



PREPARING FOR YOUR DEPARTURE



Some Practical
Matters

1 PREPARING FOR YOUR DEPARTURE

INCOMING STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE AN INFORMATION PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDES: LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE, MAPS, TIMETABLES etc

1.1 DOCUMENTATION

Under no circumstances should you leave for Finland until you have obtained all the necessary documents. Depending on your home country, you may need a student or a work authorisation (or even a visa) for Finland. Be sure that you carry all the relevant information on you in person. Do not pack it in your baggage.

Documents needed in most cases

- valid passport
- student or work authorisation in addition to the residence permit (if necessary)
- visa (if required - not to be confused with your authorisation)
- original letter of invitation / acceptance from Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences (KUAS) or the employer
- your student ID from your own university or polytechnic
- Certificate of funds available for the study abroad period (e.g. a letter/document from your bank or resp.)
- other information advised by the Finnish Embassy in your country
- E111 / E128 form (for EU-students) or the European Health Insurance Card
- Travel insurance to cover the period of your stay in Finland (you need a **written proof**)

Foreign students from **outside the EU and EEA** are required to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds by the depositing a required sum in a Finnish bank, with no conditions restricting the use of this account. This sum is 505 euros per each month of studies in Finland: thus 4 months would equal 2020 euros, 9 months 4545 euros.

EU and EEA (European Economic Area) citizens

Citizens of the EU and EEA countries can stay in Finland for three (3) months without any residence permits. For a period longer than 3 months you need to apply for an ETA card (or EEA card), which allows you to stay in the country for the time stated on the card. The ETA card can be applied for at the local police station in Finland. This will be done with the tutor students during the first weeks. The residence permit must be applied for within a week after your arrival in Finland if you know that your stay is longer than 3 months. After applying, you should get the card within two weeks.

The documentation needed for an ETA card application are:

- a valid passport
- 2 passport photographs
- 40 euros (charged for the administration and handling of your application)
- a certificate/acceptance letter from Kymenlaakso UAS
- a statement indicating the reason for staying in Finland for more than 3 months (e.g. study period as an ERASMUS student)
- eligibility for health insurance in your own country; E111/E128 form for European citizens should be obtained before departure for Finland.

1.2 ARRIVAL IN FINLAND

When you arrive in Finland as a foreigner, you should have a valid passport issued by the authorities in your home country. If you are not a citizen of an EU or EEA country, you are required to have a work permit if you come to Finland to work, and a student authorisation if you come here to study. A foreigner coming to Finland as a tourist is required to have a visa, unless his/her home country and Finland have made an agreement abolishing this requirement. Finland has made such agreements with more than eighty countries. Please check whether your home country is included on this list.

Please remember the Customs regulations. Detailed information about Finland's Customs regulations is available e.g. www.tulli.fi (or through this direct link: http://www.tulli.fi/en/02_Publications/02_Customer_bulletins/index.jsp)

If you arrive in Finland at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport there are good coach connections (e.g. Finnair buses) to the Helsinki city centre at the cost of around 6 Euros and also direct connections to buses for e.g. Kotka and Kouvola. Please ask the Information Desk officer at the Airport how to reach the coach taking you to these buses. As there might be changes in the timetables after the print of this booklet, please remember that **we give relevant information of the timetables, etc after you have informed us about your arrival.**

Taxis in Finland are relatively expensive but there is a Yellow Cab service at the Airport which takes you to any address in Helsinki for about 20-25 Euros in case you need. Main Passenger ferries arrive at the Helsinki harbour, which is located in the city centre at the distance of 2 km from the railway and bus stations. Ask for guide maps at the Information desks.

The best way to get **Kotka** is to take a coach from Helsinki-Vantaa Airport directly to one of the express busses to Kotka or to take a bus from Helsinki City centre (bus terminal), depending on the time of your arrival. We shall inform you which to choose as soon as we know the exact time of our arrival in Helsinki Airport. The cost of travel is around 25 Euros from the Airport or from Helsinki City centre. It takes about 2 -2,5 hours to reach Kotka by bus.

Get off the bus at a bus stop called **SUTELA**. It is the first stop in Kotka town area. Bus driver will call all stops. Some of our tutor students will be there waiting for you and will drive you to the student hostel providing that you let us know of your arrival.

The easiest way to travel from the Airport to **Kouvola** is by an Express Bus, which leaves from the front door of the International Arrivals hall at certain times. The trip takes about 2,5 hours and costs around around 25 Euros . There are also good railway connections from Helsinki City centre to Kouvola, and the trip takes also about 2 hours but you may have to change the trains twice. It depends on the time and the train. Tutor will meet you at the bus/train station and take you to the dormitory.

When you arrive, you are advised to have at least 50 - 100 Euros in cash for traveling expenses to Kotka/Kouvola. We also recommend that you carry enough cash or traveller's cheques for at least your first three week's expenses. Because of various extra costs during the first month, this can amount to 300 Euros or more. A credit card is always very

practical. The most common credit cards are in use in Finland (Visa, Mastercard, American Express).

Please let us know in advance **when and how** you will be coming to Finland, so that we can advise you in detail of the connections and arrange for somebody from the KUAS to meet you at the bus or railway station, if you wish. Also try to arrange your flight or other arrival in Helsinki so early that you would have possibilities in reaching Kotka or Kouvola Region not too late in the evening. The latest recommended arrival in Helsinki would thus be around 7-8 p.m.

YOU WILL GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORIENTATION DAYS (WEEK 35 in Kotka) BY E-MAIL BEFORE YOUR ARRIVAL.

1.3 HEALTH CARE INSURANCE AND OTHER INSURANCES

It is extremely important that you have the insurance for your stay in Finland. Your insurance must cover the costs incurred for services provided by a physician and for any hospitalization in case of injury or illness. Always remember to bring the insurance policy (in English) with you. If you have an existing medical condition or detailed medical history, bring a copy of it with you. Furthermore, be sure to bring an adequate supply of any prescription medication you are presently taking. (one visit to a doctor without any documents ~150-280 euros)

EEA citizens are eligible for normal public health care. For this, please do not forget to obtain an E111/E128 form or the **European Health Insurance Card** in your own country. We have a nurse in our KUAS to take care of students' minor health problems as well. You must purchase the traveler's insurance in your own country before departure covering your luggage and possible accidents and illness occurring while traveling to and from Finland and throughout your stay away from home. Otherwise it may occur, that you have to pay all the cost of your possible hard luck yourself.

1.4 TRANSFER OF FUNDS

It may take several days or even week for your funds to be transferred through regular banking channels. You should find out from your local bank how long it takes to transfer funds to Finland, and arrange the transfer well before your departure for Finland. There are several banks located in the city centre of Kotka and Kouvola as well as in the neighboring municipalities.

1.5 ACCOMMODATION

The International Office in Kymenlaakso UAS arranges accommodation for exchange students. A typical student's residence consists of a single bedroom and shared kitchen and bathroom. In Kouvola and Kuusankoski there are usually 2-3 students living in the same apartment and in Kotka most of the foreign students are placed in a hostel with ensuite bathrooms and a shared kitchen and lounge room. A written rental agreement must be drawn up between you and your landlord specifying such details as the rental amount, due dates, and the notice to vacate period.

In Kouvola you have to pay a housing deposit of 150 Euros, which is returned at the end of your stay *if everything is in good condition in your apartment*. On average the monthly rent is from 165 - 200 Euros. The rent is usually paid in advance every month and we expect you to pay your rent regularly. Please keep your apartment clean and tidy by yourself and let the house care taker know immediately if there are any problems with heating etc., and, of course, if any damage has been caused.

Most of the student residences have the basic furniture including bedclothes, too, so you need not have concern about that before your arrival. Only if specifically requested, please bring your own sheets, pillowcases and towels (everybody studying in KOUVOLA). You may also have to purchase some basic kitchen equipment. These can be bought at a reasonable price here. Normally there are laundry rooms available in your rental house. The washing machines are usually coin-operated.

1.6 LIVING EXPENSES

Students in both universities and polytechnics have to pay for their books and other materials, plus their accommodation and living expenses. For example, one month's expenses at Kymenlaakso UAS could be

- Accommodation at Student Houses 165-- 200 Euros) (+ repayable housing deposit 150 euros at the beginning of studies)
- Grocery shopping 160 Euros
- Local public transportation single ticket 2.80 Euros
- Monthly bus card with unlimited traveling, cost per month 43 euros + 6.50 euros deposit when the card is purchased
- Meals at Student Cantine (appr.) 45 Euro
- Miscellaneous costs for studies 26 Euros
- Traveling (eg Kotka/Kouvola-Helsinki) 25 Euros (for students, a return ticket)

Some goods and services are very expensive in Finland: cigarettes (4-5 Euros/20 pcs), gasoline for ca, in Spring 2006 around 1,4 Euro/litre, eating at restaurants (meals 7 --30 Euro, 1/2 litre of beer around 4 Euros, a bottle of white wine 7- 34 Euros, etc.). The total monthly living expenses of a single student average approx. 600 Euros.

1.7 SMOKING AND DRUGS

In Finland **smoking is not allowed in any public buildings**. In the premises of Kymenlaakso UAS, including student hostels, smoking is allowed **only in the marked places outside the buildings**. In Finland it is also forbidden to possess, use, sell or in any other way be part of dealing with drugs (Chapter 50 of theCriminal Act). They are punishable acts and it will be informed to the police if any of these activities are noticed.

Students violating these laws and thereby causing damage, are themselves solely responsible for the consequences. It is also forbidden to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs within the premises of Kymenlaakso UAS.

1.8 ABOUT ATTITUDES AGAINST FOREIGN PEOPLE

In general, it is very safe in Finland, but as everywhere, there are individuals and even small groups of people who are more or less against people with different cultural backgrounds. In Kotka and Kouvola Region we have not met any serious problems or violence so far, but we advise you to avoid walking alone, and especially under the influence of alcohol, late in the night and in the areas, where there are noisy crowds. Please remember, that by your own behaviour you can either provoke or hinder the possible difficulties, too.

1.9 OTHER ISSUES

Finally, prepare yourself for giving some presentations and talks about your country, your university and your studies. You might be invited for visits to the local schools, for example. Bring with you some pictures, slides, etc. and information about your home country and yourself. Business students organise every year an International Day, where you have a chance to make your home country familiar to Finnish students.

2 SURVIVING IN KOTKA AND KOUVOLA AND THE SURROUNDINGS

2.1 CLIMATE

The climate in Finland is relatively mild, even though the country is located far in the North. During July, the average temperature is 17°C, whereas in January it is about -6°C. During the Summer the temperature can exceed 25-28°C even in Northern Finland. However, during the Winter the temperature can drop to -25°C or below, even in Southern Finland.

Here in Southern Finland we *usually* get the first snowfalls in November. Very often, though, the permanent snowcover is received in December and it will usually stay until middle of April. The snow cover can range considerably within a relatively small geographic area. In the coastal regions there is usually much less snow than in the interior parts of the country. In the northern and eastern parts of Finland there are usually good chances for skiing, for example, from the beginning of November until the end of April.

Normally the lakes and the sea on the coast are covered by ice for 3-4 months every winter. There are exceptions, however: In winter 05-06 the permanent snow arrived only in January in Kotka! We suggest that you bring warm clothing with you, e.g., winter coat, hat, gloves, sweaters, warm underwear, warm shoes etc. If you need to purchase any new articles, it would be advisable to wait until you arrive in Finland.

Houses and apartments in Finland are generally very well equipped against cold weather: double or triple glazing and central heating are normal. The average room temperature is around 21 degrees Celsius in winter, too. If you feel cold, however, sauna is available. In public saunas (e.g. in connection with swimming halls) there are special times scheduled separately for men and women. Ask for details at your residence and help/advice from your Finnish friends.

2.2 HEALTH SERVICES

The health services in Kotka and Kouvola and their surroundings are well organized. In the case of illness or injury, you can contact the local Health Care Centre (TERVEYSKESKUS or TERVEYSASEMA). Dental services (HAMMASLÄÄKÄRI) are arranged by these health care centres. An E111/E128-form / European Health Insurance card is needed for using these services with lower expenses .

Without the form/card you need to pay all costs by yourself. Please note, however, that you always have to pay yourself the services of a doctor, consultations and laboratory tests, etc. in private hospitals, surgeries or laboratories. In most cases you also have to pay the cost of e.g. ambulance transportation in the case of an acute injury, but you will be reimbursed later on most of the cost, if you carry the form / card with yourself.

During weekdays there is a school nurse (TERVEYDENHOITAJA) available at the KUAS in various faculties. Ask for detailed information on the nurse's consultation hours in your faculty. Pharmaceuticals are sold at pharmacies (APTEEKKI). You can obtain some medicines, e.g., headache tablets, without a doctor's prescription.

2.3 BANKING

Even though you will spend a short period of time in Finland, it is practical to have a bank account. The banks (PANKKI) will advise what form of account is best for you. It is easy to manage payments from a normal deposit account, and a bankcard can also be obtained for the account enabling its holder to make withdrawals from cash dispensers (OTTO), which you can find in all towns and cities. Foreign currency can be exchanged into euros at banks or in currency exchanging machines. Most common credit cards are accepted in Finland.

2.4 POSTAL SERVICES

You will find postal services (POSTI) in very small towns as well as in most of the town and city suburbs in Finland. The opening hours may vary but normally they are Monday - Friday from 9.00 to 17.00, some evenings even later. The main post office in Kotka is located at Kauppakatu 5, and in Kouvola at Kauppalankatu 13.

2.5 GROCERY SHOPPING

You can shop for groceries at supermarkets, such as Sokos, Prisma, City-Market, Anttila . There are also several smaller stores. Stores are usually open six days a week (Mon-Sat). Typical opening hours in big supermarkets are Monday -Friday at 9.00 - 20.00 (or 21.00) and Saturdays at 9.00 - 18.00. Smaller stores usually close a couple of hours earlier than the larger ones, but some of them stay open even on Sunday afternoons nowadays.

Alcoholic beverages are heavily taxed in Finland and are sold in special stores called ALKO. Some lighter beer and cider types can, however, be bought in normal grocery stores.

2.6 TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation covers the entire country quite efficiently. Long distance travel is run by the state airline, FINNAIR, and its subsidiaries, the Finnish State Railways (Valtion Rautatiet or VR) and private bus companies. Local transportation in larger cities is provided by a municipal company or by private companies. In some means of transportation there are discount rates available for students. Ask for details.

In smaller towns and cities, such as Kotka and Kouvola in particular, most services are located within an easy walking or cycling distance in town centers. Cycling, even in the city centre, is safe on the special pathways for cyclists and pedestrians. The KUAS and its sites are located close to the city centres (distances vary from 5 kms to none). If you wish, you may bring your bicycle with you. There may be opportunities, however, to purchase a bicycle cheaply, for example, from the auctions organised twice a year by the local police or from the second hand shops.

2.7 TELEPHONE

The area code of Kotka and Kouvola and their regions (Kuusankoski, Elimäki) is 05. When making local calls, omit the area code. To call Helsinki, start with the area code 09. In order to telephone or fax from abroad to Finland, you need to omit the first number of the area code, i.e. 0 (zero). For example, if you want to call to the International Office of KUAS, please dial + 358 5 2208236.

For international calls from Finland, dial the international prefix 990, 999, 994 or 00 (we have four independent operators for international calls), then the country code, area code and telephone number. For example, to make a call to the Fachhochschule Lûbeck, Germany, dial 994 (or 999 or 990 or 00) 49 451 5005001. For more exact information please see the "How to use telephone in Finland" pages in the telephone directory. Finns possess and use mobile telephones, which reduces the number of public telephones in the whole country.

2.8 LIBRARIES

Every Finnish municipality has one or more public libraries (KIRJASTO) from where residents, and our students, too, may borrow material (books, periodicals, audio-visual material, ADP and CD-ROM discs, videotapes etc) in most cases free of charge. If an item is not returned by the due date, a fee will be charged. Material in foreign languages is available as well.

Kotka City Library (KAUPUNGINKIRJASTO) is located at Kirkkokatu 24.

Kouvola City-Provincial Library is located at Salpausseläntäkatu 33. There are also several branch libraries (SIVUKIRJASTO) in various parts of both Kotka and Kouvola region.

When visiting a library for the first time, take an ID with you. The library will issue you a library card, which you can use to borrow the material you want. The lending period is generally for a maximum of one month at a time. The KUAS has also excellent library facilities in each department. Ask for further information.

2.9 HOLIDAYS

The most important holidays for the Finns are New Year's Day, Easter, Mayday, Midsummer, Independence Day (6th December) and Christmas (Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day). There are also several other public holidays and school holidays. On the major holidays stores, offices and civil service agencies (such as banks and post offices and government agencies) are generally closed.

2.10 LEISURE TIME

Kotka and Kouvola and their neighboring towns (Kuusankoski, Elimäki etc.) are well-known for their sports facilities. In general, Finns are enthusiastic about participating actively in sports events as well as being spectators. There are several sports grounds, sport halls and swimming pools in the Kotka - Kouvola region. Ice-hockey (JÄÄKIEKKO), cross-country skiing (HIIHTO), downhill skiing (LASKETTELU), basketball (KORIPALLO) and volleyball (LENTOPALLO) are very popular as well as Finnish baseball (PESÄPALLO) and football or soccer (JALKAPALLO). There are also opportunities for e.g. golf, bowling, riding, tennis, etc. A great variety of water sports such as sailing, canoeing, rowing and rapids shooting are available in summertime especially in Kotka, which is located by the sea. Kymenlaakso UAS has excellent facilities for indoor sports, e.g., students can play volleyball, badminton, tennis etc. free of charge.

There are also many cultural events in the Kotka - Kouvola region; very active Town Theatres, several other theatre groups, orchestras and choirs, art exhibitions, movie theatres. In addition to the usual cultural services, there are also several Summer festivals taking place regularly in Kotka. One of the best known is the Kotka Maritime Festival (4 days), which takes place at the end of July and brings to Kotka more than 100 000 visitors during one weekend.

We normally organise the course "Finnish Language and Culture" for our foreign students in the autumn semester, in some cases also in the spring semester. You will be informed of this course during the orientation as you arrive in the KUAS.. We recommend that you attend these courses. You will undoubtedly pick up some Finnish during your studying / training period or when communicating with local people but it is not a waste of time to study a little bit more. Ask for more details in the International Office.

2.11 IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In the event of an emergency, call the general emergency number 112. By calling this number you can contact the ambulance services, fire department and other emergency (rescue and police) services. The emergency number directly to the police is 10022.

2.12 THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC ACCESS

In Finland everyone is allowed to roam freely throughout the countryside. It is referred to as the right of public access ("JOKAMIEHEN OIKEUS"). This means that you can walk around and pick berries and mushrooms, go boating and swimming on or in what is actually private land or water. The exceptions to this law should be carefully observed.

They are:

- Observe the privacy zone close to people's homes and private jetties.
- Do not light fires without landowner's permission or if there is a risk of the fire spreading.
- Beware of picking rare and endangered species of plants
- Do not damage live trees or any part of them.
- Do not remove bird's eggs or nests.
- A fishing license is needed in some cases and is available at the post office, for example.
- Please remember the special rules and restrictions in the national parks and other protected areas.

2.13 RELIGIOUS LIFE

In Finland we have freedom of religion. In Kotka and Kouvola region there are many different churches and denominations represented. The majority of Finns are Lutheran.

Other churches include e.g.

Orthodox Church	Orthodox Church	Catholic Church
Keskuskatu 35 A	Muuramistontie 13 A	Valimontie 1
48100 Kotka (centre)	45130 Kouvola	45100 Kouvola

2.14 STUDENT UNION

There are several activities arranged by Kymenlaakso UAS student unions by faculties. They run the book shop, photocopier etc and often arrange sport events. Ask about the events and take part in them whenever you get a chance. More information about the events and contact persons is available at the offices of Kymenlaakso UAS.

2.15 USEFUL ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS IN KOTKA AND KOUVOLA

A. Tourist information

Kotka City Tourist Office
www.kotka.fi

Kouvola City Tourist Office
www.kouvola.fi

B. Travelling

Valtion Rautatie (VR) ,Railway Station (Rautatieasema) www.vr.fi

C. Oy Matkahuolto Ab Bus terminal (Linja-autoasema) www.matkahuolto.fi
ExpressBus www.expressbus.com

Please do not hesitate to contact the International Office for further information,
tel. +358 5 2208236 international@kyamk.fi, fax: +358-5 2208209.

3 TIMETABLES FOR LOCAL TRAVELLING

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WILL BE INFORMED ABOUT THE EXACT TIMES WITH E-MAIL after they have informed the date & time of arrival.

* * * * *

NARCOTICS OFFENSES

In everyday language, drugs usually mean narcotic substances such as hashish, marihuana, amphetamine and heroin. Narcotic substances, in Finland, refer to substances separately listed in the provisions on narcotics. Drug abuse has spread throughout Finland, and the problem now exists in almost every Finnish locality and in every social group. The number of narcotics offences has increased sharply in the 2000's.

The most commonly used drugs in Finland comprise cannabis, different pharmaceuticals, amphetamine and its derivatives, opiates, of which especially heroin, cocaine and its derivatives and LSD.

The use and possession of drugs are punishable acts in Finland, as are the production, selling, import and transport of narcotics and will be informed to the police if/when any of these activities are noticed (*student will be sent back home immediately and the home university will be informed*)

Risks of drug abuse

- * There is no such thing as a harmless drug - all drugs develop an addiction of some sort.
- * Every experimentation with drugs involves a risk - anyone can become addicted to drugs.
- * Narcotics endanger health - even small doses can cause serious damage.
- * School, studies and work suffer from drug abuse.
- * The risk of having an accident grows.
- * The risk of having infectious diseases is great - the HI virus and many dangerous diseases spread through dirty needles.
- * Drug abuse needs a lot of money - drug addicts often commit other crimes as well.

What to do if you or someone close to you has a drug problem

- * If you cannot stop using drugs, ask for help - the sooner you seek treatment, the better chances you have of coping with your problem.
- * If you need help, contact the professional helpers, for example via the social office or the health centre of the nearest municipality, or voluntary organisations.
- * If your friend is addicted to drugs, encourage him to seek help - there is always treatment available.
- * If you are afraid that your child uses drugs, remember that what children and young people in trouble need most is their family - contact advisor organisations, social authorities or health care professionals, who can help you find the best way to support your child.
- * The local police can also help you get the necessary information and support.

Emergencies

In an emergency, call the police emergency number 10022 or contact the local police or the health centre of your place of residence. The police can be tipped off about a narcotics offence by calling the local police tip-off numbers or the Customs narcotics tip-off number 9800-4600

Advice

For advice, further information and support, please contact the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health STAKES, Drug Treatment Unit at Helsinki University Central Hospital (Helsingin yliopistollisen keskussairaalan huumevieroitus yksikkö), Free from drugs - Irti huumeista ry, or other voluntary organisations.