Finland from both your guardians to your application.
 - If your documents are not in Finnish, Swedish or English, have them translated into one of these languages by an authorized translator. Take the originals of your **documents with you to the embassy.**

4.2 Insurance

EU citizens

Students and researchers moving to Finland from an EU/EEA country, Switzerland or a country that has a social security agreement with Finland are normally not covered by the Finnish social security system, because their residence in Finland is of a temporary nature. However, they are entitled to necessary medical treatment in Finland by presenting a **European Health Insurance Card**. The card is issued by the competent authority of one's home country.

Citizens of the Nordic countries

Persons moving temporarily to Finland from another Nordic country can normally prove their entitlement to medical treatment with an identity card. However, you can just as well get a European Health Insurance Card, which is valid also in Finland.

Non-EU citizens

For students coming from other than EU/EEA countries, having health insurance became compulsory from the 1st of September 2007. That means that to get the residence permit a student must have valid health insurance that covers medical treatment in Finland. This concerns students who are applying for a residence permit or an extension of the residence permit after the change in the law was implemented. Please read also the previous section 4.1 Residence Permit.

Important information about insurance:

- For EU citizens it is important to acquire at least European Health Insurance Card to get necessary medical treatment in Finland.
- For Non-EU citizens it is compulsory to have insurance to acquire a residence permit.
- For more information on insurance, see:
www.migri.fi
www.kela.fi

The University of Lapland has adopted a mandatory insurance policy for all its international students by the Rector's decision on January 24th, 2005. In order to register at the University of Lapland, all international students are required to show proof of valid insurance throughout their stay in Rovaniemi. By proof, the University of Lapland means a valid insurance card or equivalent document in English. The insurance must meet the following requirements: it must be valid throughout the stay and it must cover health, accidents and preferably liability issues. For citizens of the EU, the European Health Insurance Card is a sufficient document.

Students are strongly advised to purchase good medical and accident insurance before arriving in Finland; one good option, which has been negotiated by the Finnish universities, is the Marsh Student Insurance Program SIP.

Marsh Student Insurance Program SIP, Insurance for International Students

Marsh SIP insurance is available for international students who study in Finland. For more information, please see www.studyinfinland.fi. To buy Marsh SIP in-

surance, please go to www.marsh.be/sip. This website allows you to purchase health insurance online with a credit card.

4.3 Accommodation

Please note that it is very important to arrange accommodation before you come to Finland. The beginning of each semester is quite a busy time and student housing fills up quickly. That is why it is important to be on time with your accommodation application. Staying at a hotel is expensive in Finland. Please read the following information to see what kinds of accommodation options are available.

DAS

Domus Arctica -säätö (DAS) is a Student Housing Foundation that offers accommodation in the city of Rovaniemi for Finnish and international students. DAS apartment buildings are situated in four different parts of the city. The areas are called Kuntotie, Rovala, Asemarinne and Rantavitikka. All these areas are situated at a maximum of 3.5 kilometres from the University of Lapland or Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. You can find more information about DAS accommodation and the housing areas at www.das.fi.

Degree and Exchange Students

All international and Finnish students can apply for accommodation in DAS apartments continuously. Most of these apartments are not furnished. It is very important to apply as soon as possible, because the applications are handled on a "first come, first served" basis. First-year

students always have priority in August and September. Please note that in autumn DAS receives many more applications than there are apartments available.

Apartments

DAS has many different kinds of apartments: studios, family apartments and shared apartments. In shared apartments you either have a single bedroom or share a double bedroom with another person. You share the kitchen, bathroom and toilet with other people who are the same gender as you and who live in the same apartment.

DAS has furnished apartments in the Kuntotie and Rovala areas. Kuntotie is a larger area with two buildings; Rovala is smaller and accommodates fewer people. In the furnished apartments the rooms contain basic furniture, including a bed, a mattress, and a desk and chair. The kitchen contains a kitchen table, chairs, an oven and fridge/freezer. There are no dishes, cutlery, cooking utensils, curtains, pillows, blankets, sheets or towels in the rooms. There is no Internet access in the furnished apartments.

Information about the application process:

To apply for a DAS apartment, you must fill in the online application at www.das.fi. DAS will only offer apartments to students after being informed by the universities that a student has been accepted for studies.

Contact information:

Address Domus Arctica -säätö
Ylikorvantie 28 A,
FI-96300 Rovaniemi, Finland
Email [dasaspa\(at\)das.fi](mailto:dasaspa(at)das.fi)
Internet www.das.fi (online application)
Tel. +358 20 7699 180
Fax +358 20 7699 188

For all issues related to DAS accommodation, please contact DAS customer service directly: dasaspa@das.fi

Other options

You can also look for an apartment from the City of Rovaniemi, housing companies (estate agencies) or the private sector. These apartments are usually unfurnished. However, you can buy furniture at low prices from second-hand shops.

The rent for private apartments varies depending on the area and the condition of the apartment. Apartments are usually more expensive in the Viirinkangas-Rantavitikka area and the city centre area than, for example, in Ounasrinne or Korkalovaara. Please keep in mind that you can rent an apartment together with a friend or friends.

- For more information on apartments with housing companies and the private sector, see: www.vuokraovi.com ; www.kas.fi

IMPORTANT!

Please note that every tenant must sign a tenancy agreement with the landlord. **Only one person can live in an apartment per tenancy agreement.** The tenant has no right to let



people who are not mentioned in the tenancy agreement live in the flat without the landlord's (for example DAS) permission. Your friends are not allowed to live in your apartment. You will lose your tenancy agreement and the right to live in your apartment if you do not follow the tenancy agreement.

In case of questions, always contact the housing office. For more information about



multicultural student housing in Finland, see: <http://www.opiskelija-asunnot.fi/en/studenthousing/>.

If you have not agreed with your student-tutor about your arrival, it is important to make arrangements to get the keys to your accommodation! Be sure to contact your landlord well in advance so he/she knows when you will come to pick up your keys. Also remember to have all the necessary documents with you!

Depending on the furniture and other furnishings in the apartment, it may be a good idea to take a sleeping bag with you. The first days can be quite busy, and it may take a day or two before you have time to go shopping. There are some second-hand shops in Rovaniemi where you can buy dishes, curtains, etc. at a lower price. Your student-tutor will help you locate all the necessary shops.



5 Arrival and First Weeks

5.1 Arrival to Finland and Rovaniemi

How do I get to Rovaniemi?

The first thing you need to do is to find your way to Helsinki. Any travel agent or airline should be able to get you a flight to Helsinki from just about anywhere. The next step is to get from Helsinki to Rovaniemi. There are several ways to do this.

Travelling by **plane** is the easiest way. Before leaving you can check the schedule, price and availability of seats on the Internet at:

- www.finnair.fi, or www.norwegian.com

The second alternative is to travel by **train**. The trip takes about 12 hours. There is a direct bus

service from the Helsinki - Vantaa airport to the train station, so that is no problem. The train schedule, price information and basic information about the Finnish railways are available on the Internet at www.vr.fi.

The third way to travel to Rovaniemi is by long-distance **bus**. You can find more information about bus schedules and prices on the Internet at www.matkahuolto.fi.

Note that you can only get a student discount with a Finnish Student card. You can only obtain your card after registering at your university and paying your Student Union membership fee.

The fourth way is to arrive by your **own car**. It takes about 12 hours to drive from Helsinki to Rovaniemi. The E4 highway leads directly

from Helsinki to Rovaniemi. Please keep in mind that under Finnish law it is compulsory to use winter tyres between 1 December and 28 February. It is important to pay attention to the weather, and especially in Lapland roads are snowy and slippery in winter. That is why people living in Lapland often use winter tyres until late spring. Please note also that you need your own parking place for your car. In Finland it is forbidden to park anywhere except in designated parking places. For more information please visit:

- www.autoliitto.fi/in_english/
- www.tiehallinto.fi/alk/english
- www.liikennevakuutuskeskus.fi
→ in English
- <http://smartmotorist.com>

How do I get to my accommodation?

After arriving in Rovaniemi, you will need to find your way to your accommodation. Please keep in mind that there are no bus connections from the airport, and that is why a taxi is the easiest choice. The Airport taxi costs around 10 € / person, and a normal taxi is around 25-30 €. If you arrive by train, a taxi is the easiest choice. The taxi costs approximately 15 € during the daytime and a few Euros more in the evenings and night-time. There are also bus connections from the train station or from the city centre to the accommodation. For more information visit www.rovaniemi.fi.

How do I get to the university and to the orientation?

There will be an orientation session for new international students during the first week of the semester. Please read the section entitled Important Academic Information in either Chapter 3. The whole first week will be full of important information, so it is important for you to be present from the very beginning! You will also meet the student tutors.

International student tutor

Each international student gets a student tutor who will help with all practicalities especially during the first days and weeks. The tutors are volunteers who are trained for their duties. Your student tutor will help you familiarize yourself with the university, study practicalities, accommodation, the city, etc. Even though the tutors are here to help you, please read this guidebook carefully and prepare for your stay in Rovaniemi. If you have any problems and you wish to have help and guidance with various matters, the student tutors will help you.

5.2 Arrival checklist

It is most likely that your first few days and weeks will be busy. It is worth familiarising yourself with the arrival checklist below. The checklist includes the most important things you need to take care of before and after your arrival in Rovaniemi. Your student tutor will also help you with all the practicalities upon your arrival.

Before:

- Residence permit, page 24
- Insurance, page 30
- Accommodation, page 31
- Finances, international credit card, etc, page 44

First days:

- Familiarise yourself with your accommodation
- Find the way to the university
- Participate in the orientation program
- Familiarize yourself with necessary facilities and services at the university (the study affairs office, student services, the international office, etc.)

- Familiarise yourself with the nearest grocery store
- Visit the nearest post office and file a notification of change of address

First week(s):

- Sign the tenancy agreement (if not done earlier)
- Pay the first month's rent (and the deposit if necessary)
- Get a mobile phone and Internet connection if necessary
- Open a bank account if necessary
- Obtain a student card
- Obtain a library card
- Locate the student health centre
- Familiarise yourself with the town



6 Good to Know About Studying and Living in Finland and Rovaniemi

6.1 Finland, Lapland and Rovaniemi

Finland

Finland is the northernmost country in the world after Iceland and the fifth largest country in Europe in terms of area. It is a country that has always been an important gateway between the east and the west. Finland is a Nordic democracy with a population of 5.2 million inhabitants. Finland is the northern- and easternmost member state of the European Union.

Finland shares a border with Sweden on the west and with the tip of Norway in the north; it has a long border with Russia in the east, and Estonia lies to the south across the Gulf of Finland. Finland has 625 miles of coastline. The archipelago to the south and southwest of the country contains around 30,000 islands, and is one of the world's most beautiful marine areas. Finland is also a land of lakes: almost 200,000 at the last count. Two-thirds of the country is covered by forest, which we like to call our "green gold".

The climate is not as cold as Finland's location might suggest, partly because of the warming influence of the Gulf Stream. In the summer months, Lapland basks in 24 hours of

daylight. In winter, a blue-tinged darkness falls for about two months. This sunless period is called kaamos, the polar night. During kaamos in Rovaniemi, the sun rises above the horizon for only a couple of hours each day. Although the sun is out of sight for weeks, the snow on the ground reflects the light of the moon and the stars. Sometimes the aurora borealis (the northern lights) flickers across the Arctic sky in nuances of green, red and yellow.

The development of the Finnish economy has been rapid since World War II. Today the main manufacturing areas of Finland are the wood and metal industries, computers and communications equipment, chemicals, textiles and construction. The best-known Finnish products are probably Nokia mobile phones. More than 90 per cent of industrial establishments are privately owned by Finnish investors.

Finland, like the other Scandinavian countries, is known for its highly developed social welfare system, e.g., free medical care and education. The political system of Finland is also similar to that of the other Scandinavian countries. Finland works in close partnership with its Nordic neighbours: Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. Finland is a parliamentary republic with a multiparty political system. Two

hundred members are elected by proportional representation to the unicameral Parliament for a four-year period. Governments are usually formed by coalitions of several of the many political parties. The President is elected by the people for a six-year term. The Government is appointed by the President and it must enjoy the confidence of the Parliament. The current President of the Republic is Mr Sauli Niinistö. Finland declared itself a free and independent state on 6 December 1917. Finland joined the European Union on 1 January 1995.

Finland is officially a bilingual country. Its official languages are Finnish and Swedish. Finnish is spoken by 93 % of the population, while Swedish is spoken as a first language by some 6 % of Finns. In Lapland, the Sami language is also spoken by 2000 indigenous Sami people.

Lapland

Lapland is the northernmost province of Finland and the European Union. It represents about one-third of the total area of the country (about 99,000 km²). It is also a very sparsely populated area with only 2.1 people/km². Lapland is known for its treeless fells and wildlife. In southern Lapland the forests of pine and spruce trees are endless. Further north the trees become sparser. In Northern Lapland, on the fells, there are no trees at all.

The seasons are very pronounced in Lapland. During the six months of winter there is a lot of snow, and sometimes the temperature

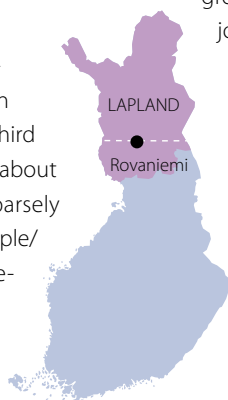
can drop to -40°C . The spring, when the days are longer, is very short. Summers can be very warm with daylight 24 hours a day.

Autumn is famous for the beautiful colours of the trees before the leaves fall. People who have not experienced a Nordic winter before may have a lot of questions in mind. To help you come to terms with the winter season, it might help you to think of it not as a long, monotonous period of darkness, cold and snow, but as a sequence of distinct phases, each with its own special atmosphere. With friendly people around you and by taking things as they come, you will find the winter in Rovaniemi a richly rewarding experience.

Rovaniemi – The Heart of Lapland

Rovaniemi is Lapland's energetic capital city. On the Arctic Circle at the junction of two great rivers, the Kemijoki and the Ounasjoki, the city which has grown round the Ounasvaara Hill recreation area is a part of nature itself. Rovaniemi is located in the middle of rugged and beautiful nature. Eight distinct seasons provide a wide range of attractive features and offer excellent settings for a wide variety of activities. Each season offers an opportunity to experience the town in a totally different light.

Located on the route to the markets of Northern Europe and Northwest Russia, Rovaniemi is the logistical hub of Northern Finland. It is a dynamic and growing city with a strong, diverse business structure and international expertise. The city has a highly-educated work force: in proportion to the total



population (60,000), the number of creative professionals in Rovaniemi is the third highest in Finland.

Source: City of Rovaniemi
www.rovaniemi.fi

6.2 Student life and services in ULapland

Student health care

Please read through Section 4.2 Insurance to learn more about insurance and health care in Finland. It is important to take care of the necessary insurance before you arrive in Finland. During your stay at ULapland you are entitled to use the student health care services. Please check the table below to see what kind of services you are entitled to.

Mental Health Care Services

During weekdays, contact the Finnish Student Healthcare Services. During nights or weekends, if you need emergency help, contact the hospital emergency unit (Lapin keskussairaalan Päivystyspoliklinikka, Address: Ounasrinteentie 22, Rovaniemi, Telephone: from 8:00-22:00: 016 328 2140, and from 22:00-8:00: 016 328 2100 (First Aid Station).

Mental Health support services online:
<http://www.e-mielenterveys.fi/en/>

Facilities

The University of Lapland has modern facilities and study environments. The institutions have various kinds of auditoriums, classrooms, computer rooms, laboratories, work premises and environments for studying. Students from



both universities can use the Lapland University Consortium Library, which consists of several libraries on different campuses, as well as the Arctic Library, which is located in the Arctic Centre. The universities also include student restaurants, kiosks, photocopying facilities, etc.

Student union and ESN Lapland

The University of Lapland has a student union called LYY. Student unions are designed to support the students' rights and to make sure that the students' voice is heard in the institution and surrounding society.

As a member of the student union you are entitled to many benefits, such as the services provided by the student union and its companies, as well as all the discounts provided by the student card.

The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) operates under LYY. ESN Lapland arranges various interesting activities and excursions for the international students as well as for Finnish students interested in meeting and socialising with international students. The meetings of ESN are held in English, and students are warmly welcome to share their ideas and opinions.

For more information on student unions and ESN Lapland please visit:

- LYY: www.lyy.fi
- ESN: www.lyy.fi,
ESN Lapland in Facebook

Student card and discounts

As a student you are entitled to a variety of benefits and discounts. The most common dis-

HEALTH CARE SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

University of Lapland (ULapland)

As a student of ULapland you are entitled to use the services of the Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS). FSHS will provide most of the medical care you might need during your stay in Rovaniemi. Visits to the nurse and general practitioner are free of charge, and if you need to see a specialist (for example, a dentist) the fee is modest.

Please note that FSHS does NOT cover emergency or hospital treatment or other treatment exceeding basic health care or treatment during evenings or weekends when FSHS is closed. **To use the services of FSHS you must be a member of the student union.** The office of FSHS is located on the campus. For more detailed information, please see www.fshs.fi.

In addition to this, ALL international students need to have valid health insurance (please see Section 4.2 Insurance).

counts for students are on the student lunch at university cafeterias and discounts on train and long-distance bus tickets. Some shops, restaurants and services offer various discounts for students. In most cases discounts require a student card, which can be obtained through the student unions.

Please note that doctoral Students are not entitled to the same benefits and discounts as undergraduate students.

Sport services at ULapland

Sport services are intended for students of ULapland. All sport services are available with the Sportpass. Some of the services are free of charge (with Sportpass), and others are subject to a modest fee. Various indoor and outdoor activities are available. Please read more about sport services at:

- www.lyy.fi
- www.ulapland.fi/sportservices

Finnish Friend programme

The Lapland University of Applied Sciences and ULapland organize international friend activities between international students and local people each semester. Participation in the activities is voluntary and free of charge for both the students and the locals, and there are no limitations or obligations. Generally the idea is to introduce Finland, Lapland and Finnish culture to international students coming to Rovaniemi. The student and his/her local friend(s) meet according to their own schedules and organize activities together. Finnish Friend activities are a wonderful opportunity for the student to integrate into the Finnish culture and

way of life while local people get to know new cultures and enrich their language skills. Students can sign up for this activity during the orientation week. More information is available on the Universities' web pages.

Other free-time activities

Rovaniemi is surrounded by beautiful nature, and there are lots of things to do throughout the year. Since the city is close to nature, it is easy to go hiking, skiing, swimming, cycling, fishing or downhill skiing. Various gyms and sport centres also offer many exciting sport services.

Ounasvaara is a hill and recreational area right beside the city of Rovaniemi. Ounasvaara has signposted and well-maintained trails with numerous spectacular landscapes for townspeople and visitors. There are almost 50 different activities available at Ounasvaara, and the number is growing. In wintertime you can go downhill and cross-country skiing, tobogganing and snowshoeing. In summertime hiking, hurtling down the slopes on the summer bobsleigh and golf are activities to enjoy.

Rovaniemi is also a city of culture, and there are many things to see, visit and experience. You can go to museums, exhibitions, theatres, the cinema, the library, concerts and familiarize yourself with various kinds of architecture.

As Rovaniemi, and Lapland in general, is a tourist destination, there is a huge variety of exotic things to experience: for example, husky sleigh rides, snowmobiling, and visits to reindeer farms. To find out more you can see what the local safari companies offer. You can easily enjoy the northern nature on your own as well.

To learn more about national parks, trekking trails and open huts, see the links below:

- www.visitrovaniemi.fi
- www.outdoors.fi

There are various events, information sessions, lectures, theme days and shows organized by various organizations. Student life is really active in Rovaniemi, and ESN and the student

tutors organize all kinds of events throughout the year.

Shopping

Shopping is not a problem in Rovaniemi. There are various grocery stores, supermarkets, home-furnishing -, hardware -, and clothing shops in the city. There are also several second-hand shops around the city where you can shop at lower prices. These can be good



places to look for the things you need (dishes, curtains, etc.) for your accommodation.

Second Hand Stores

There are several second-hand shops in the city.

- *Tuhattori*
Harrikatu 2
- *Varastotien kirppis*
Varastotie 8
- *Vintikki*
Varastotie 2
- *Rovaniemen Kontti - Kierrätystavaratalo*
Teollisuustie 13
- *Revontulikirppis*
Kairatie 3

Transportation in Rovaniemi

After you have arrived in Rovaniemi it is worth considering whether you should buy a bicycle. Since Rovaniemi is a fairly small town, locations are quite near. That is why a bicycle is an easy way to get from one place to another. You can get help from your student tutor when you go to buy a bicycle. You can, of course, also use public transportation (buses) if you wish.

Bicycles

Having your own bicycle is very handy in Rovaniemi. The following shops in the city centre usually sell used bikes:

- *Mountain Bike Center*
Ruokasenkatu 10
- *Tuhattori*
Harrikatu 2

Mobile phone and internet connections

It is easy to get a prepaid mobile phone and Internet connection in Finland. For example, some of the DAS buildings do not have Internet connections. In those cases a prepaid Internet connection comes in handy. Your student tutors will help you with these matters after you have arrived in Finland.

6.3 Notification of move & registration of foreigners

Notification of change of address

According to Finnish legislation, you must always submit a notification of change of address if you move into a new home or if you stay temporarily at another address (for example, a friend or relative's home or summer cottage) longer than three months. The notification can be made at the earliest one month in advance of the move or within seven days from the date on which you move. The easiest way to submit your notification of change of address is to fill in the form which you can pick up at the local post office or local register office (maistraatti).

Registration of foreigners

Basic data on foreigners residing in Finland are entered in the Population Information System. Registered information includes the person's name, date of birth, nationality, family relationships and address. **The Finnish municipality of residence is registered for a foreigner who has moved to Finland if he or she plans on staying here permanently (for example,**

to study for a Bachelor's or Master's degree) and if he or she has a residence permit for at least one year. Citizens of Nordic countries do not need residence permits.

Under the law, a foreigner is required to register the same information as a Finnish citizen if he or she resides in Finland for at least one year. The registration takes place at the local register office. The registered information is used, amongst other things, in the organisation of elections and for taxation, health care, administrative and statistical purposes.

A **foreigner residing temporarily in Finland** can also receive a personal identity number if he or she needs one, for example, in order to work. The only requirement is that the person must have a residence permit for a period of at least one year. **However, a municipality of residence will not be registered for him or her, nor will he or she necessarily enjoy the same rights as a person who resides in Finland permanently.** A person moving from another Nordic country must present an Inter-Nordic Migration Form to the local register office. Citizens of Nordic countries are not required to report to the local register office unless they plan on residing in Finland for a period exceeding one year. In this case, the person who is moving is required to register as a foreigner in addition to making a notification of change of address, unless he or she has already been assigned a personal identity number in Finland.

If you are a **Permanent Resident of Finland** you are covered by public health insurance. You are entitled to use public health services in Finland if you have a **municipal-**

ity of residence (kotikunta) in Finland. The municipalities organise public health services for their residents. As a **Permanent Resident of Finland** you can, for instance, apply for a refund from the Social Insurance Institution (Kela) for the cost of many kinds of medicine.

You should always register as a permanent resident of Finland to ensure that you get a municipality of residence and can use public health care!

For more information on the notification of change of address and registration of foreigners, please visit:

- www.maistraatti.fi and www.posti.fi
- Local Register Office (maistraatti) in Rovaniemi: Hallituskatu 5 C

6.4 The cost of living, money and financial support for students

Financial support

International students can apply for grants, scholarships or other financial aid in their home countries from, e.g., their home institution. International students can also apply for a state grant in Finland or scholarships from CIMO, the Centre for International Mobility, **under certain circumstances.**

For further information on financial support for students, please visit:

- www.kela.fi
- www.studyinfinland.fi

The cost of living

The cost of living in Finland is comparable to the rest of Europe on average. For basic expenses such as food, rent and transportation, an undergraduate (Bachelor's or Master's) student will need 600 – 900 € / month, which will be spent roughly as follows (all figures are in euros):

- Rent (dormitory type accommodation)
190 – 350
- One/two-room apartment (private sector)
450 and up
- Food (including lunch at school)
250
- Transport by local bus
50
- Leisure activities, other personal expenses
130

The living expenses of doctoral students are higher (about 1200-1800 € per month) because they are not entitled to the same benefits as undergraduate students. Monthly expenses depend on your personal spending habits (food, social life, travelling, books and other materials, sports equipment, etc.). Depending on the type of accommodation, you should be prepared to pay your deposit and first month's rent through the bank before your arrival. It is good to remember that, when travelling, unexpected expenses always come up, so bring along a little extra money to be on the safe side. You must also be prepared to buy some items, for example, for your apartment.

Money and bank account

The legal currency in Finland is the euro (EURO, e, €), which is divided into 100 cents (sentti, ct). International debit and credit cards are accepted in most shops and services in Finland.

In Finland nearly all payments are made through the bank. Opening a bank account is a simple operation, but it is nonetheless worth asking the student tutors for help. The employees of the banks normally speak at least some English, but it is good to have the student tutors along in case you need a translator. Always make a reservation beforehand and inform the bank employee that you would like to have service in English. (Nordea telephone: +358 200 3000)

You will need the following documents:

- Your passport (please note that the passport is the only official ID in Finland),
- Your letter of acceptance from the University / Study certificate (once you receive it, keep it and bring it with you to Finland),
- Your address in Rovaniemi.

If you do not wish to open a bank account in Finland, there are plenty of cash machines (ATMs) around that will work with a credit card. You need to be careful about choosing this option, though. Before you leave you can discuss with your own bank what the best option for you is. If you wish to use a credit card, make sure that your card will work internationally. You also need to find out about any service or commission fees that may apply when you use your card internationally.

6.5 Working in Finland

Getting a job in Finland can be challenging. Most of the places require the employee to speak Finnish. Below is some information about working in Finland for citizens of the Nordic Countries, EU citizens, and non-EU citizens.

Citizens of the Nordic Countries

A citizen of a Nordic country can live, work and study in Finland (or in another Nordic country) as long / much as he/she wants without a residence permit, but he/she must fill in a notification of change of address (Muuttoilmoitus).

EU citizens

An EU citizen can live, work and study in Finland as long / much as he/she wants if the stay lasts less than three (3) months. If the stay is longer than three months, an EU citizen must register his/her right to reside in Finland. After registering, an EU citizen can live, work and study in Finland as long / much as he/she wants. There are some exceptions to this rule with the new EU citizens. Please contact the local police office for further information.

Non-EU citizens

If a student from a non-EU country is studying in Finland for more than three months he/she needs to get a residence permit before arriving in Finland. With the residence permit students can work if the work is directly related to the studies (practical training) or if the work is part-time (max. 25 hours per week). During periods when there is no teaching in the institution, students can work full-time. For further infor-

mation, please contact the local police office or a Finnish Embassy.

For more information, please visit:

- www.mol.fi
- www.migri.fi

6.6 Weather and clothing

Autumn and Spring

The weather in Rovaniemi varies in autumn and spring. For example in August and May it can be quite warm during the day and you can often wear jeans and a t-shirt or long-sleeved shirt. However, the nights can be surprisingly cold. In autumn and spring a wind-proof jacket is highly recommended. It is also good to have a raincoat or umbrella because it can rain quite a bit during these seasons.

Winter

In winter time (November - April) the significance of warm clothing cannot be over-emphasised. It can get really cold in Rovaniemi. In February 1999 the temperature near Rovaniemi dropped to -52 Celsius degrees, which was a record in Finland. If it's of any comfort, the temperature rarely gets that cold here. But temperatures of -20°C or even -30°C are very common between December and March. The best way to dress is to wear clothes in layers: a long-sleeved undershirt and long underpants, pants and a shirt over these, and a warm coat on top. And don't forget a hat, gloves and warm winter boots or shoes!

In the winter it is best to wear clothes made of natural materials, such as wool and cotton. Thick-soled, insulated shoes or boots are essential. Your winter coat should be a quilted one or wind-proof with a lining. It is a good idea to have some wool sweaters and extra pants in your closet: it is comforting to know you have something extra to put on if we happen to have a cold snap.

Summer

Summer is usually warm and sunny in Finland, but it can be occasionally rainy. During the daytime temperature can be around 25 degrees Celsius, and shorts and a t-shirt are suitable clothes. During the night-time you may need a long-sleeved shirt and trousers.

It is a good idea to bring as many clothes as you can with you because clothing prices in Finland tend to be high. There are lots of clothing shops in Rovaniemi and also some second-hand shops where you can buy clothes at a lower price. Be aware of the weather before you arrive, and prepare yourself with the necessary clothing.

For more information on weather in Finland, please visit:

- www.fmi.fi
- www.foreca.fi
- www.yr.no



6.7 Emergency help

General emergency number

112

Police

112

Lapland police switchboard

+358 71 876 0321

Finnish Student Health Service

- Psychologist
+358 46 710 1095

The Mother and Child Home and Shelter of Lapland

- Crisis hotline 24 h
+358 40 553 7508

Health care services

- Lapland Central Hospital (22:00-8:00)
+358 16 328 2100
- Rovaniemi Health Centre (8:00-22:00)
+358 16 328 2140

Mental health and substance abuse services

- Youth Psychiatric Polyclinic, Lähteentie 15 A
+358 16 346 924
- Rovaniemi A-Clinic, Sairaalakatu 1
+358 16 322 2269
- Romppu (Rovaniemi clinic for young
substance and drug users),
Maakuntakatu 29–31 A 4
+358 40 487 3030

- City of Rovaniemi, Mental Health Services,
Sairaalakatu 1
+358 40 481 4942

Helpline services

- Rovala Settlement / Crime victims hotline
 - Lapland office
+358 400 979 175
 - National service
+358 203 16116
- Mannerheim League for Child Welfare
Child and youth phone
+358 116 111
- Free From Drugs
+358 10 804 550
- Helpline for victims of bullying
+358 800 97474
- Rape Crisis Centre Tukinainen /
Crisis hotline
+358 800 97899

Help with social problems

- The Mother and Child Home and
Shelter of Lapland / Crisis hotline 24 h
+358 40 553 7508
- Family Counseling Center,
Rovaniemi Parish
+358 16 335 5250
- City of Rovaniemi, Social Office,
Rovakatu 1
+358 16 322 6701

Crisis debriefing

- The Mother and Child Home and
Shelter of Lapland / Crisis hotline 24 h,
Lähteentie 5
+358 40 553 7508

Student pastor

- Rovaniemi Parish
+358 40 178 1018

Information on the Web

- www.traumatერიapiakeskus.com
- www.rikosuhripaivystys.fi
- www.apua.info

6.8 Other Practical Information

Alcohol and Narcotics

Alcoholic beverages are sold in state-owned shops called Alko (www.alko.fi). Medium strength beer (4.7 per cent by volume), mild ciders and very mild wines are also sold in grocery stores.

Finland has a zero tolerance policy on drugs. The importation, selling, use and possession of narcotics are prohibited by law and punishable by a prison sentence. Any violation of this prohibition may result in deportation. We will also contact the student's home institution.

Sexual Minorities

SETA (www.seta.fi) is a Finnish national human rights organization which works for legal equality and social justice for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans-people. It is the central organisation for sexual minorities, with chapters all over Finland. SETA is a member of ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Association) and IGLYO (International Gay and Lesbian Youth).

The Rovaniemi Section has meetings, parties and groups for young people. To find out more, please contact:

- The Rovaniemi Section of SETA:
Rovaniemen SETA ry
info@rovaniemenseta.fi
www.rovaniemenseta.fi

Names

In Finland you will use only one first name and one last name (family name). If necessary, decide before coming to Finland which of your last names will be used when you are to be listed alphabetically.



7 A Short Guide To Finnish Culture

7.1 What is Culture?

Culture is ...

"The collective programming of the mind."

(Geert Hofstede)

"The learned and shared values, beliefs and behaviors of a group of people."

(Milton Bennett)

"The know-how of daily life."

(Catherine Bartlett, Aira Davidsson)

In other words:

As we grow up, we are constantly exposed to our parents', relatives', friends', teachers', society's and state's conceptions of what is right and wrong, good, and bad, desirable and despicable, and how to behave in daily life. This process is called socialization. The result of our socialization is that we are able to function

well in our own environment: we now share its culture. This means that culture is learned. Yet we did not learn it consciously, but rather acquired it without being aware of the process. It is because of this, that culture is deeply rooted in our personality, and giving it up, or straying from it, usually feels wrong and is very difficult.

Each culture is the product of its natural environment, and works well within it. This is why each person perceives their culture as normal and as the best possible one.

Each culture works where it developed. It works "at home". Any community resents outsiders, who think they can improve on the community's culture, by forcing elements of their own culture on their new environment.

7.2 You in Your New Environment

TOURISTS AND IMMIGRANTS

Students, who decide to go abroad, often are experienced travelers. They therefore believe to be experienced in intercultural encounters. However, a tourist's status is always special. Tourists are perceived as welcome guests, they are allowed to uphold their own culture, and are treated with kindness and respect, so that they may come back and spend even more money. An immigrant's lot is very different.

Consider for a moment attitudes towards tourists, and towards immigrants, in your home culture!

Naturally, international students do not constitute typical immigrants. Yet they are coming to live within their host culture, if only for a while.

In any country, a person coming to live within society will be quietly expected to behave according to this society's cultural norms. Any behavior at odds with local expectations will most likely be considered a show of disrespect towards the local culture.

7.3 Culture Shock

"The best time of my life" ...

A stay abroad is often treasured as a greatly rewarding experience.

"The best time of my life" is frequently heard feedback from students after they return home.

... or culture shock?

On the other hand, encountering a new cultural environment is always a challenge. Minor disappointments and problems are to be expected, particularly during the early stages. They are a natural part of the adaptation process, and will usually be the more severe the more different the host culture is from one's own home culture. At its worst, culture shock can set in. Its symptoms include:

depression, a feeling of helplessness, anxiety, homesickness, confusion, irritability, isolation, intolerance, defensiveness, withdrawal.

Being prepared makes a difference

As we have seen, living abroad can be a richly rewarding experience, or it can cause a serious psychological shock. What can we do to tilt the scale towards the former?

Disappointments go hand in hand with expectations. Hence, it is imperative to

- accept that some traits of your home culture will not be appreciated by your new environment,
- accept that cultural adaptation should be our aim abroad, in other words make a conscious effort to **study, understand, and accept your host culture,**
- accept that the process of cultural adaptation, even if ultimately successful, will not be without throwbacks, problems, and occasional disappointment.

We will look more closely at these points in the following paragraphs.

The u-curve of cultural adaption

According to research, cultural adaption (the process of becoming a functional member in one's new environment) tends to follow the curve of the letter "u".

In other words:

At the beginning, everything seems to be exciting and interesting - simply because it is new. Life often seems better at this stage, than it was at home. However, by and by we notice strange and disturbing traits in our new environment. We become aware of things that simply do not feel right to us. This usually leads to a sense of disappointment. The decision to go abroad suddenly seems questionable, or even like a mistake. (The more excited we were at the beginning, the more severely disappointed we tend to be upon realizing that integration will not go smoothly after all.) Fortunately, it is these problems and disappointments, which can serve to open our eyes for the true nature

of our host culture. This generates a learning process, which eventually makes us culturally competent, and allows us to enjoy a rich and rewarding life of interaction with our host culture.

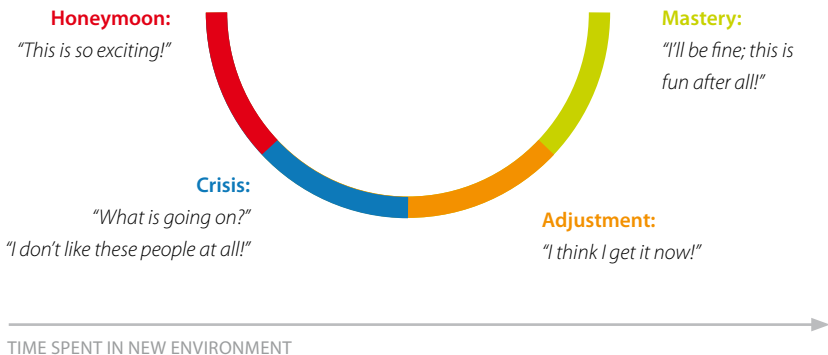
Good advice:

Don't expect too much. Accept from the start, that there will be culture-related conflicts, as you learn to fit into your new environment. Accept these conflicts as part of your learning process: which are the underlying issues (values, beliefs, behaviors), in which you seem to be at odds with your host culture?

From u-curve to w-curve

In some cases, the u-curve turns into a w-curve, as we go through a similar process of adaption - or rather re-adaption - after our return home. Having come to terms with our new environment abroad, we come home as different people. We are rich in experience

PICTURE 1: U-CURVE



now, having seen the world, and our own native culture, from a completely different angle. Most probably we have a desire, even a need, to share our excitement and our new insights with our friends and family at home.

However, home doesn't quite seem like home anymore, since we are now able to look on it from an outsider's perspective. The familiarity we once appreciated unconsciously, may look boring and dull, now that we have become conscious of it. On top of that, our friends and family do not share our new perspective, since they do not have our experience. They will probably fail to understand the thoughts we feel we need to share; they might find even them alienating or think of us as boastful, trying to show off our cultural expertise.

Good advice:

Yet again, expectations and disappointment go hand in hand. It took you a year (or half a year) to reach a new level of cultural awareness. Do not

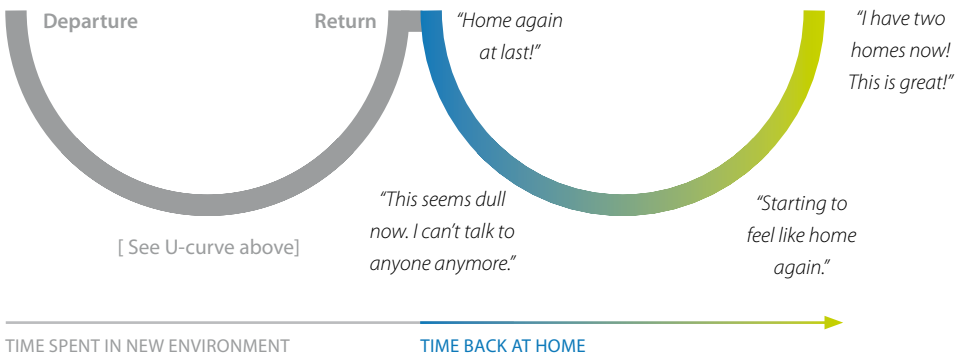
expect others to be able to reach the same level during an evening's talk. Look on your new competence as an advantage! And don't be afraid: after all you have already gone through the same process of adaptation before, haven't you? By the way: you don't have to choose between the two cultures! From now on, you can divide your time between the two of them just as you see fit.

7.4 The Road to Cultural Competence

We are not the same. But we are equals.

According to the internationally renowned scholar Milton Bennett, as we grow to become culturally sensitive and competent individuals, we move away from ethnocentrism towards ethnorelativism. Bennett's model is called The Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. (From this perspective, the u-curve mentioned above covers only the first inevitable two steps of a long journey towards biculturalism.)

PICTURE 2: W-CURVE



PICTURE 3: DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY
(a.k.a. Milton Bennett Scale)



Ethnocentrism is the (often unconscious) assumption that our values, beliefs, and behaviors are ultimately normal and correct. This assumption seems to be built into our human psyche, though we might not be aware of it, or might like to claim we are actually more open-minded than that.

Ethnorelativism is the understanding that our values, beliefs and behaviors are ultimately arbitrary. They are simply the result of our socialization process. People socialized in a different environment must necessarily have different values, beliefs, and behaviors. Therefore, no culture is objectively better than any other one.

According to Bennett, we all start out believing that “people are all the same inside”, or that “we all want the same things in life”. Thus, we deny the existence of significant cultural differences (Denial).

With time, we necessarily become aware that differences do exist, however. The natural response at this stage is to defend our own culture against our surrounding’s (defense).

The final stage of ethnocentrism is marked by an attempt to return to the start: we accept the existence of cultural differences, but believe them to be superficial (Minimization).

It is only when we finally accept the existence of real cultural differences (the fact that we aren’t the same inside, that we do not want the same things from life), that we enter the sphere of ethnorelativism.

During the next stage, we adjust our behavior to our environment, thus accepting its cultural norms, whenever necessary (Adaption).

A completely ethnorelativistic person will lose their preference for any one culture, since they understand all cultures to be arbitrary. They will move into and out of any culture ac-

ording to the demands of the moment (Integration).

Please note that ...

our belief, that we are all the same inside, driven by the same goals in life, might seem both philosophically sound and a display of good-will. However, it is quite simply wrong. It is also one of the preconditions of culture shock.

The Acceptance-stage is of the greatest importance. From this point on, we may further our ability to get along and successfully deal with our environment simply by studying it (academically and through everyday observation), and by implementing what we learn.

Integration, the highest stage of intercultural sensitivity, ultimately means that we are able to leave our own culture where it belongs: at home.

7.5 Categorizing Finnish Culture

The view is better from above

When cultures collide, we immediately tend to think in terms of “us” and “them”. Why do they differ from us? At this point, we have to remember, that culture is learned. It is the result of the socialization process, which made us functional members of our very own society – and not of any other.

Cultural differences are never a question of right and wrong.

The best way to deal with perceived cultural differences is to try and isolate the underlying issue (paradigm), and then rise above it; to look at both home and host culture as points along

a scale. Thus, cultural differences become visible as different answers to the same underlying human questions.

Next we will look at some aspects in which cultures tend to differ, sometimes greatly, because people in different environments have found different answers to the same challenges in life.

Cultural paradigms

1. Individualism and Collectivism

No-one lives all alone, utterly independent from all others. We all want to lead interesting and fulfilling lives, but we also don't want to disappoint our social environment (family, relatives, friends, society etc.). Cultures, whose members prioritize personal well-being and goals over their environments, are called individualist. Cultures, in which the opinions and needs of the family, clan, tribe, or other sub-society are prioritized, are called collectivist.

Living in Finland

Finland is an individualist society. Personal independence and the ability to get by without any outside assistance are held in very high regard. There is a Finnish tendency to shut oneself off, and deal with one's issues all by oneself. This may seem strange, egotistical or antisocial from the point of view of collectivist cultures, but it is deeply rooted in Finnish history, when living a life of complete independence was often the only alternative to living a life under one yoke or another.

2. Power Distance

In all societies, some individuals have power than others don't have. Typical examples are politicians and policemen, men and women in leading positions in business life, but also teaching personnel. In some cultures men have power over women or grown-ups have power over children.

Living in Finland

A low power distance is characteristic of Finland. There is no difference in power between men and women, and very little between grown-ups and children. Leaders in politics or business as well as teachers are perceived as being empowered only for convenience of organization. They are always approachable on equal terms.

3. Status Achievement and Status Ascription

A related question concerns the way in which the more powerful come to be empowered. In some cultures, people are born into positions of inferior or superior power. This is called status ascription. Typical examples would be societies with a caste system, clearly defined social classes, or cultures which grant a higher status to one gender, one color of skin, or old age. On the opposite end of this spectrum are cultures in which any form of heightened status must be achieved through work or merit.

Living in Finland

Finland is an achievement based culture. As stated above, no-one is ascribed a higher status simply based on what they are (a man,

elderly, somebody's son or daughter, or anything else). All status must be achieved. Thus, the same elderly person might not be ascribed special respect simply because of their age, but will be shown the highest respect based on their achievements as a war veteran.

4. Specific Roles and Diffuse Roles

The final related question is, whether a person's higher status is valid only in specific situations, or in all situations (diffuse status). For example, will a professor be treated with reverence only during his lectures, or always? Will one consider one's boss to be one's superior only at work, or out of work, too?

Living in Finland

In Finland, roles and status are highly specific. Outside of the very situation for which they were awarded their special status, they will be treated like anyone else. This is one reason, why academic titles are hardly ever used in Finland.

5. Masculinity and Femininity

According to studies, women's values differ less from one culture to another, than men's values do. In most cultures women are expected to show compassion and a willingness to care for others. In some cultures, this is largely true of men, too, whereas in other cultures men are expected to be competitive and assertive. The former cultures are called feminine, the latter masculine.

Living in Finland

Finland, like all Scandinavian cultures, is among the strongly feminine cultures. Being competi-

tive and striving for dominance over others is not considered a virtue. Also, men and women largely share the same roles and display the same forms of behavior in society. This can be highly confusing for people from masculine societies, who are used to thinking that certain values, roles and behavioral patterns are acceptable in men, but not in women.

6. Uncertainty Avoidance

All human beings feel uneasy, or anxious, when facing an uncertain future. However, cultures develop very different means of trying to bring predictability to the future. Some cultures keep tight schedules, others pray for guidance or employ charms for protection. While all but our own means often appear futile to us, it is important to remember that all means respond to the same underlying desire to control, or at least affect, our future.

Living in Finland

Finns, like the German or English speaking cultures in Europe and North America, tend to plan carefully and keep tight schedules. They eye other attempts at structuring the future with skepticism, and expect everyone to stick to the carefully planned agendas – to the minute!

7. Universalism and Particularism

Values can collide and force one to prioritize. Imagine you were to witness a friend running over a person in traffic: would you lie to the police to protect them? In some cultures, the priority is on equality in legal matters: all rules apply to everyone under all circumstance.

These cultures are called universalist cultures. In other cultures, protecting one's friends and family always comes first. Hence, every situation must be assessed separately, taking into account one's ties to the people involved. These are called particularist cultures.

Living in Finland

Studies show Finland to be among the most universalist cultures on earth. Rules do not get bent. They hold for everyone and in all situations. This may seem cold and anti-social from a particularist point of view, but it is in tune with the strife for complete equality throughout Finnish society. (See the comments on matters concerning power, above.) No-one can expect to be treated differently by anyone, simply because of whom they know or are related to.

8. Affective and Neutral Communication Styles

In some cultures, people display their emotions openly, in others they don't. This is not merely a matter of personal style. It reflects the underlying conviction that emotions matter, and should be taken into consideration when making decisions – or that emotions should be kept out of decisions making, because rational thought should prevail.

Living in Finland

Finns show very little emotion. Not only do they tend to restrain themselves, they also believe that rational thinking should be the basis for one's actions. This may seem cold to outsiders.

ers, but it goes well with a highly organized, carefully planning society.

9. Secular-rational and Traditional

Religion or philosophical belief systems serve as the basis of politics and education in many cultures. (This is called traditional, since it used to be the case in all known cultures until a few centuries ago.) In other cultures, religion and belief systems are deliberately excluded from affecting either. This latter approach is called secular-rational, since rational thinking is supposed to replace religion as said basis.

Living in Finland

Finland strives to be a highly secular-rational society. While the (Lutheran) church tends to show presence, it is not allowed to exert an influence over political decision making, legislation or education. Members of traditional cultures tend to be critical of such “godlessness”. However, it forms an integer part of the culture visible behind all the paradigms described above, and should be accepted as a means of state organization, rather than be seen as individuals’ lack of moral convictions.

10. Active Politeness and Passive Politeness

Being polite means to behave in a way that one can expect to make a positive impression on others. People in all cultures strive to be polite. The problem is, each culture has its own idea of how to make a positive impression. In most Western cultures, politeness is achieved through activity: smiling at a person, touching them on the arm, back or shoulder, talking to

them and generally showing interest in how they are doing. In other cultures (particularly in East Asia), politeness is achieved through passivity: leaving other people alone, not intruding on them, is considered polite. (This often goes hand in hand with the notion of “face”).

Living in Finland

As far as politeness goes, Finland is an East Asian island in a Western sea. To be polite, Finns leave other people alone. Foreigners often perceive Finns as distant, withdrawn, uninterested in others, and even rude. But it is at these very moments that Finns are actually striving to at their most polite, by not intruding on another person’s privacy!

Summing up

Finnish culture is individualistic, with everyone more or less going through life on their own terms. Finns are not likely to ask for help, but will probably try to help you, if asked to do so.

In Finland, everyone is considered to be equal to everyone else. Men and women, grown-ups and children, younger and elderly, employers and employees, teachers and students basically see eye to eye. Where anyone is given power over others (the boss over the secretary, the teacher over the student), the position of power is specific to a clearly defined situation (at work, at school).

Men and women largely share the same values, have the same roles in family-life and society, and display the same patterns of behavior. Finnish work-life (and this includes education) is based on careful planning and exact timing.



Everyone is required to stick to schedules, even to the minute.

Since all people are to be treated as equals, rules may not be bent as a favor to friends or relatives. What passes as kindness shown to your own in many other cultures, is perceived as corruption in Finland. No-one is to benefit from their personal contacts. Instead, all status must be achieved through hard work.

Finns tend to restrain their emotions. This does not mean they don't have any! It simply indicates that they expect peoples' and institutions' decisions to be based on reasoning.

Finns often like to be left alone, and will leave you alone as a sign of respect for your private sphere. What passes for indifference or

rudeness in your home culture, may well constitute polite behavior in Finland.

7.6 Developing a New Identity

Does that mean I have to change into someone else?

A person's identity is not written in stone. Each one of us adjusts their behavior to the requirements of the situation: we are different people when we are with our grandparents and when we are with our friends. We behave differently at work and at home. To adapt to our environment is not to betray ourselves: it is an

intelligent way of getting along with our environment.

Still, there may be limits to how far we can – and want to – adapt. Milton Bennett (whose scale for intercultural sensitivity we looked at above), sums it up in his “Platinum Rule”:

“Treat others the way they want to be treated (or at least be aware of what that is).”

Note, how this is the opposite of the – unfortunately – oft repeated, well-meaning advice to “just be yourself”! If you would like your environment to accept you, first you have to accept it! And you show your acceptance by integrating into your host culture. Where you feel you can’t do that, at least be aware that is it you, who is at odds, not your host culture.

An outsider’s attempts to change their host culture will always be resented. However, an outsider will usually be allowed to diverge from their surrounding culture, so long as they show that they understand their host culture, and explain their behavior with reference to their home culture.

7.7 Conclusions

What do I learn from this?

- You are going abroad, because you are interested in foreign cultures. Since each culture is largely limited to its natural environment, trying to leave your own culture behind (as far as you can) is a good start.
- Make an active attempt to learn and understand Finnish culture. Courses and lectures on Finnish language and culture as well as courses in intercultural communication are worth the time and effort they require.
- Expect the occasional culture clash. Culture-related problems provide a great opportunity to become aware of cultural differences. This will help you to become culturally competent.
- It all depends on your attitude: if you are willing to embrace Finnish culture, Finnish society will embrace you!

Welcome to Finland!

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7.8 Recommended Reading

(Bibliographical details are omitted on purpose. Numerous editions are available, and all are of interest.)

- *Catherine Bartlett & Aira Davidsson: Improve your Global Competence* (includes a good analysis of Finnish values and Finnish behaviour at work)
- *Donal Carbaugh: Cultures in Conversation* (interesting chapter of Finnish conversational habits)
- *Geert Hofstede: Cultures and Organizations* <http://geert-hofstede.com> (under "National Culture" you can compare your country to Finland using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model)
- *Richard D. Lewis: When Cultures Collide* (includes good chapter on Finland)
- *Richard D. Lewis: Finland, Cultural Lone Wolf* (the only book dedicated entirely to Finnish culture that I am aware of)
- <http://www.crossculture.com> & <http://blog.crossculture.com> (this is Richard Lewis Communications' website. The triangular Lewis Model allows you to compare your country's communicative features with those of Finland)
- *Väinö Linna: Tuntematon sotilas* (Engl.: *The Unknown Soldier*; German: *Der unbekannte Soldat / Kreuze in Karelien*; Swed.: *Okänd soldat*) (the best book on Finnish mentality written by a Finn, and a literary classic in Finland)
- *John Mole: Mind Your Manners* (includes tables of comparison which allow you

to see your country's work-life culture in relation to the Finnish one)

- *Helen Spencer-Oatey & Peter Franklin: Intercultural Interaction*
Fons Trompenaars & Charles Hampden-Turner: Riding the Waves of Culture (includes a few dozen countries' scores in the Trompenaars Cultural Dimension Model, including Finland)
- *William R. Trotter: A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939–1940* (the best book I know on one of the most defining periods in Finnish history)
- Numerous introductions to Intercultural Communication are available. It is hard to recommend any particular one above the others. I use *Shuang Liu; Zala Volčič & Cindy Gallois: Introducing Intercultural Communication* as a basis for my own introductory course (KICP1101).

7.9 Task

Try to find some of the sources mentioned above to acquaint yourself with Finnish culture. Geert Hofstede's and Richard Lewis' websites allow you to compare your national culture with the Finnish one. Make a list of cultural differences and similarities! Which differences might be difficult to digest? Which of the similarities might make it easier for you to make yourself at home in Finland?

8 Survival Finnish

(English – Finnish)

Useful phrases

Good morning!	Hyvää huomenta!	My name is...	Minun nimeni on...
Good afternoon!	Hyvää iltapäivää!	What time is it?	Mitä kello on?
Good night!	Hyvää yötä!	It is one o'clock.	Kello on yksi.
Hello!	Hei / Terve!	I don't understand.	En ymmärrä.
Goodbye!	Näkemiin!	I love you!	Rakastan sinua!
Excuse me / I'm sorry!	Anteeksi	Cheers!	Kippis!
Thank you!	Kiitos!		

Shopping

Milk	maito	Onion	sipuli
Coffee	kahvi	Vegetables	vihannekset
Tea	tee	Fruit	hedelmä
Yoghurt	jogurtti	Pasta	pasta
Butter	voi	Rice	riisi
Bread	leipä	Sugar	sokeri
Fish	kala	Salt	suola
Beef	naudanliha	Toothpaste	hammastahna
Chicken	kana	Toothbrush	hammasharja
Meat	liha	Shampoo	shampoo

At the university

Academic year	lukuvuosi	Study guide	opinto-opas
Semester	lukukausi	Assessment	arviointi
Lecture	luento	Credit	opintopiste
Library	kirjasto	Student	opiskelija
Degree programme	koulutusohjelma		
University	yliopisto		
University of Applied Sciences	ammattikorkeakoulu		

9 Web links

ULAPLAND www.ulapland.fi/intl

Lapland

Rovaniemi	www.rovaniemi.fi
Lapland	www.laplandfinland.fi

Finland

Discover Finland	www.studyinfinland.fi
Visit Finland	www.visitfinland.fi
Virtual Finland	virtual.finland.fi
Finland Statistics	www.stat.fi
Helsinki	www.hel.fi

Weather

Weather Service Finland	www.foreca.com
Finnish Meteorological Institute	www.fmi.fi

Travelling

Finnair	www.finnair.com
Norwegian	www.norwegian.com
Train	www.vr.fi
Bus Travel	www.matkahuolto.fi
Skiing in Finland	www.ski.fi
Hiking and Outdoors	www.outdoors.fi

Residence permit, insurance etc

Finnish Immigration Service	www.migri.fi
Police	www.poliisi.fi
Local register office	www.maistraatti.fi
Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela)	www.kela.fi

Housing

Domus Arctica Foundation (DAS)	www.das.fi
Rental Apartments	www.vuokraovi.com www.kas.fi
Multicultural student housing guide	www.soa.fi/en/studenthousing/

A nighttime photograph of Rovaniemi, Finland, showing a cityscape with illuminated buildings and streets. The foreground is covered in snow, and a body of water is visible at the bottom. The sky is dark with a hint of twilight. The text is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

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