



## Final report from a student placement at a partner university abroad

This report must be handed over to the MU Centre for International Cooperation within 6 weeks of completing the study placement. Please send the completed questionnaire to the address of the CIC coordinator.

Final reports will be available in the database [here](#)

**Please complete the period of studies** (for example the academic year 2018–2019, spring semester 2019, summer school 2019, etc.):

### Personal Data

Name of faculty at MU: Give the faculty/faculties through which you travelled	Faculty of Arts
Field of study:	Upper Secondary School Teacher Training in English Language and Literature
Level of study during period of placement (Bachelor's, Master's or PhD):	Master's
Host university:	University of Kansas
Host country:	United States of America
Start of placement:	31.07.2017
End of placement:	15.12.2017
Number of months:	5
Language of studies:	English

We would like to know whether you want to publish your report anonymously or not. Publishing your name and contact information will help those coming after you.

I consent to publication of this report Yes  No

I consent to giving my name with my report Yes  No

I consent to giving my e-mail address with my report Yes  No

### 1. Activities before my departure abroad

Where can information be found about courses taught at the foreign school? At their website: <a href="https://online.ku.edu/courses">https://online.ku.edu/courses</a>
Which documents were needed for acceptance at the foreign university? Visa, confirmation of payment of SEVIS fee, Learning Agreement, copy of passport, Transcript of Records
How far ahead did you have to organise your acceptance? Around 6 months
Did you need a visa? Yes
Documents and materials needed for a visa: KU form DS2019, Sevis fee form, copy of passport, bank account transcript (with enough money on it), a photo. Length of wait for visa: around a week after the interview Fee for the visa: 180 euro

## 2. Studies

Did you have a Learning Agreement signed before your departure? yes If not, why not?
Before your departure did you know how your courses would be recognised by your home faculty? yes
During your stay did you change your Learning Agreement? yes
When and how did course registration take place? Are there any restrictions? Possibilities of making changes? In the first two weeks of teaching period, and it is done through their website. There are not any restrictions that I know of, only the minimum (9) and maximum (12) numbers of credit hours that need to be taken in a semester. Changes can be made rather easily with the help of the coordinator (Kate Gerken at the time).
Did you take any examinations at the foreign school? Yes, for all the classes.
Does the school use the ECTS system? If not then explain how the credits there were recalculated into ECTS. No, the credit hours at the university correspond to a 3:8 ratio. That is, I took three courses there, which each counted for 3 credit hours. The sum of 9 credit hours at KU was translated into 24 MUNI credits (8 for each class).
Describe the teaching methods (theory, practical and projects) and assessment of students: There was less theory than at Masaryk university, and many more assignments and projects during the semester. On average I got graded once a week for each class. There is overall more work that students need to put in, although it is easier to get good grades as long as you are consistent.
Quality of teaching in comparison with home school: I would say that teaching itself is of higher quality at MUNI, but students are forced to put in more work at KU (although it is sometimes rather superficial).
How did you receive study materials? Either physically in class, uploaded to Blackboard (their version of ELF), or I had to order them over Amazon.

<p>Can you recommend an interesting course/subject/teacher? Fiction writing classes offer a unique opportunity for the students of English language and literature. It is a sphere that does not exist at MUNI in any way, and it is truly rewarding.</p>
<p>How well is the school library equipped? It is great, full of helpful materials and tools. There are different kinds of rooms depending on your needs (group study, computer room, quiet zone, etc.), and also various events (e.g. therapy dogs brought to the library for helping stress levels before the finals) and semester-long services designed to help in your studies (e.g. the writing center in Anschutz library).</p>
<p>Availability of computers, internet access, level of software needed, requirements on notebook: Wifi is available on the whole campus, and there are computers available for free use in almost every library (I think the only exception is Kenneth Spencer Research library).</p>
<p>Options from printing and copying: There are print/copy machines available in every library, and there is even a 10USD gift on your account given for every semester that you are free to use for any copying or printing needs.</p>
<p>Does the foreign school/student organisation arrange special events for exchange students? If yes then what? Yes, there is an orientation week for exchange students before the semester starts. It is the most fun part of the whole stay, filled with great events and opportunity to meet people that you mostly stay in contact with throughout the rest of the semester. I would strongly recommend not skipping the orientation week, since you get crucial formal and informal information, as well as connections that will be of help for the rest of your stay. Later, during the semester, you will not have so much time or opportunity to make friends, so make use of it. Throughout the semester, there are also many events organized, so there is always something to do in terms of socializing.</p>
<p>How would you assess your integration with the local students (evaluation like in school from 1 to 5 with 1 as highest5), or describe in your own words: 1 – Americans are friendly and easily approachable, so the social part of the semester abroad is really straightforward. Some of the friends I made there that came from broadly different cultures, like China or Saudi Arabia, had more trouble coming to grips with some aspects of local culture, but Europeans will not be shocked by many things there.</p>

### 3. Practical questions on your placement

<p>Type of accommodation: GSP Dormitory (Gertrude Sellards Pearson), in a two-person room.</p>
<p>Price per month (Price in EUR per month): 600 USD/ 490 EUR per month</p>
<p>Describe the equipment. Tips for future students – what should they bring with them? There is not much furniture in the room, for each person there is: a bed, a desk, a chair, and a closet with a few drawers. Do not take too much stuff therefore, since you will have nowhere to store it anyway. Since you cannot cook in most dormitories, it will at least save you some space in the suitcase. Make sure to bring bedding (including everything: sheets, pillow, pillow case, and a semi-warm blanket) with you or buy it there (everything best at Walmart).</p>
<p>How and how far ahead should accommodation be organised? As soon as you are accepted, it is good to start looking. Do this as soon as possible, since the possibilities get narrowed down fast.</p>
<p>What are the catering options?</p>

Students in dormitories (except for Jayhawker Towers) must take a meal plan. The cheapest option is around 2000 USD per semester, and comes with 10 meals a week (all-you-can eat style at numerous locations).
<p>What are the rough prices for food – compare with prices in the Czech Republic.</p> <p>I did not buy groceries since my dorm was without a kitchen. However, the prices are generally higher, but you can get amazing burgers for cheap and experience the American style of eating.</p>
<p>Means of transport to location of placement: The flight ticket from Vienna to Kansas City and then free pick-up by car to Lawrence.</p> <p>Rough prices: The round-trip ticket cost me around 35000 CZK.</p> <p>Tips for purchasing cheap tickets and other recommendations: google flights, and skyscanner.com</p>
<p>What are the local transport options (public transport, cycling, on foot, rough prices).</p> <p>On campus you can easily walk anywhere, and there are also free buses going all over it. Off-campus, life is trickier – everything is rather far for walking, and buses are known for tardiness. If you get a bike, your life will be much easier. The car was too expensive for me, so I don't know the details.</p>
<p>What kind of formalities have to be arranged before arrival, for example residence permit?</p> <p>There are no big things that you should worry about. Just attend the orientation week and they will let you know whatever needs to be done and when. They provide plenty of detail concerning your visa, vaccination you need, and KU insurance.</p>
<p>What health insurance did you use? (rough price, advantages, disadvantages, is it necessary to arrange insurance at the university other than your home (Czech) insurance?)</p> <p>It is best to get KU insurance for 620 USD per semester. Do not get some European insurance and then try to get a waiver – they almost never accept it. Many of my friends ended up paying twice this way, since KU has high standards of how students need to be covered and don't accept anything less. KU insurance is rather expensive, but really everything is covered except for dental. You can go to Watkins Health Services every week if you want and it will be free under the insurance.</p>
<p>Did you have any experience with medical treatment abroad?</p> <p>Yes, I went to the University's health clinic (Watkins) a couple of times. I have had a very good experience each time: basically everything is covered by the KU insurance, and the doctors and nurses are all extremely friendly.</p>
<p>Did you work during your studies? No</p>
<p>What are the conditions for working for MU students?</p> <p>Under the J-1 visa, you can only work on campus.</p>
<p>Tips for free-time activities:</p> <p>There are many clubs and social events being organized on campus at all times, however if you get tired of Lawrence, it's a bit of a drive going somewhere, since Lawrence is rather isolated. Nevertheless, it is all doable. I rented a car and went to Denver (8 hour drive) and hiked the Rocky Mountains for a week during the fall break. It was an amazing experience and I recommend it to everyone. One of my friends travelled to Chicago with Amtrak and also had a nice time. However, be wary of American public transport, since it is often late and a bit unreliable. Other than that, if you are willing to fly, there are plenty of things to see. After the end of the exam period, I was able to travel much more.</p>

#### 4. Financial support and expenses

Grant from CIC – grant from MŠMT (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports) project Monthly grant in CZK:	10000
Number of supported months:	5
Total number of months:	5
What other sources did you make use of to finance your placement? My own savings and family's help. If you received another grant, state which and how much in CZK.	
Fees associated with enrolment at the university: a/ amount of enrolment fee: 0 b/ amount of tuition fees: 0 c/ amount of other fees (which): health insurance 620 USD	
What was your average monthly expenditure: a/ of which for accommodation: 600 USD b/ of which for catering: 400 USD c/ travel and recreation: 500 USD on average (but I travelled a lot: whole California, New York, Las Vegas, Rocky Mountains/Denver)	

## 5. Recognition of foreign studies at the home faculty

How many credits did you gain during your studies (in the system of the foreign school)?	9
How many of your ECTS credits were recognised here?	24
Did you know in advance which of your courses would be recognised by your home faculty?	Yes
What problems did you have with recognition?	No problems

## 6. Evaluation of the placement, further comments

Assessment of personal benefit ( 1-5, 1-excellent):	1
Assessment of academic benefit (1-5, 1-excellent):	1
Evaluate the information and support provided by the foreign school (1-5, 1 – excellent)	1
Did you encounter any serious problems during your stay:	No.
What would you recommend to take with you: Plug adapter (for different American sockets), layered clothing even for summer (although summer is really hot in Kansas, they insist on bringing the temperature to chilling lows with air conditioning – it's good to be prepared), any medication you might need (anything not covered by insurance is more expensive than in Europe), small gifts from your country for the friends you make there – it makes for a lovely gesture and something to remember.	
What most surprised you at the partner university in a positive way: How friendly and willing to help everyone is. In case of any uncertainties, feel free to ask the coordinator (Kate Gerken) for help. The same goes for specific classes – all professors are very willing to	

engage in a small friendly chat with their class (not as reserved as in Europe), and if you make an appointment during their office hours, they will be open to discuss any personal issue that you may have in their class.

What most surprised you at the partner university in a negative way:

The lack of in-depth analysis and perspective when it comes to studies. Universities in the US seem to focus heavily on specialization without offering the bigger picture in their education.

Further comments:

KU offers great opportunities, as long as you get out of your shell and take part in them. The state of Kansas is not that interesting, but Lawrence itself is full of open-minded people and friendly faculty members who will try to help you out on every step of the way.

Also, if you get a chance to travel, I highly recommend American national parks. I have camped through Rocky Mountains, Yosemite, Death Valley, and Sequoia National Forest, and it was truly one of the best experiences of my life. If you need to choose between visiting LA or the surrounding nature preserves, I would urge you to choose the latter. Have fun!

Link to photo gallery, blog, etc.

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