

KYMENLAAKSON AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

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ERASMUS PROGRAMME STUDENT'S CHALLENGES FACED ABROAD AND THE  
IMPACT ON EUROPEAN COMMISSION OBJECTIVES

Bachelor's Thesis 2010

# CONTENT

## ABSTRACT

## TIIVISTELMÄ

1.	INTRODUCTION	8
1.1	Objectives of the study	8
1.2	Methodology	9
1.3	Utility of the report	10
1.4	Suggestions for further research	11
2.	ERASMUS PROGRAMME	12
2.1	Erasmus exchange experience	13
2.2	Erasmus Advantages	16
2.3	Disadvantages of Erasmus	17
3.	ACADEMIC CULTURE SHOCK	20
3.1	Language	20
3.2	Teaching methods	21
3.3	Assessment and Feedback	22
3.4	Curriculum	24
4.	LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT	26
4.1	Extracurricular activities	27
4.2	Cost- living expenses information	28

4.3	Transport and travelling information	29
5.	LACK OF ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION	30
6.	ERASMUS OBJECTIVES VERSUS ERASMUS STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES	33
7.	RESEARCH	34
7.1	Introduction to the research	34
7.2	Kyminlaakso University of Applied Sciences	35
7.3	Southampton Solent University	36
7.4	Research Results	38
7.4.1	Erasmus Student Exchange Experience at KYAMK	38
7.4.2	Erasmus Student Exchange Experience at SSU	51
8.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	62
8.1	Summary of the results	62
8.2	Recommendations	63
8.2.1	Kyminlaakso Ammattikorkeakoulu	64
8.2.2	Southampton Solent University	66
	REFERENCES	68
	APPENDIXES	74
	Appendix 1 Feed-back Sheet for In-class Test/Assignment	74
	Appendix 2 Questionnaire KYAMK Erasmus Students	75
	Appendix 3 Questionnaire SSU Erasmus Students	80
	Appendix 4 Anonymous Marking Form is being used at SSU	86

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Academic adaptation KYAMK	39
Figure 2 Level of a course acceptance and understanding KYAMK	41
Figure 3 Personal Study Plan development KYAMK	42
Figure 4 Explanation of courses, assignments and exams KYAMK	43
Figure 5 Quality of the feedback provided by teachers KYAMK	44
Figure 6 Social Support Assessment, KYAMK - International office	45
Figure 7 Social Support Assessment, KYAMK - International tutors	46
Figure 8 Assessment of extracurricular activities, KYAMK	47
Figure 9 Correlation of desolated male and female respondents	48
Figure 10 Adaptation to the new academic environment at SSU	52
Figure 11 Academic integration and teachers' assistance SSU	54
Figure 12 Quality of the feedback provided by teachers SSU	55
Figure 13 Assessment of social support, SSU - International office/adviser	56
Figure 14 Assessment of extracurricular activities at SSU	57
Figure 15 Assessment of Freshers' Fair at SSU	58
Figure 16 Assessment of in-class group works SSU	60

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Academic grade conversion between European countries	23
Table 2 Rating of the Welcoming Week at KYAMK	38
Table 3 Social support assessment KYAMK	45
Table 4 General assessment of educational experience at KYAMK	49
Table 5 Rating of the Induction Week at SSU	51
Table 6 Assessment of educational experience SSU	61

## ABSTRACT

KYMENLAAKSO UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

International Business/Kouvola

NIKULINA, OLGA	Erasmus programme student's challenges faced abroad and the impact on European commission objectives  Case: Southampton Solent University (England), Kymenlaakso Ammattikorkeakoulu (Finland), Education
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European students have an opportunity to study for part of their degree in another European country. The Erasmus Programme launched by the European Commission in 1987 encourages students to go to study abroad, provides information about foreign host universities, and offers assistance and support.

This thesis work was aimed at investigation of what difficulties are encountered by students during their exchange and what is the relation between those problems and the Erasmus Programme objectives set out by the European Commission. Three main themes of the theoretical part are academic culture shock, social support provided to students at host universities and academic and social adaptation. The aim of the empirical part was to find out what challenges were faced by Erasmus students who came to do a part of their degree at Southampton Solent University (SSU), England and Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences (KYAMK), Finland.

In order to find out what were the most problematic areas that students had an impact on, and what services were available to students at the universities, semi-structured interviews with international coordinators of both universities were conducted. Basing on the results of those interviews the questionnaires were designed. The number of respondents participated in the survey was 86 students and 43 students from KYAMK and SSU respectively.

The results revealed that more than a half of all respondents experienced academic culture shock to a different degree. Social services provided by the universities were assessed positively. High percentage of respondents pointed out that the process socialisation was especially challenging when they were trying to get in contact with local nationals. Two lists of recommendations were developed for each university.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

### KYMENLAAKSON AMMATIKORKEAKOULU

#### Kansainvälinen kauppa/ Kansainvälinen markkinointi

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Eurooppalaisilla opiskelijoilla on mahdollisuus suorittaa osan opinnoistaan toisessa maassa Euroopassa. Erasmus-ohjelma, jonka Euroopan Komissio on aloittanut vuonna 1987, rohkaisee opiskelijoita opiskelemaan ulkomailla. Se hankkii tietoa ulkomaalaisista isäntäyliopistoista sekä tarjoaa apua ja tukea.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoitus oli tutkia, millaisia ongelmia opiskelijat voivat kohdata vaihtonsa aikana, ja minkälainen suhde näillä ongelmilla ja Erasmus-ohjelman päämäärillä, jotka Euroopan Komissio on laatinut, on.

Teoreettisen osan kolme pääteemaa ovat akateeminen kulttuurishokki, isäntäyliopistoissa opiskelijoille tarjottu sosiaalinen tuki ja akateeminen sekä sosiaalinen sopeuttaminen. Kokemusperäisen osan päämääränä oli selvittää millaisia haasteita Erasmus-opiskelijoilla, jotka tulivat suorittamaan osan opinnoistaan Southampton Solent University:ssä (SSU) Englannissa ja Kymenlaakson Ammattikorkeakoulussa (KYAMK) Suomessa, kohtasivat.

Puoliohjattuja haastatteluja molempien yliopistojen kansainvälisyyskoordinaattorien kanssa suoritettiin, jotta ongelmallisimmat alueet, joihin opiskelijoilla oli voimakas vaikutus, ja mitä palveluita yliopistoilla oli opiskelijoiden saatavissa, selvitettäisiin. Kyselykaavakkeet suunniteltiin näiden haastattelujen tulosten perusteella. Kyselyyn vastanneita oli yhteensä 86 opiskelijaa, 43 opiskelijaa kummastakin yliopistosta.

Tulokset paljastivat että yli puolet vastanneista koki akateemista kulttuurishokkia eriävissä määrin. Yliopistoiden tarjoamat sosiaaliset palvelut arvioitiin positiivisesti. Suuri prosenttimäärä vastanneista huomauttivat että sosialisoinnin prosessi oli erityisen haastava kun he yrittivät saada kontaktia paikallisiin kansalaisiin. Kummallekin yliopistolle tuotettiin yksi neuvoja sisältävää

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study will explore Erasmus Programme objectives, advantages and disadvantages. It will investigate the specific problems encountered by students abroad, such as: academic culture shock, lack of social support, academic and social integration.

Therefore, this thesis work will focus on Erasmus students exchange experienced at Southampton Solent University, England and Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, Finland, achieving its aim:

To investigate what difficulties are encountered by Erasmus Students during their study exchange abroad and what impact it has on Erasmus Programme objectives set by the European Commission?

### 1.1 Objectives of the study:

To find out what problems Erasmus students encounter when they study for part of their degree abroad.

The thesis work will examine the most challenging aspects of students' difficulties overseas.

To evaluate Erasmus students exchange experiences at Southampton Solent University and Kymenlaakso University of applied Sciences in terms of those aspects.

The research will find out what things have positive impact on students at the host university and what things discourage or prevent them from benefiting from the Erasmus exchange.



To develop two lists of recommendations for each university individually, these would provide suggestions on how to improve services for their future incoming students.

The lists of recommendations will be produced which advise further actions for universities on how to improve the educational experience of their Erasmus students in the future.

## 1.2 Methodology

To meet and achieve the objectives of this project, two types of information will be combined: primary and secondary data. The information will be gathered from primary and secondary researches.

Primary sources of information, such as surveys/questionnaires and interviews will provide up-to date, original and objective data to analyze for the research. International coordinators of both universities have been asked particular questions that will help to reveal a university's provision toward Erasmus Programme and university's services available to incoming exchanges.

The secondary research will start with literature review, assessing and analysing existing information related to the objectives of the thesis work. It will largely enable to define common and present difficulties encountered by Erasmus students abroad.

The basis of this study will be formed through the combination of qualitative and quantitative research. The thesis work aims to determine the challenging aspects of Erasmus Programme which affect students' educational experience and find out which problems arise to Erasmus students hosting at Southampton Solent University and Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences by means of qualitative research. Also, there was interest to trace how many students met and experienced the same kind of problems which is the purpose of quantitative research.

The existing literature was studied to form the theoretical framework for the thesis project; give detailed explanation to the idea and nature of Erasmus Programme; find out advantages and disadvantages of the programme; determine the most challenging aspects of the study exchange experience; establish the picture of those challenging aspects and develop the model for assessment of Erasmus students' experience at SSU and KYAMK.

According to the definition given by Bryman (2001, p.10) the research strategy chosen for this project is a primarily inductive study. The approach will trace the relationships between the theory and the research, with the inductive stance where theory will be the outcome of the research. Nevertheless, the deductive elements will be considered for the project, when there will be an attempt to try to deduce hypothesis, defining common existing problem areas met by Erasmus students. This part will enable to develop a good questionnaire for the research.

Bryman (2001, pp.12-13) defines interpretivism as the scientific model of the study of the social world. This strategy is required the researcher to seek and understand the subjective reality of participants, grasp subjective meaning of social action and respect the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences. Following the relation between strategies of the project and the meaning of interpretive, the study will have an interpretive approach.

### 1.3 Utility of the report

The findings of the report can be used for improvements of the educational services provided by universities. It also can be suggested that not only Erasmus students face the problems described in this work, but also it can be applied to measure the degree of adaptation of all incoming international students at a university.

#### 1.4 Suggestions for further research

This study was focused on Erasmus students' challenges met at host universities in terms of academic culture shock, social and academic adaptation and integration, social support provided to students. Nevertheless, the research results revealed many different problems that can be encountered when go to study abroad. Those challenging aspects can be studied and researched in-depth in order to discover the roots of revealed problems and provide recommendations that can improve education services in the future.

## 2. ERASMUS PROGRAMME

The internationalisation of education brings new opportunities to students from different countries to study abroad. It enables them to gain valuable experiences and learn about new cultures. Specially designed student exchange programmes help their participants to choose a destination country, provide information support, documentation assistance and funding. The European Union Education and Training department (European Commission, 2009) reports that according to carried out studies a period spent abroad not only enriches students' lives in the academic field but also in the acquisition of intercultural skills and self-reliance.

The Erasmus exchange program enables higher education students, teachers and institutions in 31 European countries to study for part of their degree in another country (British Council, n.d). In a non-residential university system which previously had few or no facilities for international students, Erasmus had a great impact on the internationalisation of university education. (Field, 1998, p.108)

The Programme named after the humanist Desiderius Erasmus was launched by European Union in 1987 (European Commission, 2009), aiming to encourage university students to study, and lecturers to teach, for short periods in another European Union member state (Field,1998, p.36). Its participants can spend an integrated period of study of between 3 months and 12 months abroad (European Commission, 2008).

As a part of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme the general aim of the Erasmus is: *To create a European Higher Education Area and foster innovation throughout Europe* (European Commission, 2009.)

European Commission (2009) defines the main objectives of Erasmus exchange as:

1. To enable students to benefit educationally, linguistically and culturally from the experience of learning in other European countries. Promote the acquisition of new knowledge with an emphasis on improved recognition of gained skills (Field, 1998, pp. 74-75).
2. To promote co-operation between institutions and to enrich the educational environment of host institutions.
3. To contribute to the development of a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced young people as future professionals.

In connection with the idea of creating learning society, Field (1998, pp.74-75) explains Union's general objectives as a provision for greater ease of student mobility, building closer relationships between schools and businesses, meet the increasing demand of proficiency for every citizen in three Union languages.

## 2.1 Erasmus exchange experience

In December 2006 the European Commission (European Commission, 2006) launched two studies which were aiming at examining strong and weak sides of Erasmus mobile activity and analyse the impact of students, who experienced program exchange, on access to the labour market and future employment. Some of the main findings of the Erasmus mobility analysis were:

- More than 80% of students having benefited from an Erasmus study period abroad were the first in their families who had had an opportunity to study in a foreign country.

- The students achieved greater linguistic competences during their ERASMUS experience. The percentage of students who are able to work in a second language increased from the 40% to 65%.
- The participation of students from lower income groups did increase from 50% to 60% during the period 2000/2005.
- Most Erasmus students experienced and developed a more open attitude and approach towards society, also a better and clearer perspective for their professional life - that is why many of them evaluated the program as very positive impact on their personal development.
- A period of Erasmus mobility is seen as one of the keys to facilitating a graduate's employability. 60% of the respondents considered language skills to be the strong points to their first successful recruitment. 50% cited the element of international experience offered by ERASMUS, and about 40% of the respondents felt that the ERASMUS exchange period was directly responsible.
- 50% of the representatives of the labour market (enterprises, administrations, etc.) confirm that the ERASMUS students are normally recruited into jobs with an international context. (European Commission, 2006)

The main reasons to go abroad, suggested by British Council (n.d) describe a number of benefits from personal and academic points of view offered by the program:

1. Stand out in the job market

Ability of a graduate to compete efficiently on multi-cultural European Job Market. The experience of living and studying abroad demonstrates a developed degree of independence and self-assurance as one of the keys to a successful career (Jobweb, n.d.).

2. Return more motivated, independent and confident

Many recruiters are seeking graduates with developed and recognizable transferable skills. Besides subject-specific knowledge employers look for highly motivated young professionals who possibly have taken additional responsibility or experiences during their study period. (Dickinson, 2000)

3. Learn a range of life-skills not taught in the lecture theatre. Access a wider range of subject areas than in a home country.

4. Improved language skills

In relation to key factors for successful employment, Prospects (2008) describe the ability to speak one or more foreign language as a very important aspect, because communication is one of the most frequently mentioned words in recruitment. People with language skills enter all kinds of jobs. Employers in all sectors value language skills and experiences, by reason of cost effectiveness to use multi lingual abilities of an employee.

5. Gain an international network of friends and meet a lifelong partner.  
(1 in 10 students do so)

6. Discover a different culture and gain an international perspective

I\*ESN (n.d) states main traits of those who passed some time at the university abroad: they are culturally competent, possess good communication skills, they are mobile and they develop their personality.

In 2002 in Lyon (France), within the IBS framework (International BEST, Board of European students of Technology, Symposium) run by the European Educational Committee, a study called "One million Erasmus Celebration; weak and strong points" was carried out (BEST, 2002a). During the first day, two focus groups formed of international students from different European countries were offered to discuss the next topic: 'Why do students want to study abroad'. Both groups similarly conclude that main reasons are:

- to find and learn new things
- to study subjects that are not offered by home University
- to learn a new language
- to become independent from parents
- to learn to be open-minded
- to experience different ways and methods of teaching
- to travel and learn about new culture
- to improve knowledge and take on new challenges.
- sometimes, possibility to have a double degree (BEST 2002b, p. 4)

The reasons given by the student focus groups were very closely intertwined with European Commission Erasmus general objectives. The only difference was students' greater emphasis and prospects to benefit from cultural experience and personal development rather than educationally, when they go to study abroad.

## 2.2 Erasmus Advantages

Advantages of Erasmus exchange program were discussed within the BEST focus groups during IBS event in Lyon. From the students' point of view, Erasmus experience enables to gain independence, to improve personal skills, to find different aspects of life, to learn new and realize own culture, to mature, to improve employability with a more attractive CV, to meet new friends and have a good time abroad. (BEST, 2002b, p.6)

The UK Erasmus Student Committee (Parliament, 2005) splits main advantages of Erasmus Program into three categories:

- First, Erasmus permits personal growth and development.
- Secondly, in relation to the process of globalisation and European integration, which continues to have a larger and more direct impact on individuals in Member States of the European Union, there exists an undeniable need for a deeper understanding of "European



Identity," i.e., the core elements that create Europe and its citizens. Erasmus is seen as an instrument for supporting and accelerating both enhanced integration and a shared European Identity.

- Thirdly, European dynamic job market demands students with gained necessary skills. Erasmus provides the opportunity to develop the competence and expertise to adapt to and thrive in such an environment.

### 2.3 Disadvantages of Erasmus

Disadvantages do exist, however. Going overseas for studying a part of their degree in another country, students encounter several difficulties abroad. The explanation of Erasmus Program disadvantages provided by the UK Erasmus Student Committee and followed by Erasmus weaknesses suggested by student focus groups (BEST, 2002a); describe the main problems that have an impact on student mobility:

1. Insufficient communication between Erasmus-participating universities results in lack of interaction, including enrolment on incorrect courses, administrative errors and, in some cases, host universities being unaware of the arrival of foreign students. (Parliament, 2005)
2. The lack of students' linguistic capabilities (Parliament, 2005) attributes primarily to difficulties in adapting to the new environment, methods of teaching, social life and communication (BEST, 2002b, p.8).
3. Lack of information about the program available to students. (Parliament, 2005)

4. Varying level of services provided by a host university to Erasmus students, difficulties with getting services from a university, educational standards and different curricula culminate in academic culture shock. (BEST, 2002b, pp.7-8)
5. Inadequate social support, lack of extra curricula activities and social integration result in stress, home-sickness and loneliness. Sometimes students experience racism and nationalism. (BEST, 2002b, pp.6-9 )
6. Financial issues. Universities generally suffer from under-funding, leading to problems for students when they are trying to (a) organise their year abroad; or (b) access the information necessary to make a decision as to whether they should participate in the programme or not. (Parliament, 2005)

Among other disadvantages student focus groups (BEST, 2002b, p.6) mentioned bureaucracy followed by unnecessary paper work and recognition of studies and credits by home universities.

These problems severely affect the main goals of the Erasmus programme proposed by the European Commission, namely, integration through learning and cultural acquisition (Parliament, 2005).

The illustrated points demonstrate the impact of Erasmus students on problems in relation to education and social integration. For this study, the thesis work will describe, investigate and analyse three challenging aspects of students' difficulties, respectively, in terms of:

- Academic culture shock
- Lack of social support
- Lack of social and academic integration

The main research will focus on the analysis of Southampton Solent University (SSU), England, and Kymenlaakso Ammattikorkeakoulu University of Applied Sciences (KYAMK), Finland performance in connection to those aspects and services provided to incoming Erasmus students.

### 3. ACADEMIC CULTURE SHOCK

The Collins Dictionary (1991, p.376) defines culture shock as: *The feelings of isolation, rejection, etc., experienced when one culture is brought into sudden contact with another...*

Another interpretation explains this term as sense of confusion, disorientation and uncertainty that a person feel, when exposed to a different cultural environment. (Business Dictionary, 2010)

Based on the definitions provided by the dictionaries, it is seen that academic culture shock may be characterised as the feelings of confusion and disorientation encountered by a student, which are caused by psychological reactions to unfamiliar academic environment.

The specific aim of the Erasmus exchange is specified in the idea of doing a part of a degree abroad. It means that students go to study overseas after some years have been spent in their home universities. The studying process at home university has particular features and a pattern that students follow: organisation of classes and exams, methods of teaching, set criteria to assess written works and presentations, general requirements and standards for handed-in assignments. According to the London School of Economics, some students may find the experience of coming to a new college and a new academic scheme a bit overwhelming (LSE, n.d.). Adaptation to a new academic environment may slow down the process of learning integration. Nevertheless, it is reminded that academic culture shock is a normal experience, which in many cases should pass quickly (LSE,n.d).

#### 3.1 Language

Nowadays, there are growing numbers of international students who decide to study in another language. Studying in another language is very

challenging and differs significantly from studying in native language, especially, if a person feel that he/she is still learning that language at the time the studies start. (Lowes, 2004, p.20) Not having foreign language proficiency means that students have difficulty in understanding much of the content of their courses (Grayson & Stowe, 2005 p.3)

The challenges of learning in another language are:

1. The subject-matter is new and unfamiliar and the language it is being transmitted in may be, too. In spite of very good topic related knowledge and innovative ideas, a student may find classes quite hard work, while getting used to the terminology of a subject and the way a teacher speaks. (Lowes, 2004, p.20)
2. In relation to the lack of facility in a course language, low involvement of international students in formal and informal activities in the university appears. (Grayson, & Stowe, 2005, p.4)
3. Communication with the audience during a presentation and concerns about speaking with an accent may detract from a smooth performance. (Lowes, 2004, p.138)

Based on the evidence provided by several authors, it is seen that language barriers, in some cases, disable a student for self-expression, active participation in class discussions and lower a degree in self-confidence.

### 3.2 Teaching methods

A local teaching international students is an experience that many university lecturers see very challenging (Salili, 2001, p.293). Harris (1997, p. 78) states that many overseas students with different educational cultures characteristically value highly deferential approaches to teachers and learning.

Lecturers in different colleges are used to dissimilar teaching methods. It may be dialogue with students, group discussions, research-based written

works or listening to the teacher and taking dictated notes (Meighan & Siraj-Blachford, 1997, p.34). To be thrust suddenly into situations where a course leader applies a new unaccustomed teaching approach is bewildering to students. They feel that it is the responsibility of teaching staff to ease students gradually into a particular way of learning. (Kinnell, 1990, p.114)

The research results provided by The Society for Research into Higher Education (Kinnell, 1990, p.114) reveal that foreign students who previously only practiced formal teaching methods whereby they were expected to absorb information passively and were not expected to interact with one another or to exercise any powers of analysis on the material, encountered difficulties of adaptation to a new teaching methods. Just the other way round, students who used to active in class discussions felt that formal teaching approaches limit their self-expression; as the consequence they usually were very bored and inattentive during the lectures.

These practices were making students' progress to fall behind a group results and had an impact on their learning outcome.

### 3.3 Assessment and Feedback

The assessment criteria vary at different universities among Europe. The table 1, provided by The European Association of University Departments of Biology (EUROBIO, n.d), demonstrates established equivalents for grades awarded in 19 European countries. The equivalents apply to university grades in general for these countries. (EUROBIO, n.d.)

Table 1 Academic grade conversion between European countries

Qualitative:	Fail	Pass	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
<b>Austria</b>	5	4	3	2	1	Mit Auszeichnung
<b>Belgium: Flanders</b>	(<10)	(10-13.5)		(14-15.5)	(16-17.5)	(18-20)
<b>Belgium: French</b>	(<10)	(10-13.5)		(14-15.5)	(16-17.5)	(18-20)
<b>Suisse: French</b>	3	4		5	6	
<b>Czech Republic:</b>	4	3			2	1
<b>Germany:</b>	5	4	3	2	1	Mit Auszeichnung
<b>Denmark</b>	0, 3, 5	6	7	8	9, 10	11, 13
<b>Spain</b>	(<5)	5	6	7,8	9	10
<b>France</b>	(<10)	(10-13.5)	(12-13.5)	(14-15.5)	(16-17.5)	(18-20)
<b>Greece</b>	<5	(5-6.4)			(6.5-8.4)	(8.5-10)
<b>Hungary</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Italy</b>	(<18)	(19-24)	(25-26)	(27-28)	(29-30)	30
<b>Ireland</b>	<40%	(40-49%)		(50-59%)	(60-69%)	(>70%)
<b>Norway</b>	>4	3.3-4.0		2.6-3.2	1.6-2.5	1.0-1.5
<b>The Netherlands</b>	40 = 4	40-55 = 5	55 = 5.5	60 = 6	70 = 7	>80 = >8
<b>Portugal</b>	(<10)	(10-13.5)		(14-15.5)	(16-17.5)	(16-17.5)
<b>Poland</b>	2	3	(+3)	4	(+4)	5
<b>Sweden</b>	(<60%)	(61-79%)			(>80%)	
<b>Finland</b>	Hylätty	1	2	3	4	5
<b>United Kingdom</b>	(E/F; <35%)	(C-, D; 35-39%)	(C, C+; 40-49%)	(B-, B; 50-59%)	(B+, A-; 60-69%)	(A; >70%)

Resource: adopted form EUROBIO (n.d.)

Grades differentiation may disorientate a student in a way of incorrect interpretation of marks awarded by a teacher. In addition, if a student doesn't get feedback with comments about his/her work a degree of disorientation rises up. It is difficult for students to understand the quality of work they have done (Levin, 2007, p.13).

Lack of constructive feedback on performance leaves foreign students uncertain how to improve themselves, particularly in the analysis of material and in written presentation. They feel that they do not receive enough advice on study skills to make them help the transition to self-responsibility and self-directed learning. Many overseas students consider that teaching staff do not really understand the difficulties of listening and writing in a foreign language. (Kinnell, 1990, p.114)

The assessment type also can be distinct among European universities. Some colleges apply anonymous marking, which is defined as: *A procedure whereby the markers of examination scripts are unaware of the identity of the students taking the exam* (Mondofocato, 2006) in order to prevent any bias and discrimination, which might exist on the part of examiners (BBC News, 1999). Sometimes, unconscious bias is bound to creep into marking. Anonymous assessment enables to eliminate disparities and provide equal opportunities to all. This fact plays important role for overseas students, who very often feel as outsiders because of their language abilities. (Utley, 1999)

### 3.4 Curriculum

According to Collins dictionary the definition for curriculum is: *A course of study in one subject at a school or college* (Collins English Dictionary 1991, p 378). Another description defines it as: *Any program of activities* (Oxford Dictionary 1998, p.203)

Upon arrival to the host university a student may find out that a course of study offered by a teacher is dissimilar to the one the subject is taught in at home college and the timetable is drawn up in different style.

Some universities practice timetable altering according to a week number. For example: one year is divided into 52 weeks. The weeks with even numbers (2, 4, 6,8,10...etc.) have a different timetable to the "odd" weeks. (Legierski & Domagala, 2007)

A course itself can be taught in a particular style:

- Lecture-seminar-lecture-seminar-lecture...etc.
- Lectures only with an emphasis on independent work at home and additional recommended reading.
- Seminars only with an emphasis on individual work at home and in class presentations and discussions about new material.



Variant approaches and attitudes to exams can be met in a host university. There may be differences in exam time limits. (Lowe 2004, pp.278-279) For example, lecturers in some colleges prefer many short exams up to 50 minutes each, during a study year, other choose 3 hours exam at the end of the course. Students with no short exam practice may run out of time, because they are not accustomed to concise way of writing.

Some courses may not even have exams at the end but will be assessed through coursework only or a combination of exam and coursework. (Lowe 2004, p.279)

#### 4. LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Studying and living in a new country is an exciting and rewarding experience. In order to avoid stressful adaptation to a new environment, it is very important to get assistance from people around the student, who will be able to offer explanation, advice and support. (Lowes, 2004, p.301-302)

The International Student Support Unit or Office at a host university aims to help international students to cope with the challenges of living and studying in an unfamiliar culture, to achieve success in their studies and to make the experience of being an international student rewarding and enjoyable. (SSU, n.d) All universities have a range of services to deal with any problems or difficulties students might have during their study time. These usually include following:

- Accommodation – help to get a place in a university hall of residence.
- Finance – information how to open bank account and sort out the fees
- Careers – assistance to find part-time work or give some employment advices
- Disabilities – help for special needs people
- Counselling – help for students who become unhappy or upset for any reason. (Lowes, 2004, p.302-303)

March 2003, the study carried out by Christine J. Yeh and Mayuko Inose (Yeh & Inose 2003, pp. 15-28) explored social support satisfaction and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress among a sample of 359 international students. The results indicated that a very big part of respondents who went to study in European countries felt lack of social support in relation to:

- Extra-curricula activities.
- Cost-living expenses information
- Transport and travelling information

All these aspects are subjects to further discussion and improvements, as they might affect overall students' satisfaction in a host university.

#### 4.1 Extracurricular activities

It is very inspiring to go abroad to study in a new country, and there is a lot to discover both in studies and in life outside the university (Lowes, 2004, p.306). Time to time, Universities organise social and cultural activities for their students. Some activities are free of charge, other on payment basis and subject to enrolment. (European University Institute, 2009)

Extracurricular activities include student clubs and associations, international student and staff residences, intercultural events, international alumni programs, and intercultural community-based projects (Farquhar 2008 p. 2).

Usually, at the beginning of the academic year in September, "fresher's fairs" are organised in some universities. This is an event for students who have recently started to study or who have arrived for student exchange program to a college or university. On a "Fair Day", the opportunities to join different clubs and societies are offered. There may be different societies: from "The Christian Union" and "The Fine Art Club" to "The International Students' Union" and "The Utopia Society (Politics and Modern History)". There may also be societies for students from particular countries, for example a Chinese or Spanish Students' Society. Joining one of these is obviously enjoyable and reassuring for students, who speak the same language, because they can easily find new friends there, share their ideas and interests. Some colleges may have sports facilities either on campus or further away if the university is located in the middle of a city/town. Time free of lectures students can participate in team sports or any other sport activities. (Lowes, 2004, pp. 297-301)

Intercultural events such as: international weeks - country presentations; play acts performed by international students, introducing their culture;

poster competitions and other can also be a part of a university's extra curricula activities.

There also may be activities which involve trips away from the university (Lowes, 2004, p. 301). It can be short tourist visits to neighbour countries. For example, Erasmus exchange students in Finland might be offered group visits to Sweden, Russia or Estonia. It can be local sightseeing tours. It can be organised visits to a theatre, concert or sport game.

Extra curricula activities is a very good way to meet new people – local students from a host country and international ones, discover new activities or develop existing hobbies and learn a lot of the foreign language.

#### 4.2 Cost- living expenses information

Often the biggest problem that international students face in a host country is finance. The cost of living may be high in comparison with the home prices. Everything is expensive: food, clothes, transport, books. Students who study Fine Art, design and etc. also need to spend lots of money on material. Paying for work printing and photocopying at the university, fines for keeping library books too long also should be taken into account. (Lowes, 2004, p. 303)

Nevertheless, every city or town has places, where people can buy everything they need relatively cheaply, but the only thing is people should know or should be given the advice where to find them.

For many international students who came to study abroad the information about places where they can make economical purchases and get good deals is essential (Yeh & Inose, 2003, p.21). Apart from the price related subject, students may need guidance to whereabouts book, stationary and food shops are located.

This fact especially has an impact on students who came to a university to study a course taught in a language which is not official language in a country. For example, Dutch college De Haagse Hogeschool (n.d.) offers exchange programs in English. An incoming student from Spain would not be able use mass media and articles published in local newspapers for information search. That is why guidance provided by a university is a very useful and valuable resource to international newcomers. They get a possibility to plan their living expenses and integrate into the new environment quicker.

#### 4.3 Transport and travelling information

When they go to study abroad many students try to make the most of their time (Lowes, 2004, p. 306). Travelling around the country, visiting neighbour towns and cities, having short interesting trips with new friends are very joyful ways to learn more about the new culture and the new place.

Some students who live far from their campuses have to commute to the university daily using public or private transport.

In both cases the information regarding to the modes of transport available locally and price range (the cheapest and the most expensive options), would be beneficial to the foreign students.

## 5. LACK OF ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Academic and social integration into college are keys to persistence in models of student attrition (Kraemer, 1997, p.163).

Student academic Integration is the comprehensive integration into study abroad programs and courses in a host university. This is accomplished through deep and sustained collaboration and communication between international and local students, study abroad offices, academic units and teachers. (EAP, n.d)

Social integration is linked to positive outcomes for students, institutions and the broader community (Ward, 2005). Taking as the basis the definition of social integration provided by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the social integration of international students can be described as an inclusionary goal, implying equal opportunities and rights for all students. In this case, becoming more integrated implies improving academic performance chances, communication abilities and socialisation. (UNRISD, 1994, p. 3)

The Society for Research into Higher Education (Kinnell, 1990 p.102) conducted an investigation which demonstrated that overseas students are usually enthusiastic to develop friendships with students of local origin (nationals of a host country); success in this aim was reported to be limited. A study done by professor Colleen Ward in 2005 (McNamara & Skorka, 2007, p.1) showed that if the international student experience is diminished by the lack of integration with domestic students, it links to poor language skills and possibly the development of large marginalised ghettos whereas, more frequent and more satisfying contacts with local students, leads to better adjustment and an increased chance of student success.

International students who were interviewed during the research described how they had experienced overseas students and home students falling into two camps (Kinnell, 1990 p.103). Doing a team work, group presentation or writing a mutual assignment home and overseas students rarely joint together voluntary, forming a mixed group. Very often they cooperate with people of same origin and language group.

The conclusion made from the investigation done by the Society for Research into Higher Education (Kinnell, 1990 pp.103-106) describes that the home students rarely make efforts to be friendly, and that if overseas students wanted to get to know them they were obliged to take responsibility for making this relationship work. Some students find making relationships with other people whether from overseas or local quite a problem area. The reasons can be different, but the most popular three are: (a) some people are contemptuous of their fellows, (b) other are frightened and anxious about forming friendships, (c) inadequate foreign language proficiency makes people less confident in their communication abilities. One more fact is the cause of poor social integration: some international student's parents tend to prioritise learning foreign language above all else; the loss of family ties results in the single-minded pursuit of language learning as a much coveted prize, can be resented by the student who then subconsciously balks at the idea of making connections with local students for this end (McNamara & Skorka 2007, p.3). Both home and overseas students need to be aware of the essentially ethnocentric environment that is the university way of life, and to find way of coping to each other in such an environment (Kinnell, 1990 pp.104).

From the academic integration perspective the student's academic performance (formal) and interaction within faculty/staff (informal) leads to either positive experiences that help to integrate the student into the intellectual community or negative experiences that isolate the student. Within the social system, the student's involvement in formal extracurricular activities and informal peer-group interactions also lead to positive results that lead to integration, or negative experiences that lead to disconnection. (Morris, 2002, pp.37-38)

Dr. Stephen W. Draper from the Department of Psychology, University of Glasgow, the U.K (2008) suggests that academic and social integration can be measured by:

1. Academic integration:

- Grade / mark performance
- Personal development (a student's private judgement on the value of what they are learning, as opposed to official marks / teachers' judgements).
- Academic self-esteem
- Enjoying one's subject(s).
- Enjoying studying one's subject(s): i.e. the study patterns required/requested are or are not enjoyable.
- Identification with academic norms and values
- Identification with one's role as a student

2. Social integration

- How many friends a student has. (Home and overseas students)
- Personal contact with academics. (In fact, it may be that it is important to measure really small amounts of contact: how many staff know a student's name, smile at him/her ...etc.)
- Is a student enjoying being at university?

Students who report a greater level of integration into the academic and social systems of the institution will have a greater level of subsequent goals and institutional commitment. (Morris, 2002, p.38)



## 6. ERASMUS OBJECTIVES VERSUS ERASMUS STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES

Three challenging fields that Erasmus students have an impact on when go to study abroad have been described in previous chapters. The Erasmus program general objectives defined by the European Commission and expectations of the results of the Erasmus experience may be affected by those problems that incoming students encounter at host universities.

1. Academic culture shock may slow down or keep a student under academic integration and as a consequence can upset the overall study experience at a host university. This aspect affects the first objective of the Erasmus programme, which is specified by the European Commission (2009) as providing the opportunity to students to benefit educationally from learning experience in another European country.
2. Lack of social support and poor social integration reduce the degree of adaptation to the new living environment and unfamiliar culture. It may cause poor communication with other students, lower a student's self-confidence, disorientation and confusion as consequences. In this case, it interferes with other Erasmus programme objectives, such as: acquisition of new cultural knowledge and development of confident, self-motivated, open-minded young people as future professionals (European Commission, 2009).

## 7. RESEARCH

### 7.1 Introduction to the research

The research was conducted among incoming Erasmus students who went to study a part of their degree at:

- Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences / KYAMK (Finland)
- Southampton Solent University / SSU (England)

The target of the research was to analyse Erasmus students experience at host universities in terms of:

1. Academic culture shock
2. Social support
3. Social and academic integration

Based on the results of the research the challenges and problems met by incoming students during their Erasmus exchange were analysed and the recommendations to both universities how to improve the educational experience of their future incoming Erasmus students were provided.

First, interviews were conducted with international coordinators of both Universities: Ms. Heidi Jarvi (KYAMK) and Mr. Peter Jordan (SSU). The universities' policies and provision to the Erasmus Programme were discussed. Then, two questionnaires had been designed according to specifics of each university.

Second, the surveys were launched online:

Erasmus Student Exchange Experience at KYAMK

The link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K97TT3B>

Erasmus Student Exchange Experience at Southampton Solent University

The link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KYLJGF9>

Examples of both questionnaires can be found as the Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 at the end of the report.

## 7.2 Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences

Kymenlaakson ammattikorkeakoulu, University of Applied Sciences is an institution of higher education in Finland, offering degree programmes in English to the incoming Erasmus students, such as: Business and Administration, 30–60 ECTS Engineering (Logistics), Culture (Media, Design) and Forestry and Wood Technology. (KYAMK, n.d.)

The International office of KYAMK welcomes the new incoming exchange students by organizing Welcoming Days for them before the start of their studies. The idea of the event is to help the foreign students to settle down in Kymenlaakso region and Finland. (KYAMK, n.d)

### 1. Academic culture:

During the Welcoming Days international coordinators provide students with the information about academic courses, computer systems, library facilities and all the services available to students. Students are helped to develop their personal study plans, they are explained a new curricular and are told whom to ask in case of particular query. (Jarvi, 2010)

- KYAMK practices non-anonymous marking

## 2. Social support

One element of the introductory programme during the Welcoming Days at KYAMK includes a presentation of the topic: “Living in a multicultural environment” (KYAMK, n.d). The University’s international tutors try to help incoming Erasmus students to integrate socially into the new environment. They organise leisure time, parties and group trips, give everyday advices and assist Erasmus students with adaptation. (Jarvi, 2010)

- International tutors are domestic student volunteers who are doing the free choice course “International tuition” and get study credits for it.

## 3. Socialisation

KYAMK International office organise free extracurricular activities for the Erasmus students in order to increase their level of socialisation. It might include: a boat trip to an adjacent island, a visit to the national park “Repovesi”, Winter Day (winter sport activities), the Christmas Party. All events organised by the student union “Klaani” and international tutors are on payment basis, but students are offered big discounts for the group activities. (Jarvi, 2010)

### 7.3 Southampton Solent University

Southampton Solent University was awarded an Erasmus University Charter (Extended) for the period 2007–2013. The University participates in this European Programme, which provides opportunities to send students and staff members to and receive students and staff from higher education institutions across Europe on study, training, teaching or work shadowing visits provided that the institution is also in receipt of the Erasmus University Charter. (SSU, n.d.)

At the beginning of the year the Fresher’s’ week is organised. One part of this week is called International Induction – is a programme of activities such

as an introduction to Southampton and the University, advice on language classes, how to register with a doctor and social events. (SSU, n.d.)

### 1. Academic culture

During the Induction week exchange students get possibility to enrol and meet with academic staff to arrange their timetables. (SSU, n.d.) Students are provided with information on how to use university's facilities, how to hand-in and upload assignments, university's assessment policy and organisation of exams. (Jordan, 2010)

- SSU practice anonymous marking

### 2. Social support

The university has an international adviser, who can help to sort out questions a student may have (Jordan, 2010). The international adviser can be contacted through the Students' 1<sup>st</sup> information Centre or by e-mail (SSU, n.d). The adviser counsels students about banking, healthcare, living costs, study assistance and other useful information. The adviser's task is to help to international students to adapt socially with the new living environment. (Jordan, 2010)

### 3. Socialisation

Some social events are organised by the international adviser and university's staff during certain times of a year. These events are organised for non-UK students, who study at the university. Usually the arranged trips are on payment basis, but have very good value for money. (Jordan, P. 2010) Events and trips may include: day trips to London & Oxford, trips to Winchester Cathedral, New Forest Walks, trips to Bath Christmas Market (SSU, n.d). At the beginning of study year, university's Student Union organises a 'Fresher's Fair', where students can enrol for a number of sport clubs, societies and unions. Some of them have membership fees. (Jordan, 2010)

## 7.4 Research Results

### 7.4.1 Erasmus Student Exchange Experience at KYAMK

The survey was conducted among Erasmus students who went on study exchange to the Kymenlaakson Ammattikorkeakoulu, the University of Applied Sciences in 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 study years. The respondents were asked to give their opinion on their experience at KYAMK in terms of academic culture shock, social support, academic and social integration. The invitation to participate in the survey was accepted by 86 Erasmus students from Business, Media, Logistics, Design, Nursing and Maritime departments.

#### 1. Academic Culture

The respondents were asked to assess the Welcoming week at KYAMK in terms of introduction to the new environment, information and support provided. The rating scale varied from 1 – very bad, to 10 – excellent.

The average Grade Rate is 8,3

Table 2 Rating of the Welcoming Week at KYAMK

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>
8 to 10	<b>74%</b>
5 to 7	<b>20%</b>
1 to 4	<b>6%</b>

More than 70% of the respondents rated the Welcoming Week as very good and excellent organised event. Nevertheless, 26% of students suggested that not all aspects of useful information were covered.

The comments may be divided into 3 major categories:

- Respondents of the first group consider that the organisation was perfect; all information provided was very helpful and useful.
- Second group pointed out that these aspects such as: usage of Moodle, Winha, other IT programme and software was not explained enough. Having difficulties with using those programmes students did not know who they can ask in order to sort out this matter.
- A major percentage of Erasmus student said that there was a lack of teambuilding activity. At the beginning of study year they did not know each other well and felt discomfort during the first week at KYAMK.

The second question of the survey was aimed to investigate how new incoming students went through academic adaptation at KYAMK and if they got enough explanation about the new academic environment.

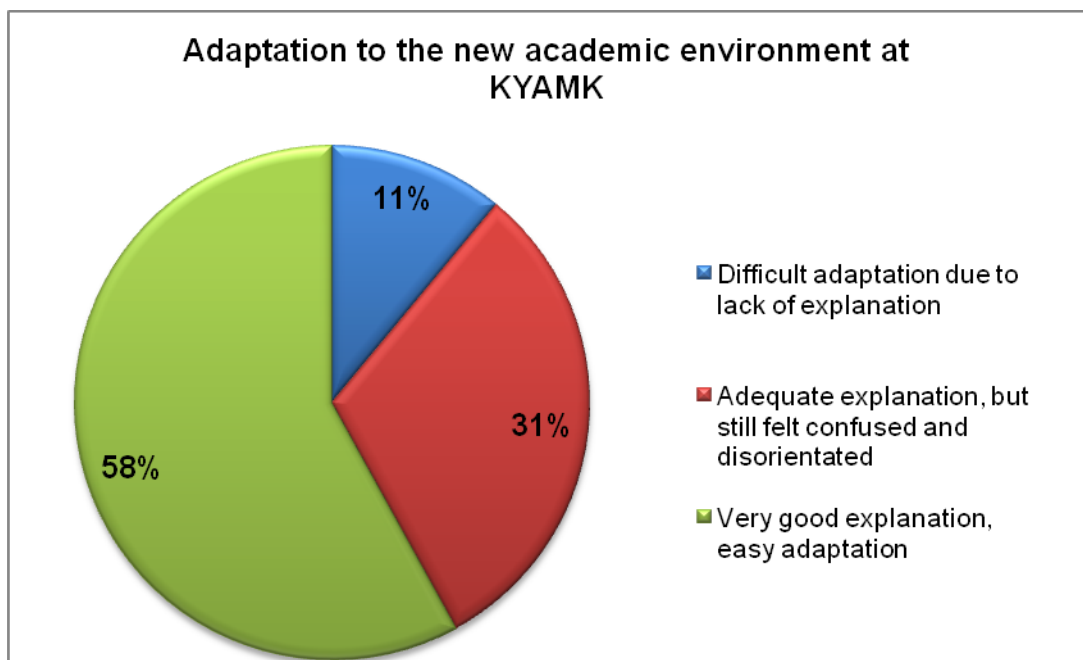


Figure 1 Academic adaptation KYAMK

- It can be seen from the Figure 1 that more than a half of respondents was satisfied with the explanation of the new environment and adapted themselves easily.
- 42 % of respondents had encountered academic culture shock to different degrees.
- Many Erasmus students from Design and Media department commented that they had difficulties with developing a study plan.

The next part of the questionnaire was aimed to find out students' opinion about the challenging experience of studying in foreign language.

- More than 90% of all respondents said that they had a good experience studying in foreign language at KYAMK.
- Also 91% of respondents pointed out that were not confident about their language abilities, but thanks to KYAMK teachers who created friendly environment where everyone was encourage for self-expression, students increased the degree of self-reliance.
- 79% and 71% relatively responded that were enjoying making presentations, communicating with the audience and took active participation in class discussions, giving their opinions about subjects
- Nevertheless, 36% of students admitted that language barrier lowers the degree of their self-confidence and they could not express own opinion in full.



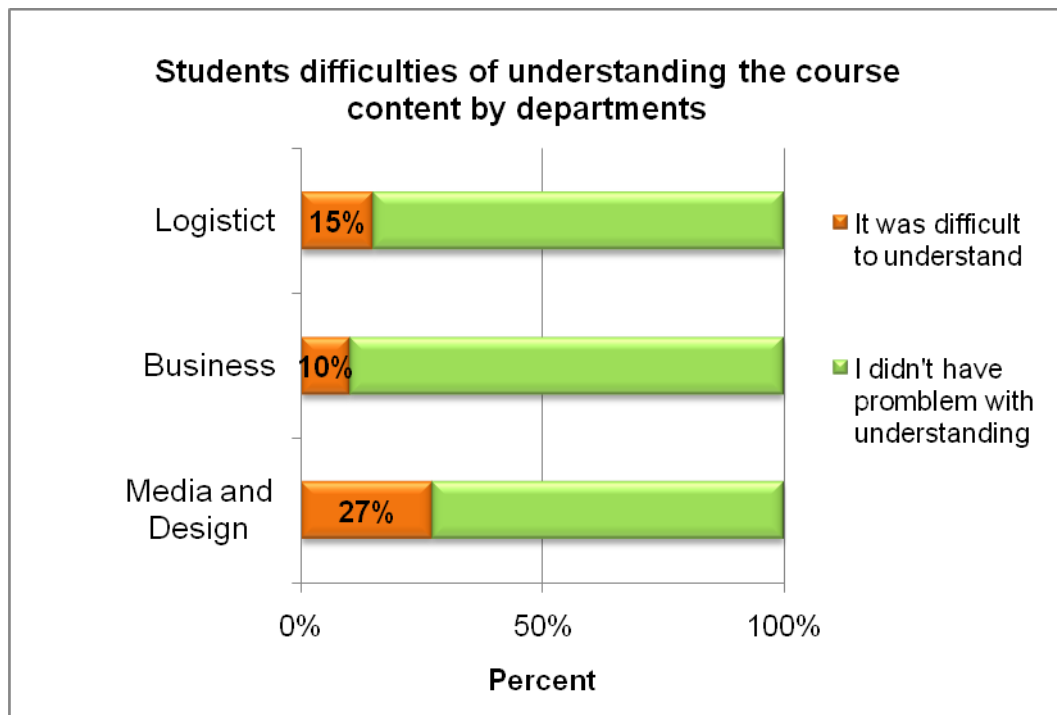


Figure 2 Level of a course acceptance and understanding KYAMK

Figure 2 demonstrates the level of course understanding by department. Many students found it quite understandable and easy. Respondents were asked to comment about their language experience at KYAMK. More than a half of students left words of gratefulness and appreciation, saying that it was valuable language practice. However the feedback where students shared their concerns can be divided into two categories:

- Media and Design students complained that many courses were taught in Finnish which caused difficulties in following a course, but some teachers were trying to assist them and translate a lot during the classes.
- One part of Erasmus students revealed that had very bad language experience at KYAMK. Teachers refused to talk in English. Some students had to pay money for private Finnish lessons in order to have at least general understanding of a course. As a consequence they admitted that did not have feeling of acceptance at KYAMK.

Respondents were asked about their adaptation to the new teaching methods and the in class environments.

- 91% of respondents had positive experience studying t KYAMK.
- About 83% of Erasmus students characterise teaching methods adopted at KYAMK as informal and 92% said they liked lecturer's approach to teaching and communicating with students.
- More than 80% acknowledged that KYAMK teachers helped them with academic adaptation and learning integration.

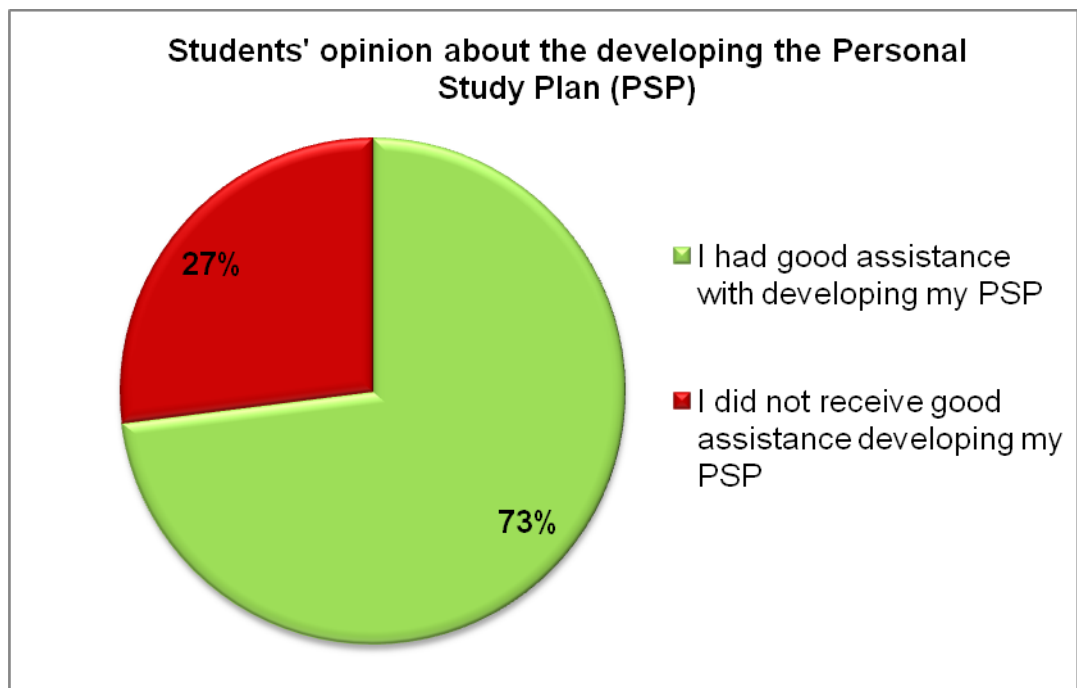


Figure 3 Personal Study Plan development KYAMK

- Those students who said that did not get enough assistance developing the PSP (Figure 3, percentage - 27%), commented that it was difficult to create the curricula, because of timing (some classes where overlapped) and they expected more advices from tutors on which class to choose.

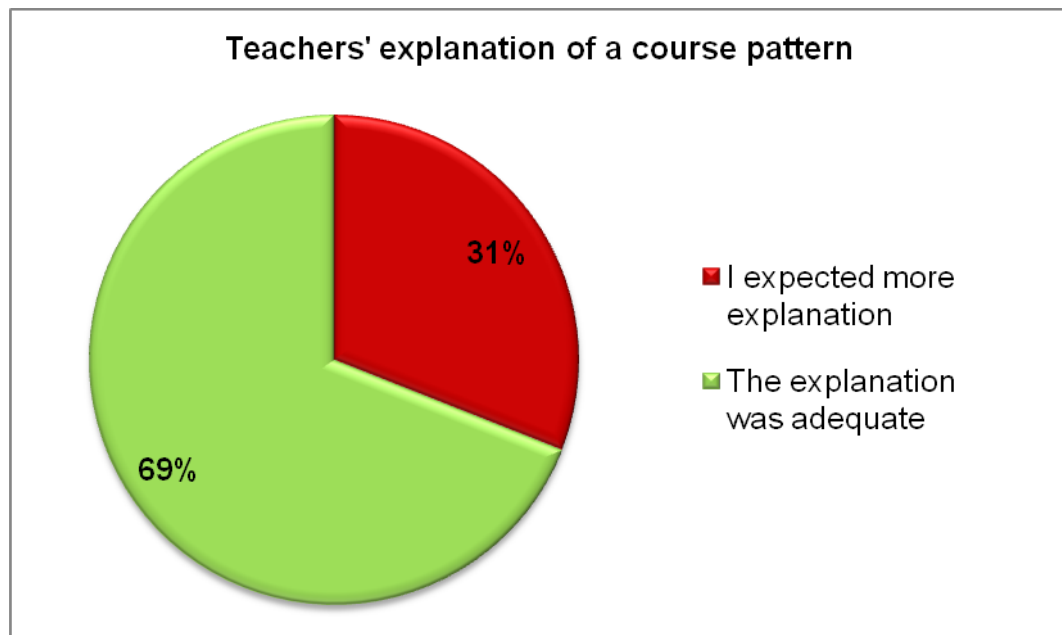


Figure 4 Explanation of courses, assignments and exams KYAMK

- It can be seen from the Figure 4 that about 31% of the respondents pointed out that they were expecting more detailed explanation of their assignments, assessment, courses, deadlines etc. from the teachers. The lack of explanation caused confusion and misunderstanding as consequences.

Respondents were offered to answer the block of questions related to the assessment and feedback they experienced at KYAMK.

- 82% of students were satisfied with the assessment system offered by KYAMK.
- 41% of Erasmus students complained that it was difficult to convert grades into the system which was adopted in their own country. That is why they could not understand how their performance was assessed. (Satisfactory, good, bad, etc.)
- 41% and 47% relatively said that would prefer if KYAMK use anonymous marking, because non-anonymous marking rises up bias, disparity and discrimination.

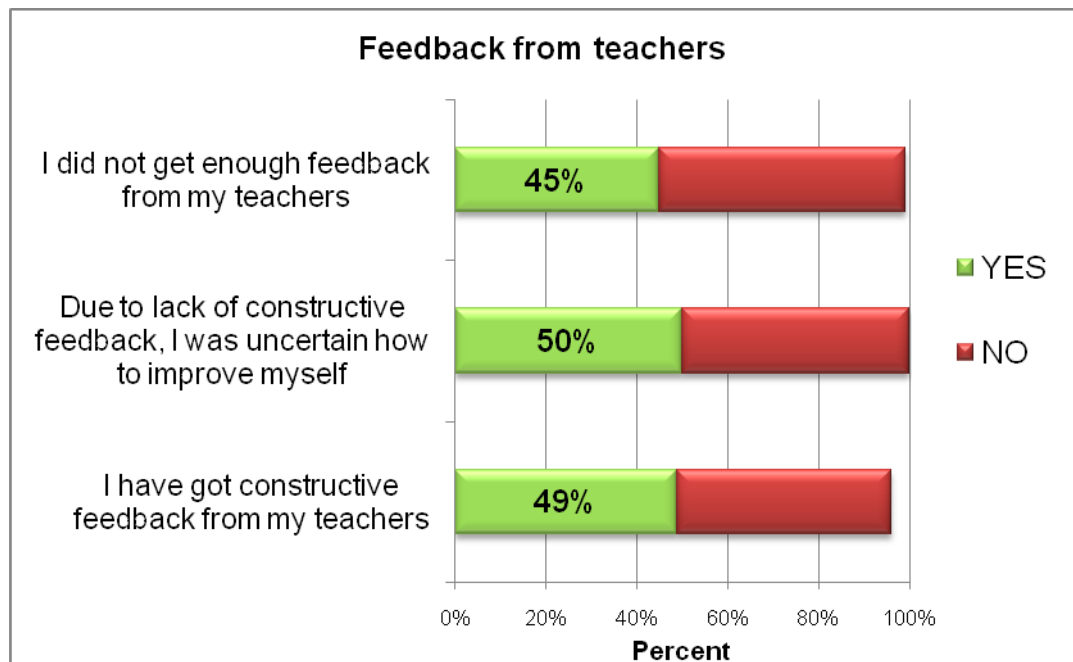


Figure 5 Quality of the feedback provided by teachers KYAMK

- Many students expressed the opinion that the university may use two way messaging. Not only students are made to leave course feedback, but teachers also can comment on students' performance and highlight the fields for personal improvement. The distribution of students' opinion regarding to the feedback issue can be seen from the Figure 5.

Analysing the comments left by respondents for this block of questions, there was found out that approximately 50% of remarks say that the level of assessment at KYAMK was not very high in Erasmus students' perception. They note that it was easy enough neglect some course instructions or skip number of assignments, hand in an assignment later than appointed deadline and, nevertheless, to be well graded at the end of the course. The quality of some courses was questioned.

- Social Support

The next section of questions was aimed to investigate students' degree socialisation and level of social support provided by the university.

Erasmus students were asked to assess the social support they receive from the International Office and the International tutors. Scale: 1 – very bad to 10 – excellent.

Table 3 Social support assessment KYAMK

Unit	Average Rating
International Office	8,4
International Tutors	7,9

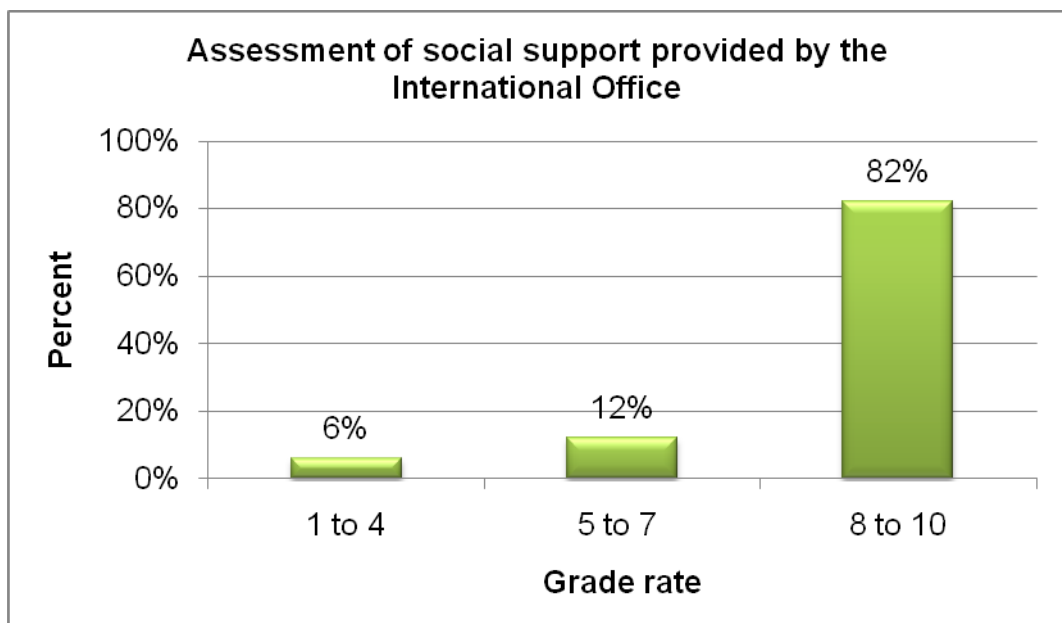


Figure 6 Social Support Assessment, KYAMK - International office

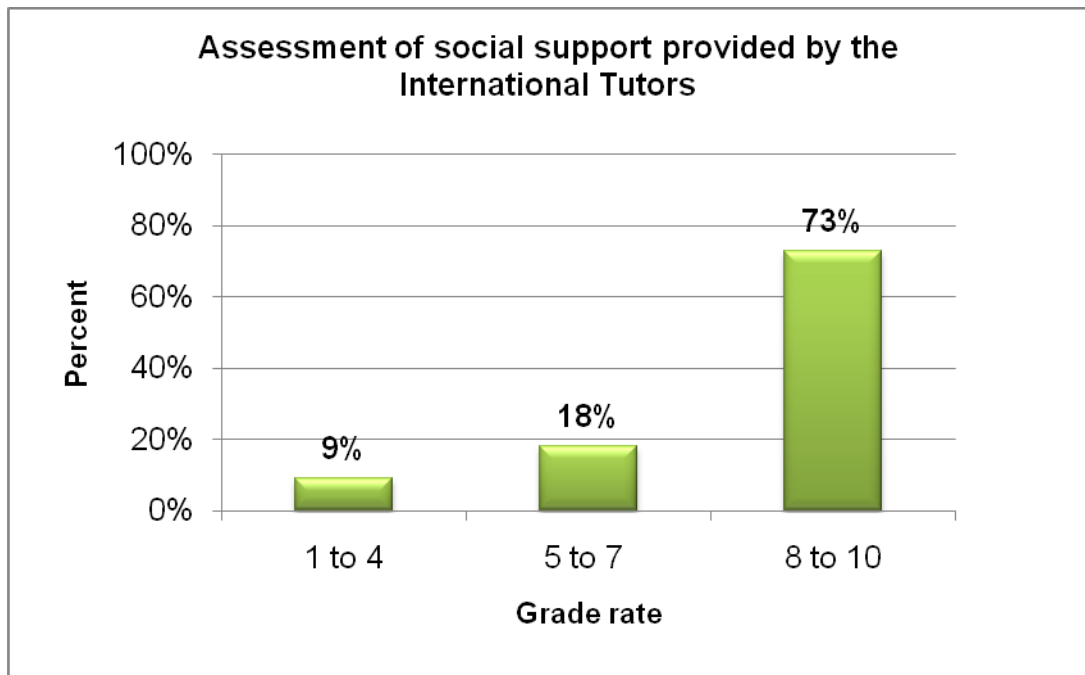


Figure 7 Social Support Assessment, KYAMK - International tutors

- One part of respondents commented that not all international tutors were friendly and helpful due to bias and having 'favourite' persons among newcomers. Sometimes Erasmus students' requests were forgotten or ignored.
- Another group express acknowledgments to their international tutors, saying that their help was very much appreciated, they helped to integrate into the new environment quickly and easily.

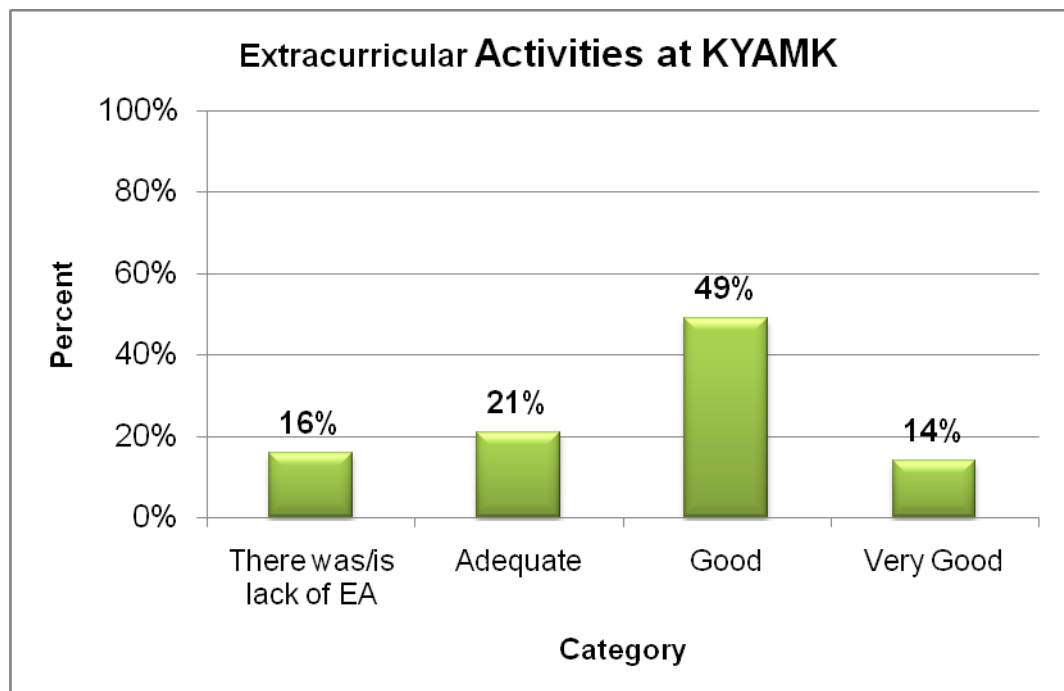


Figure 8 Assessment of extracurricular activities, KYAMK

Erasmus students suggested that there should be more EA such as (the top 3 answers):

- Sightseeing tours and trips
- Student clubs and associations
- Intercultural Events, such as international weeks/evenings, introduction to different countries, country presentations

About 80% of respondents said that they were provided with adequate information related to cost-living, transportation, allocation of points of interests etc. However, students suggested that it would be much better if they would have been given more advice like:

- Places where they could make economical purchases and get good deals (continuous up-to-date information)
- The cheapest and the most expensive options of transportation and travelling around Finland

The last block of questions was related to social and academic integration of Erasmus students at KYAMK.

- Almost all Erasmus exchanges met lots of new friends in Finland.
- 81% reveal they made more friendships with international students, rather than with the Finns.
- And 92% of respondents admit that they would like to have more friends among Finnish students in order to learn Finnish culture better
- 37% said that sometimes they felt/feel very lonely during my exchange, but didn't tell anyone about it:

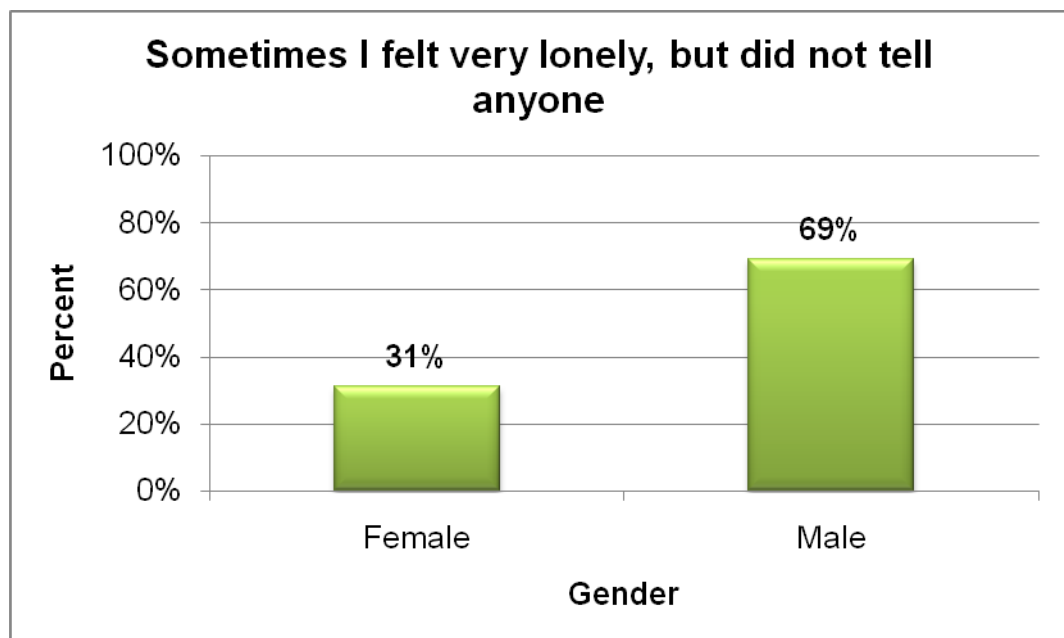


Figure 9 Correlation of desolated male and female respondents

- 69% of those who said they felt lonely were males.
- Male student commented that did not use counselling services and did not ask for help, because saying that you felt lonely would reveal your weaknesses.



- 96% said they had very good personal contact with academics.
- About a half of all respondents suggested that a teacher should help to form mixed groups for doing mutual assignments. Sometimes it difficult to form a team and have the right proportion of domestic and international students in it.
- 47% of Erasmus exchanges said that they would enjoy having more group assignments, forming mixed teams of international and domestic students.
- About 40% of students said that they did not enjoy all their subjects, but 94% of respondents admitted that they were enjoying being a student at KYAMK.

Table 4 General assessment of educational experience at KYAMK

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Grade 1 to 4</b>	<b>Grade 5 to 7</b>	<b>Grade 8 to 10</b>	<b>Average Rating</b>
Academic	11%	35%	54%	<b>7,2</b>
Cultural	0%	17%	83%	<b>8,8</b>
Social	6%	15%	79%	<b>8,3</b>

Many positive comments were left by respondents, such as:

*“It was one of the best years of my life, thank you a lot for this wonderful experience”.*

*“Great experience and unforgettable time”*

*“It was the best time in my life for now! I really will look for the possibilities to do the master programme in KYAMK!”*

After the analysis of all feedback the Erasmus students left while completing the survey, there was found out that about 40% of comments contained student's concerns about the quality of education they got at KYAMK.

Some respondents said that the academic level at the university was not adequate or low in comparison with the home university. But they also pointed out that it enabled them to devote more time to socialisation and making new contacts. One part of respondents concluded that KYAMK academic level is very good, but the assessment was not fair enough.

Almost all respondents admitted that had great cultural and social experience and Erasmus exchange at KYAMK significantly contributed to their personal development.

#### 7.4.2 Erasmus Student Exchange Experience at SSU

Southampton Solent University Erasmus Exchange students 2009-2010 were asked to complete the questionnaire, giving their opinion on experience they got while studying at SSU in relation to academic culture shock, social support, academic and social integration. The invitation to take part in the survey with the link to the online questionnaire was e-mailed to Erasmus students. 43 students out of 62 Erasmus Exchanges from different departments of SSU participated in the survey. The ratio of persons who answered (1.44) is then sufficient to analyse and use the questionnaire outcomes.

- Academic Culture
  1. Induction Week at SSU. Assessment of the introduction to the new environment, information and support provided. (1 - very bad; 10 - excellent)
- The average Grade Rate is **6**

Table 5 Rating of the Induction Week at SSU

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>
8 to 10	<b>30%</b>
5 to 7	<b>45%</b>
1 to 4	<b>25%</b>

Many respondents gave average grades to the Induction Week at SSU. The explanation of those grades is reflected in comments left by students who suggest that:

- The organisation itself was not on a high level – students were disorientated where to find needed classroom or needed person, long gaps between meetings, some respondents noted that could not understand to which faculty they belonged.

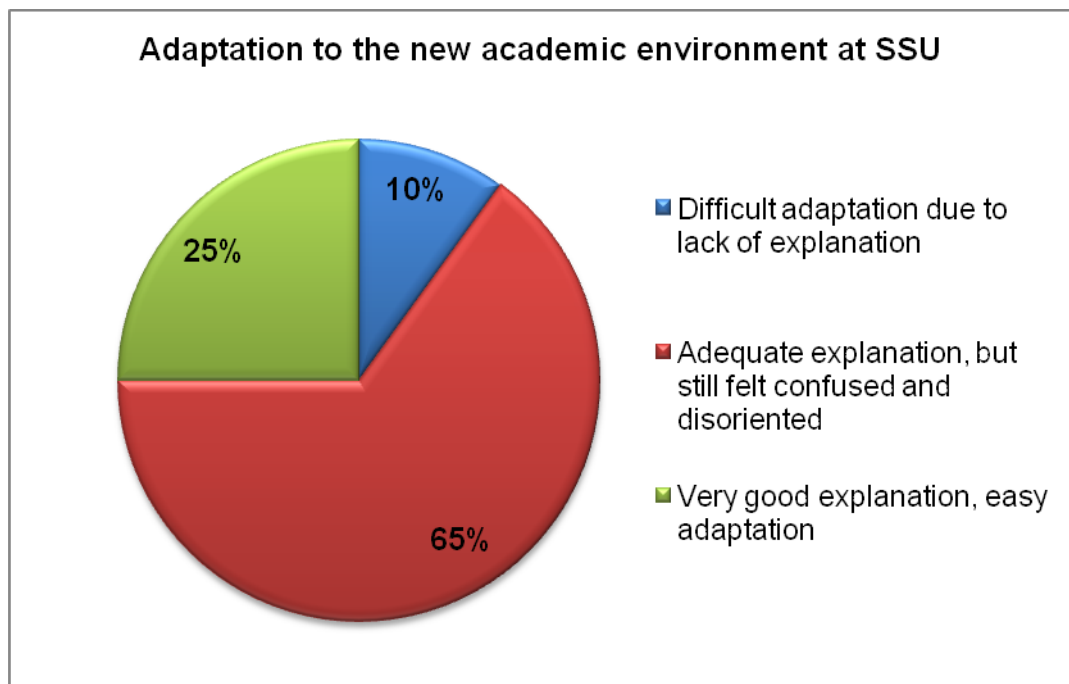


Figure 10 Adaptation to the new academic environment at SSU

- More than a half of respondents said that explanation of the new academic environment was adequate, nevertheless, students pointed out that some aspects were not clarified, which made them confused and disorientated at the beginning of their studies.

- Many respondents commented that they had difficulties developing a Personal Study Plan. It was not clear for them which courses are available. They felt lack of advice on which course to undertake if schedules of some classes were overlapped.

Students' experience of studying in a foreign language:

- 96% answered that they had a good experience studying in a foreign language at SSU
- Only, 68% of students said that were not confident about their language abilities at the beginning of the study year, but during the classes their lecturers created friendly study environment where everyone was encouraged for self-expression.
- More than a half of Erasmus students (55%), admitted that language barrier lowered the degree of their self-reliance and self-confidence.
- 60% and 40% respectively, responded that enjoyed making presentations, communicating with audience and expressed own opinion during classes.
- Only 16% of respondents said that it was difficult to understand the course content, because of new language.

One of the most popular comments related to the experience of studying in a foreign language was students' concern that they were not provided with enough possibilities to communicate in English. Frequently, doing team work during seminars, students tended to form a group with people who spoke the same language, because many domestic and international students were not open to new contacts.

In general, many respondents said that the language experience at SSU they had was a very valuable one. Erasmus students consider this experience as a significant contribution to their personal development and a good advantage for them in the employment market.

### Students' adaptation and integration to the new teaching methods

- The respondents were not sure how to characterise teaching methods at SSU. The results are almost equal 48% and 52% for the formal and informal methods respectively.
- However, 75% said that they liked lectures' approach to teaching and communicating with students; 83% concluded they had a good academic experience studying at SSU.

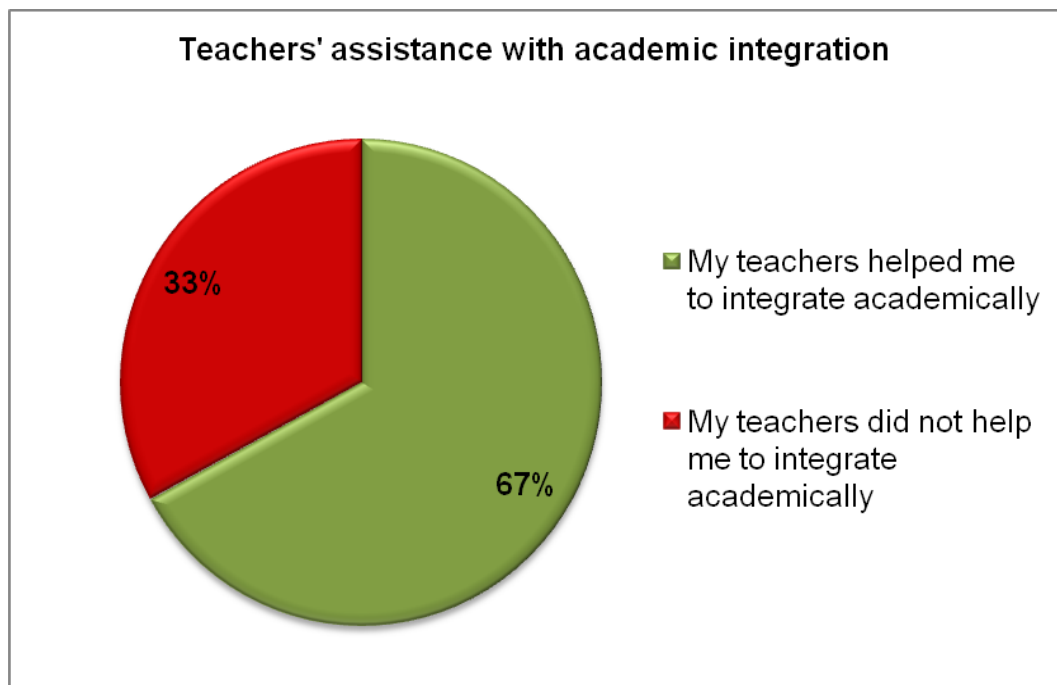


Figure 11 Academic integration and teachers' assistance SSU

- About 60% responded that they were expecting more explanation about courses pattern, assignments, deadlines, assessment and exams from their teachers.

### Experience related to the course assessment and feedback at SSU

- **25%** of respondents found that assessment criteria for their courses were not clear or was not explained well enough.
- It was not easy to convert English grades into the system which was adopted in their own countries for 45% of respondents. As consequence, it was not clear for them how the academic performance was assessed (satisfactory, good, etc.)
- 55% answered that they appreciated anonymous marking adopted at the university, which reduces discrimination, bias and disparity.
- About 45% of respondents think that SSU staff did not understand in full the difficulties of listening and writing in a foreign language.

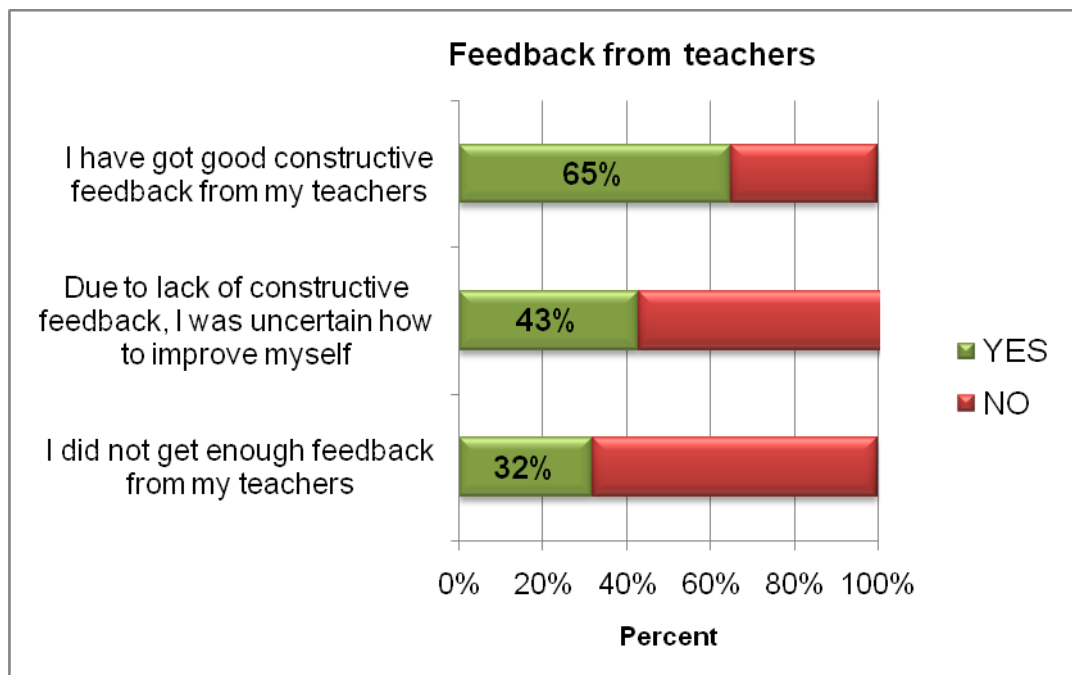


Figure 12 Quality of the feedback provided by teachers SSU

Many respondents commented that the detailed feedback provided by teachers on their academic performance was very useful. They found it was a good way to analyse own weaknesses and make personal improvements. The distribution of the results can be seen from the Figure 12.

### Social Support:

1. Assessment of social support provided by the SSU International student Office/International adviser during the exchange period. (1-very bad; 10 - excellent)
  - The average Grade Rate is **5,7**

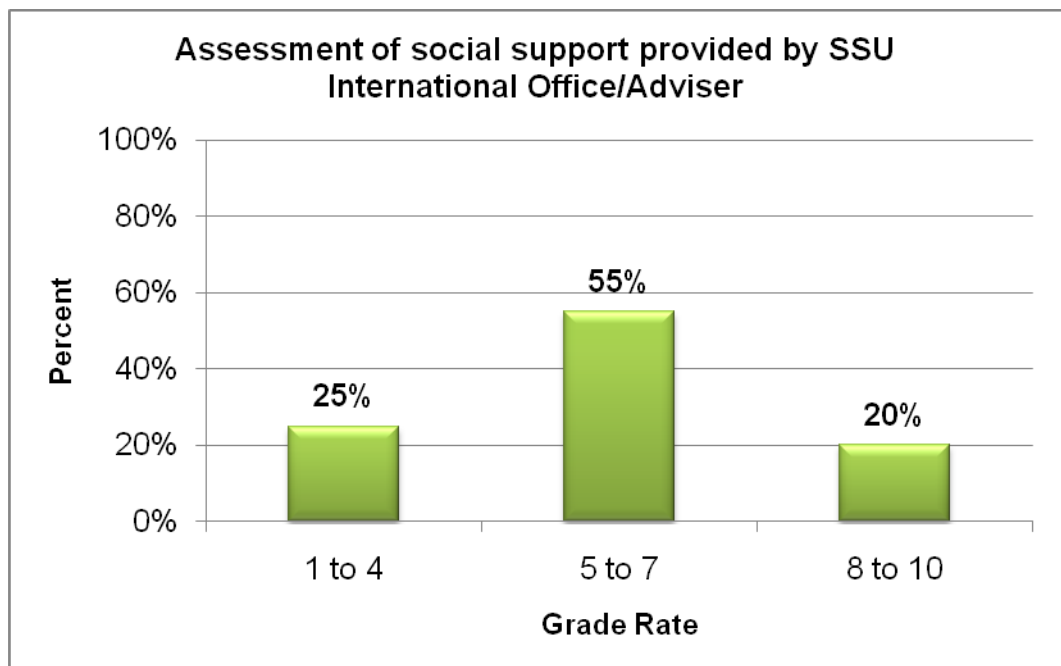


Figure 13 Assessment of social support, SSU - International office/adviser

- The comments left by respondents reflect that many Exchange students did not know what kind of support the International Office can provide for them. Others said that they did not like the system of getting in contact with the International Adviser. They would prefer instant contact rather than booking appointments by e-mail or through the Student 1<sup>st</sup> Centre.



Assessment of SSU Extracurricular Activities available to students:

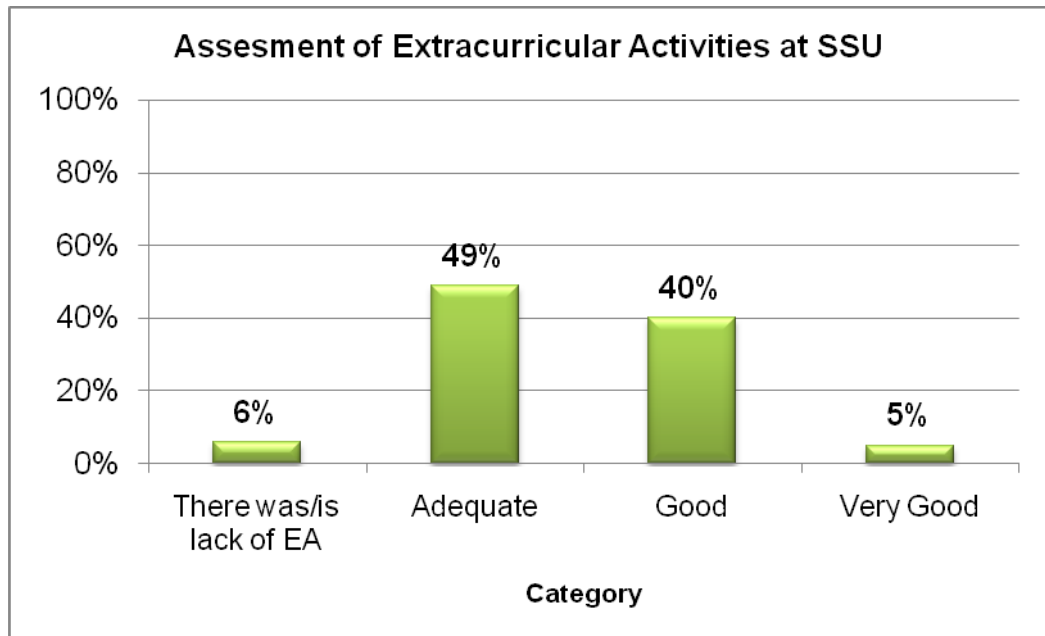


Figure 14 Assessment of extracurricular activities at SSU

- None of the respondents was aware that the International adviser / International office organise events/trips for non-UK students at certain times a year.
- None of respondents took part in any event/trip that was organised by International office/ International adviser at SSU

The top three events that respondents would like to participate in, if that would have been organised for them are:

- Trips and sightseeing tours
- Intercultural events: International weeks - Introduction to different cultures
- Visits to a theatre, concert or sport game

About 90% of respondents said that they would join the group for the sightseeing tours, trips, theatre/concert/game/cinema visits etc. and would had paid for it, because it is enjoyable to socialise with other international students and to get to know each other better.

Nevertheless, respondents were very pleased with the events arranged by the Student Union. Many comments were left with gratitude for organised parties and concerts which took place during the study year.

- 80% attended the Freshers' Fair at the beginning of study year.

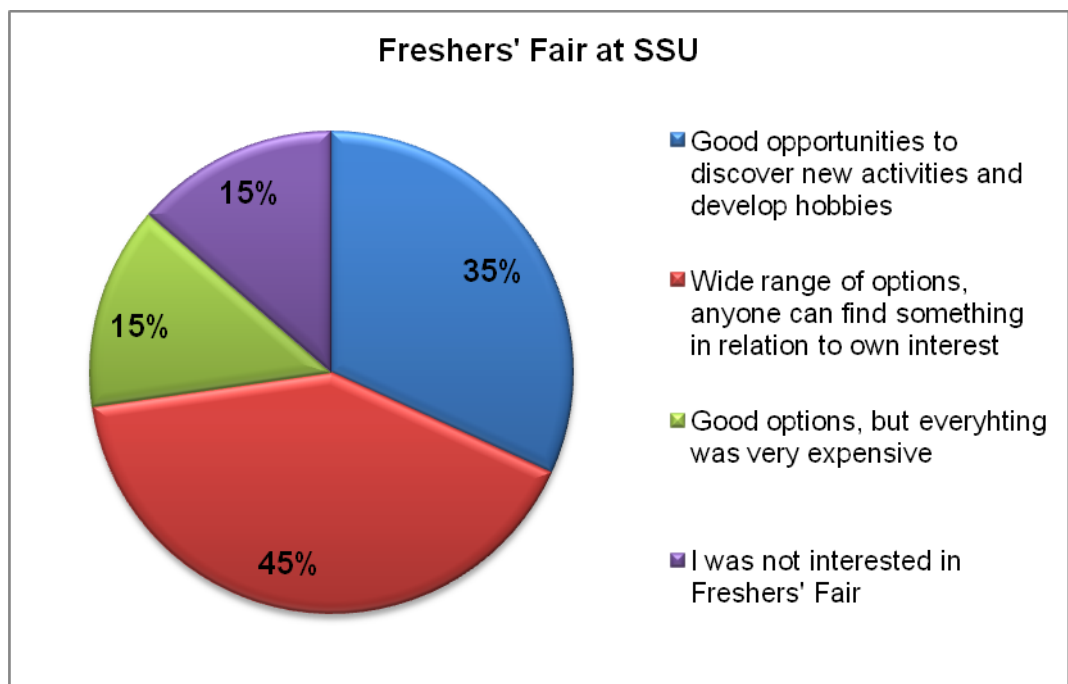


Figure 15 Assessment of Freshers' Fair at SSU

Top 3 desirable Extracurricular Activities that respondents would like to experience at SSU are:

- Trips and sightseeing tours
- Group visits to a theatre, a concert, a sport game etc.
- International weeks - Introduction to different cultures, countries presentations

70% of answers indicate that students were satisfied with information provided in relation to living environment, costs etc., but at the beginning of study year respondents would like to receive more information about:

- Places where they can make economical purchases and get good deals
- Guidance to whereabouts book, stationary, food shops, swimming-pool, post office, cinema etc. are located
- Costs and possibilities of car parking

Social and Academic integration:

- 75% of respondents said they met a lot of new friends at the university, however 90% specified they made more friendship with international students, rather than with British and expresses a wish to get in contact with more British students in order to learn British culture better.
- About 30% mentioned that sometimes they felt very lonely during the exchange, but didn't tell anyone about it. 80% of those who felt lonely during the exchange at SSU were males.
- The majority of respondents (83%) answered that they enjoyed being a student at SSU. A half of respondents said they were pleased with all their subjects.

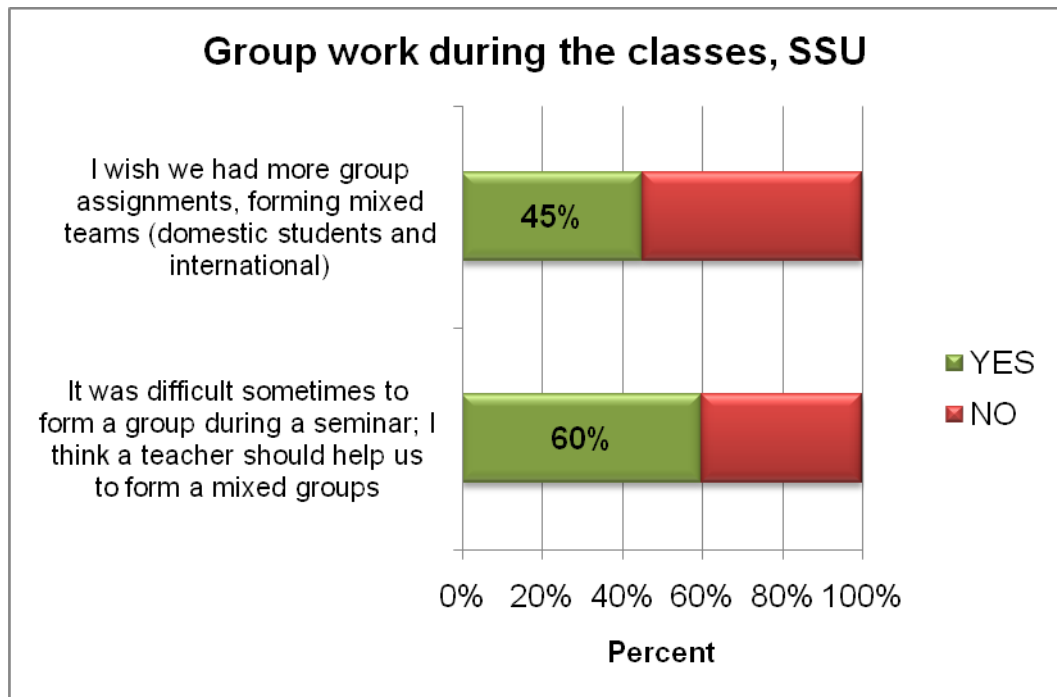


Figure 16 Assessment of in-class group works SSU

- 79% of respondents had a good experience of personal contact with academics.

## General Assessment of Erasmus Exchange Experience at SSU:

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Grade 1 to 4</b>	<b>Grade 5 to 7</b>	<b>Grade 8 to 10</b>	<b>Average Rating</b>
Academic	15%	27%	58%	<b>8,1</b>
Cultural	25%	44%	31%	<b>6,3</b>
Social	18%	19%	63%	<b>7,4</b>

Table 6 Assessment of educational experience SSU

The majority of respondents made a point that they had very good and valuable academic experience, which significantly contributed into their personal development as young specialists. Students were satisfied with the level of delivered academic services.

Nevertheless, about a half of the comments reflects that Erasmus students' expectations of the cultural and social experience were not matched up with the reality, due to lack of organised events from which students could benefit not only educationally, but culturally.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 Summary of the results

The interviews carried out with the international student coordinators at KYAMK and SSU showed that both universities provided several services to new incoming Erasmus students aiming at assisting them with social adaptation and introduction to a new environment.

More than half of all respondents said that they had experienced an academic culture shock to a different degree and expected more efficient actions from the university which would enable them to adapt to the new environment more quickly.

Social services provided by the university's student office at KYAMK had been seen very useful and helpful. SSU student services were assessed as helpful in terms of providing study advices and student discounts, however the average grade was not very high due to the lack of organising social events for Erasmus students.

The respondents of both surveys pointed out that it was easy and enjoyable to get in contact with other foreign students who came to study abroad, nevertheless the high percentage of respondents desired to make more friendship with local student in order to learn the new culture better. This initiative seemed to be quite challenging for them, because of the attitude of many local nationals which seemed to be not open to new contacts.

Erasmus experience significantly invested into personal development of almost all the respondents. It helped them to develop many personal skills, language abilities and learn new cultures.

## 8.2 Recommendations

After the analysis of the surveys' results conducted among Erasmus students two lists of recommendations for each university individually were developed. The recommendations are aimed to improve general Erasmus experience for students in the future. Comparing results of the surveys, there was invested an effort to try to find things that have positive impact on Exchange students at each university and recommend those to take into consideration to a university where these kinds of practices are not adopted. The thesis work was aiming production of recommendations that would have no impact on the financial issues and budget of each university.

### 8.2.1 Kymenlaakso Ammattikorkeakoulu

1. Include the programme of teambuilding activities in the Welcoming Week days. Consider setting aside a reasonable amount of time devoted to icebreaking exercises which would enable students to get to know each other quicker and would create friendly environment for the newcomers who are going through the stage of adaptation to an unfamiliar surroundings.
2. In order to reduce a degree of disorientation at the beginning of study year, it is recommended not only explain course pattern, curricula, etc., but also describe how classes are organised, timing, what forms of exams are adopted and how they usually are carried out. It would enable students to understand the overall picture of academic life at the university better.
3. Appoint international tutors who can attend some lectures and provide translation services to the Erasmus students whose classes are conducted in Finnish language or organise special seminars (after classes or few times a week) where exchange students and some international tutors come together and help to translate the assignments or information students were given during the classes.
4. Produce printed guides: conversion of grades between European countries, its meaning and weight (e.g. Table 1). Erasmus students could better understand the assessment of their academic performance.
5. Take into consideration the adaptation of anonymous marking policy at the university. It would help to prevent complains about discrimination, disparity and bias. Example of the Assessment Feedback Form used at SSU can be found as an Appendix 4.
6. Consider two-way feedback between students and academics. Not only should students fill in a course feedback form, but also teachers



should comment on a students' progress (how an assignment was done: what are pluses and minuses) and academic performance (an exam/ or a course completion result). An example form of teacher feedback which is used by some academics at SSU can be found as an Appendix 1

7. Discuss the opportunity of organising KYAMK Students' Fair at the beginning of study year. There can be promoted free-choice courses such as: Photography, "Insider" student magazine membership, sport course, etc. The student union 'Klaani' can tell more about its activity and student benefits (e.g. discount cards). There can be introduced students societies, such as Chinese, Russian, Spanish... where students can develop contacts with fellow countrymen. The idea of International Students Club can be introduced and developed into a new student body at KYAMK.
8. Enable international exchanges to get in contact with domestic students, help them to form mixed groups for a course mutual assignments, devote more time during seminars to group discussions.
9. Organise a special place in university's hall (e.g. news blackboard) where international tutors can provide up-to-date information in English about places where students can make economical purchases, get good offers and deals, participate in promotional actions.

### 8.2.2 Southampton Solent University

1. Provide more academic activities during the seminars, which would encourage students to express own opinion about the subject, communicate with the auditorium and increase the degree of English language confidence. Help students to form mixed groups (international & domestic students) and give mutual assignments, such as report, presentation etc. It would enable students to get in contact with each other and spend more time together, developing their relationships.
2. Appoint advisers who will help students to develop their Personal Study Plan at the beginning of study year. These advisers would provide course descriptions, its specific and recommend which units should be taken, depending on previous academic experience of an Erasmus student and his/her needs
3. Produce printed guides with explanation on how to convert grades into the grade scale which is adopted in another European Countries (e.g. Table 1) and distribute them among Erasmus students. It will clarify how graded percent is matched with the meaning of assessment: bad, good, excellent etc.
4. Consider the possibility of having international tutors at SSU. British student volunteers can undertake these roles. The responsibilities would include organising trips and visits of interest for Erasmus students, contacting them, bringing together, providing daily advices etc. It also would be seen as a good possibility for Erasmus students to make friendship with British hosts.
5. Promote events organised by International Advisor and make sure that sent messages do reach the addressees. Make sure that

communication between Erasmus/International students and the International office is maintained on a good level.

6. Discuss the opportunity of launching international weeks, where students from different countries get possibilities to introduce their own or learn more about new cultures. It can be done in form of poster competitions, country presentations, play acts.
7. Develop a list of sightseeing, interesting places that are recommended to be visited to international students. Their location and transport available to get to a destination. Students would be able to plan their own trips to the points of interest.

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## APPENDIXES

## Appendix 1 Feed-back Sheet for In-class Test/Assignment

Name:	Mark:
Question: 1    2    3    4    5    Analysis	
	Clear Handwriting
	Poor handwriting, not easy/very difficult to read, at times, - marks may have been lost
	Good/acceptable grammar: ideas clearly communicated
	Grammatical errors have proved an impediment to understanding, marks may have been lost as a consequence
	Reasonable/acceptable structure
	Muddled structure possibly containing repeated material and/or disjointed reasoning
	Content broadly inclusive
	Content identifies a reasonable number of relevant issues
	Content identifies some relevant issues
	Content fails to identify sufficient relevant issues
	Contains good explanations
	Not all points fully explained
	Lacks sufficient explanation
	Good use of operational examples
	Some appropriate use of operational examples
	Insufficient use of operational examples
	Displays a good level of independent learning
	Contains some evidence of independent learning
	Little/ no evidence of independent learning
	Good level of critical evaluation displayed
	Some critical evaluation evident
	<b>An excellent offering well done</b>
	A very good submission evidencing above average understanding
	A reasonable submission evidencing both understanding and effort, well done
	Your submission displays some understanding but lacks sufficient breadth and depth. You need to spend more time studying this subject if higher marks are to be obtained
	Unfortunately you have not displayed sufficient understanding in this instance. There is however every prospect that you will be able to improve and no reason why you cannot do well in this subject

**Comment:**



## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at KYAMK

### 1. Was it easy to adapt yourself to the new academic environment at KYAMK?

- It was difficult to understand the new study pattern, organisation of classes, exams and assessment criteria, due to lack of clear explanation.
- The overall explanation of classes, exams and assessment criteria was good enough, but some aspects were not clarified, which made me confused and disorientated at the beginning of my studies.
- The new academic environment was well explained and it was very easy to begin my studies here.
- Other

Other (please specify)

### 2. Please, assess the welcoming week at KYAMK. The introduction to the new environment, information and support provided. (1 - very bad; 10 - excellent)

My assessment      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Comment

### 3. Studying in foreign language is very challenging and differs significantly from studying in your native language. Please answer the following questions:

	YES	NO
I had/have difficulty in understanding much of the content of my courses, because of new language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had/have a good experience studying in foreign language at KYAMK	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language barrier lowers my degree of self-confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed communicating with the audience and making presentations during my classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not confident about my language abilities at the beginning of my studies, but my teachers were very friendly and created environment where everyone was encouraged for self-expression.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take/took active participation in class discussions. The most important thing is/was that I express myself and my opinion during a lecture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at KYAMK

### 4. Teaching Methods. Your adaptation and integration to the new teaching methods.

	YES	NO
My teachers helped me with academic adaptation and learning integration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had got good assistance, developing my study plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like my lectures' approach to teaching and communicating with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would characterise teaching method at KYAMK as a formal one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would characterise teaching method at KYAMK as an informal one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had/have a good experience studying at KYAMK	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expected more explanation about courses pattern, assignments, deadlines, assessment and exams from my teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

### 5. Assessment and Feedback. Please tell about your experience.

	YES	NO
The assessment criteria for my courses were absolutely clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was easy to convert Finnish grades into the system which is adopted in my country. It was clear to understand how my performance is/was assessed (satisfactory, good, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would prefer if KYAMK use anonymous marking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that non-anonymous marking raises up bias, disparity and discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the assessment system at KYAMK	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The feedback I got from my teacher was very constructive and it helped me to make self-improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to lack of constructive feedback, I was uncertain how to improve myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think, that staff do/did not really understand the difficulties of listening and writing in a foreign language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not get enough feedback of my academic performance from the teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment

## 4. Social Support

This part of the survey is aimed to investigate your socialisation at KYAMK. Please answer the following questions, adding comments, where appropriate, in the space provided.

### 1. Please assess social support provided by the KYAMK International student Office and International tutors during your exchange period. (1- very bad; 10 - excellent)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
International Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International tutors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment



## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at KYAMK

### 2. Extracurricular activities (EA) at KYAMK are:

- There was/is lack of EA
- Adequate
- Good
- Very good

### 3. I think there should be more EA, such as: (you can choose max 2 answers)

- Country presentations
- Intercultural events
- International weeks - Introduction to different cultures
- Other
- Sightseeing tours
- Sport activities
- Student clubs and associations
- Team sports
- Trips
- Visits to a theatre, concert or sport game

Other (please specify)

### 4. I was provided with adequate information related to cost-living, transportation, allocation of points of interests etc.

- YES
- NO

### 5. I think tutors could provide more guidance and information about: (you can choose more than one answer)

- Places where I could / can make economical purchases and get good deals
- Guidance to whereabouts book, stationary, food shops, swimming-pool, cinema etc. are located
- Modes of transport available locally
- The cheapest and the most expensive options of transportation
- Other

Other (please specify)

# Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at KYAMK

## 5. Social and Academic Integration

It is very important to know your experience of the academic and social integration at KYAMK.

**1. Please answer the following questions, adding comments, where appropriate, in the space provided.**

	YES	NO
I met a lot of new friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I made/make more friendship with international students, rather than with Finnish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could have more friends among Finnish students in order to learn Finnish culture better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I felt/feel very lonely during my exchange, but didn't tell anyone about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is difficult sometimes to form a group; I think a teacher should help us to form a mixed group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had good experience of personal contacts with academics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish we had more group assignments, forming mixed teams (domestic students and international)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Erasmus exchange significantly contributed to my personal development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed all my subjects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy/ed being a student at KYAMK	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment

## 6. Evaluation of Erasmus Exhcnage Experience at KYAMK

Thank you very much for your time and your answers. Hopefully, you had wonderfull time and valuable expereince being an Erasmus student at KYAMK!

**1. Please assess you Erasmus Exchange Experience at KYAMK, (1-very bad; 10 - excellent)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Academic Experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your Comments

## Appendix 3 Questionnaire SSU Erasmus Students

Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at Southampton Solent			
<b>1. Students Exchange Experience at SSU</b>			
Dear students, this questionnaire is designed to investigate your experience as an exchange student at SSU and find out the fields for improvement in the future. Please help by completing this short, anonymous questionnaire, using the space beneath each section of questions to expand on your answers where appropriate. Your participation in the survey is very much appreciated!			
<b>2. Personal Information</b>			
<b>1. The study year when you went on exchange to SSU</b>			
<input type="radio"/> 2007 – 2008	<input type="radio"/> 2008 – 2009	<input type="radio"/> 2009 - 2010	
<b>2. Your Gender</b>			
<input type="radio"/> Female	<input type="radio"/> Male		
<b>3. Duration of your exchange at SSU</b>			
<input type="radio"/> 3 months	<input type="radio"/> 1 term	<input type="radio"/> 1 study year	<input type="radio"/> other
Other (please specify)			
<input type="text"/>			
<b>4. Course of study (e.g. Business, Design, Media etc.)</b>			
<input type="text"/>			
<b>3. Academic Culture</b>			
The first part of the questionnaire is aimed to evaluate your academic adaptation at the university and your impact on academic culture shock.			
<b>1. Was it easy to adapt yourself to the new academic environment at SSU?</b>			
<input type="radio"/> It was difficult to understand the new study pattern, organisation of classes, exams and assessment criteria, due to lack of clear explanation.	<input type="radio"/> The overall explanation of classes, exams and assessment criteria was good enough, but some aspects were not clarified, which made me confused and disorientated at the beginning of my studies.		
<input type="radio"/> The new academic environment was well explained and it was very easy to begin my studies here.	<input type="radio"/> Other		
Other (please specify)			
<input type="text"/>			



## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at Southampton Solent

**2. Please, assess the welcoming week at SSU. The introduction to the new environment, information and support provided. (1 - very bad; 10 - excellent)**

My assessment      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10  
                          

Comment

**3. Studying in foreign language is very challenging and differs significantly from studying in your native language. Please answer the following questions:**

	YES	NO
I had/have difficulty in understanding much of the content of my courses, because of new language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had/have a good experience studying in foreign language at SSU	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language barrier lowers my degree of self-confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed communicating with the audience and making presentations during my classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not confident about my language abilities at the beginning of my studies, but my teachers were very friendly and created environment where everyone was encouraged for self-expression.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take/took active participation in class discussions. The most important thing is/was that I express myself and my opinion during a lecture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

**4. Teaching Methods. Your adaptation and integration to the new teaching methods.**

	YES	NO
My teachers helped me with academic adaptation and learning integration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had got good assistance, developing my study plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like my lectures' approach to teaching and communicating with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would characterise teaching method at SSU as a formal one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would characterise teaching method at SSU as an informal one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had/have a good experience studying at SSU	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expected more explanation about courses pattern, assignments, deadlines, assessment and exams from my teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at Southampton Solent

### 5. Assessment and Feedback. Please tell about your experience.

	YES	NO
The assessment criteria for my courses were absolutely clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was easy to convert English grades into the system which is adopted in my country. It was clear to understand how my performance is/was assessed (satisfactory, good, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would prefer if SSU use non-anonymous marking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the assessment system at SSU	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The feedback I got from my teacher was very constructive and it helped me to make self-improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to lack of constructive feedback, I was uncertain how to improve myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think, that staff do/did not really understand the difficulties of listening and writing in a foreign language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not get enough feedback of my academic performance from the teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment

### 4. Social Support

This part of the survey is aimed to investigate your socialisation at SSU. Please answer the following questions, adding comments, where appropriate, in the space provided.

#### 1. Please assess social support provided by the SSU International student Office/international adviser during your exchange period. (1- very bad; 10 - excellent)

International Office      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Comment

#### 2. Extracurricular activities (EA) at SSU are:

- There was/is lack of EA
- Adequate
- Good
- Very good

#### 3. Did you know that the international adviser/ international office organise events/trips for non-UK students at certain times a year?

- YES
- NO
- I heard something like that, not sure...

## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at Southampton Solent

### 4. Did you take part in any event/trip that was organised by International office/ international adviser at SSU?

- YES
- NO
- I didn't know they organise events
- I was not interested

### 5. My opinion about the Freshers' Fair organized at SSU in the beginning of study year:

- Very good opportunities for students discover new activities or develop existing hobbies.
- Wide range of options, I think anyone can find something in relation to his/her interest.
- Very good opportunities for extracurricular activities, but everything was expensive
- I was not interested in Freshers' Fair
- Other

Other (please specify)

### 6. Did you attend Freshers' Fair at the beginning of the study year?

- YES
- NO

### 7. If SSU organise extracurricular activities such as sightseeng tours, trips, theater/concert/game/cinema visits etc., would you join the group even if you would need to pay for it?

- YES, it is a very good idea, we could do it together with my fellow students!
- YES, I think that group would have some discounts and it's defititely more fun to be with a group
- Maybe
- NO, I can organise any trip or visit I want by myself.
- NO, I don't like group activities
- Other

Other (please specify)

## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at Southampton Solent

### 8. I think SSU could organise EA, such as: (you can choose max 2 answers)

- Country presentations
- Intercultural events
- International weeks - Introduction to different cultures
- Other
- Sightseeing tours
- Sport activities
- Student clubs and associations
- Team sports
- Trips
- Visits to a theatre, concert or sport game

Other (please specify)

### 9. I was provided with adequate information related to cost-living, transportation, allocation of points of interests etc.

- YES
- NO

### 10. I think the international office could provide more guidance and information about: (you can choose more than one answer)

- Places where I could / can make economical purchases and get good deals
- Guidance to whereabouts book, stationary, food shops, swimming-pool, cinema etc. are located
- Modes of transport available locally
- The cheapest and the most expensive options of transportation
- Other

Other (please specify)

## 5. Social and Academic Integration

It is very important to know your experience of the academic and social integration at SSU.



## Erasmus Students Exchange Experience at Southampton Solent

**1. Please answer the following questions, adding comments, where appropriate, in the space provided.**

	YES	NO
I met a lot of new friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I made/make more friendship with international students, rather than with British	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could have more friends among British students in order to learn British culture better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I felt/feel very lonely during my exchange, but didn't tell anyone about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is difficult sometimes to form a group; I think a teacher should help us to form a mixed group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had good experience of personal contacts with academics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish we had more group assignments, forming mixed teams (domestic students and international)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Erasmus exchange significantly contributed to my personal development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed all my subjects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy/ed being a student at SSU	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment

## 6. Evaluation of Students Exchange Experience at SSU

Thank you very much for your time and your answers. Hopefully, you had/ are having wonderful time and valuable experience being an exchange student at SSU!

**1. Please assess your Erasmus Exchange Experience at SSU, (1-very bad; 10 - excellent)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Academic Experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your Comments

Appendix 4 Anonymous Marking Form is being used at SSU



Receipt Number: 000001

**ASSESSMENT  
FEEDBACK FORM**

Assignment Stamp

Faculty:	FMAS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FTECH <input type="checkbox"/>	FBSE <input type="checkbox"/>	WMA <input type="checkbox"/>
Unit Code: BA123	Unit Title: Victorian Literature			
Assessment Title:	Chapter Summary			
Assessment Tutor: Bill Green	Number of Words: 2000			

**Student Request for Feedback:**

**Tutor Feedback:**

Tutor Signature:

Mark Awarded\*:

Student Number: (Back of campus card)	Course:	Student Name:	Student Signature**:
1. 98324561	1. BA123	1. Ann Smith	1. <i>Ann Smith</i>
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.

\*Please note, the tutor mark awarded is subject to ratification at the full Examination Board.  
 \*\*By signing your signature you are certifying that the assignment is your own work, that the assignment has not already been submitted for assessment, that where material from other sources has been used, it has been acknowledged properly and that the work meets the requirements of the university's ethics policy.



Copies: White (Student copy), Blue (Marker), Pink (Student file), Yellow (Office receipt), Green (Student receipt)