

Student Guide to Budapest

Before you Go

Studying for a whole year, there is a lot to think about, not just in terms of what to pack, but the things you may not necessarily think to bring and things you need to do and sort out before you go.

Accommodation

I can't stress enough how important and how much easier everything is if you sort out your accommodation before you arrive. There is the opportunity to apply for the dorms on campus, however in our experience unless you keep asking about it, you will not get it. The best option is to join the Facebook groups before you arrive where there will be many people looking for others to share accommodation with, or get in contact with the person from Warwick who is also going and sort your accommodation out together. Without accommodation you can't open a bank account which means when you do find a place to stay, paying the deposit and first month's rent using your UK bank account costs a lot.

Money

Set up globalwebpay. There are many ways you can fund yourself while you're out here, but it may get expensive using your UK bank account all the time, and if you are going to use your UK account make sure you tell them before you go, otherwise the bank may think your card has been stolen abroad. I used the website globalwebpay and opened a bank account here in Budapest and transferred money between my UK and Hungarian account using this website. It costs £4.75 for every transaction, no matter how much you transfer over. An alternative option is to use Western Union whilst you're here.

Immigration

As you will be studying and staying in Budapest for over 90 days, you will need to register with immigration, therefore before you go out make sure you print out and bring the following with you as they are required by immigration:

- Passport
- 1 face colour photo (without glasses or hat)
- Completed and signed application form <http://www.bevandorlas.hu/ujpdf/angol/71.pdf>
- Certificate of health insurance (which covers daily hospital charges)
- Tenancy contract of the apartment PLUS ownership certificate from the Land PLUS an accommodation reporting form which must be signed by the owner of the apartment OR a certificate about your accommodation in a dormitory- issued by the dormitory
- A certificate about your financial assets for the period of your stay in Hungary by recent bank account statement OR certificate of your scholarship or any other resources OR a letter from your family stating that they cover your costs.
- Fee stamps worth 18,000 HUF (available at any post office, "illetékbélyeg" in Hungarian).
- Student registration certificate in Hungarian from the ERASMUS Office

Immigration is based at 1104 Budapest X., Harmat u. 131. To get there go to the end of Metro Line 2 (red one, station Ors Vezér Tere) and take Bus 85.

Opening hours of Immigration are:

Monday: 08.30–13.00

Tuesday: 13.00–18.00

Wednesday: Closed (Only for students pursuing studies in higher education 08.30–12.00)

Thursday: 08.30–13.00

Friday: 08.30–12.00

Make sure you print out and bring all of the relevant forms; and get there early as you can be waiting. Do this in your first few weeks to get it out of the way.

Tips

Print out the Erasmus forms before you go, these include: Learning Agreement (as it is likely to have changed), Arrival Form, Mid Term Form and Completion Form.

Bring a memory stick, seems obvious to remember, but you'll need it to print out essays.

Bring your student card; this is needed for student discounts.

First few days of arrival:

The first few days can seem daunting, but you settle in quickly enough, some things to sort out in the first week include:

- Work out how to get home! Again this seems really obvious, but on your first day work out how to get home as after your first night out, trying to remember how to get home in the dark can prove a challenge!
- Open a bank account. There are many bank accounts to choose from, but again you will not be able to do so unless you have your accommodation sorted. We opened accounts with Raiffeisen bank, but others include: UniCreditBank, Budapest Bank, Optbank, CIB bank and Erste bank
- Buy a Hungarian SIM.

Transport

We travelled to Budapest with airlines EasyJet and Ryanair from Stansted and Luton, but you can see from their websites where else they travel from in the UK. If you book in advance tickets can be relatively cheap. Travelling to and from the airport is really easy using the Airport Shuttle Bus, this takes you from your door to the airport and back again and is really worth doing.

Getting round Budapest is easy enough, with the metro and trams. There are 3 tram lines, M1 (yellow), M2 (red) and M3 (blue). Whilst you are here, buy the monthly student travel pass as it allows you unlimited travel on all trams, buses, metros and some boats. It costs 3850 HUF, which is just over £10. There are also many taxis, but try not to just get one off the street as they'll cost a lot more than phoning for one.

Currency

The currency in Budapest is the Hungarian Forint. 1,000 HUF (Hungarian Forint) is roughly £2.93. Most things here are relatively cheap compared to the UK. It is a cash based country and don't be surprised to be paying your rent and bills in cash.

Studying at Elte

Whilst here in Budapest, you will study at Eotvos Lorand University, also known as ELTE. The term is split into 2 terms as opposed to 3 at Warwick. The first term is from September to December and the second from February to May. Terms last 12 weeks, with one week break half way through.

In term 1 you will need to register which happens at the beginning of September by going to the Erasmus Co-ordinator Mariann Botlik-Molnar in building B: Keckskemeti building.

Between December and February is exam period and likewise in term 2 between May and July is exam period, however as Erasmus students you may be able to take your exams in your last week of term, which gives you an extended Christmas and Summer holiday!

In order to gain the 60 credits needed for your year abroad here, it is best to split up the 2 terms and gain roughly 30 credits in each. Most courses are worth 4 credits, although some are worth 3 and will take place every other week. This means you need to take roughly 7/8 courses per term.

You gain 2 credits for regular attendance to a class, you may miss a class twice during the term, and then to gain the extra 2 credits you will take an exam, essay or presentation. Not all courses require an exam, and a 20 minute presentation or essay will be classed instead. Essays are not marked the same way as Warwick, instead of a word count, professors usually ask for essays to be of a certain length; usually between 5-6 pages. To gain extra credits, you can write a longer essay of 8-10 pages and it is possible to gain 10 credits for a course by submitting a piece of “seminar” work, which should be 25 pages long.

Exams can take many different forms. Some can be short answer questions, multiple choice answers or oral examinations. The two oral examinations I did in first term were different to each other, in the first, the lecturer asked questions to the class who then put their hands up to answer the questions and in the second you went into the lecturers room in pairs and he would ask you each different questions.

Lectures take place in two buildings, in Building A, the main law building: Egyetem ter 1-3 and building B Kecskemeti u.10-12. Egyetem also has the PC Laboratory and one of the libraries. The university is easily reached by trams 47 and 49 and by Metro Line M3 (blue) at Kalvin Ter.

All lectures are one and half hours long and take place once a week. Some courses are presented as block seminars, which mean you take them every day for a short period of time, usually 1-2weeks. These block seminars are usually taught by guest professors from outside of ELTE University. We took courses taught by professors and lawyers from the United States of America and the University of Leipzig. There is also (if you are able to) the opportunity to take courses taught in German, French and Italian. It is also possible to undertake a language course (see further below)

The courses I took in term 1 were:

- The Impact of the European Union on Culture
- International Refugee Law: Universal and European Perspectives (3credits)
- US Law-Doing Business in the United States (block seminar)
- Jurisdiction in Civil and Commercial Litigation (block seminar)
- Settlement of International Commercial Disputes
- Defending Children’s Rights in Hungary and Europe
- Social Movements, Contentious Politics
- Hungarian Language Course (3 credits)

The courses I took in term 2 were:

- European Labour Law
- Philosophy of Criminal Law
- Transitional Justice
- Introduction to the Practice of Capital Markets (block seminar)
- Bankruptcy Law (block seminar)
- Introduction to the American Legal System (block seminar)
- Terrorism and Human Rights (3 credits)
- European and International Consumer Protection Law

All the courses that were available:

Term	Course Name
Term 1	Introduction to International Economic Law (3 credits)
Term 1	Transitional Justice
Term 1	Law of the European Union
Term 1	The Mobility of Companies in Europe
Term 1	Introduction to EU competition Law
Term 1	Elections in the United States

Term 1	International and Comparative Tax Law (block seminar)
Term 1	French Politics
Term 2	Introduction to Hungarian Civil Law
Term 2	The Hungarian Tort and Insurance Law in Comparative Perspectives
Term 2	The most recent case law of the European Court of Justice
Term 2	European Tax Law (block seminar)
Term 2	EU Budget and Taxation (block seminar, 3 credits)
Term 2	The Law of European Civil Procedure (block seminar)
Term 2	Transnational Commercial Law
Term 2	American Politics
Term 2	French Politics
Term 2	Democracy in Crisis? Contemporary Challenges of Participation

Language

The language of Hungary is Hungarian and it is one of the hardest languages to learn! Most people here do speak at least a little English and it is good to pick up the basics. There is the opportunity to undertake a language course before you come out here in August, this is like a summer camp whereby they organise events and you have classes where you learn the language in the morning. However, if you cannot attend the course, you can take a beginners course as one of your classes in either the first or second term.

Sites and Culture

Budapest is a diverse and amazing city to live in; there are many museums to visit amongst the other tourist sites including Budapest Parliament, Castle, Hero's Square, Margrit Island, multiple spas and baths (Gellert and Szechenyi, two of the most famous), Hungarian Opera House and Palace of Arts.

Travel

From Budapest you are able to travel to so many different countries, Vienna is only 3 hours away by train and Prague is also easily accessible. Other countries you can visit include: Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia and more. There are also places to visit outside of Budapest in Hungary including Lake Balaton, Sopron, Eger, Kecskemet, Pecs and Szeged, amongst others!

Nightlife

ESN (Erasmus Student Network) and ESN ELTE arrange many parties throughout the term and you are never short of clubs to visit; including Morrisions 2 and Doboz. Also popular are "ruin" pubs/bars Instant and Szimpla Kert.

Conclusions

Despite taking many modules, you'll still have plenty of spare time and make the most of it! Travel and visit as much of Budapest as you can!