
Basic information
University of Nottingham, Nottingham, England, Autumn 2016.
Bachelor in Physics

Nottingham

A city of roughly 300,000 people (Malmöish in size and feel along with a similar number of stores etc. if you interested in that). The University of Nottingham's main campus is located in the eastern part of the city with a 15 minute bus ride to get to the city centre (and basically everything you need). Lots of pubs and clubs that have dedicated student nights every day of the week. Located nicely in the centre of England so you can have easy access to go on day trips to many cities and places around the UK. City Life Nottingham and Viva Nottingham are two organizations that organize trips essentially every weekend of every semester (Bristol, Bath, Manchester, Liverpool, Snowdonia, Peak District, Lake District, overnight trips to Edinburgh and London, etc.).

The University of Nottingham (“University of” is enough for locals to know which of the two universities)

The main campus, University Park Campus, located in the eastern part of the city. This is where the majority of catered halls are located if you choose them as your accommodation option. It is a very green area, American style campus almost, with a small lake (2km in circumference) so the surrounding is very nice. There are two other campuses, one located closer to the city named Jubilee Campus and one quite a bit further on the outskirts of the city called Sutton Bonington Campus. Jubilee is the campus for Economics and Business and IT while Bonington is for Biomedicine. The other departments are located at University Park. All are connected via free Uni buses.

Arrival

This will depend on if you live in a hall or in private accommodation. I was in a hall so I can only describe that. Was very similar to a novich period in Lund. Games during the day and organized parties in the evenings for the first week or so where you really get to know the people you live with. Got to know all the main places to go out and met many new people. Also went to externally organized events called Meet and Speak organized by City Life Nottingham where I met many other internationals on exchange and studying/working in Nottingham full time. Go out as much as possible these first weeks, makes everything so much more fun.
Courses

General

Lectures are only one hour long and I had max three lectures a week for once course. A normal semester in the UK has 60 credits (equal to 30 ECTS). The classes are split up into 10, 15, 20 credit classes depending on their size and scope. The courses I took had essentially no course work. Everything was based on exams or hand-in essays. So you are left to study at your own pace. Exams were in general between 1 to 2 hours for each course during the last two weeks of the term (for the Autumn semester it was after the holiday break). Teachers had specific office hours every week where you can go ask questions, very open and friendly.

Signing up for courses in beginning was a bit tricky. Go to register for courses at Student Centres as soon as possible because they do get filled up quickly.

Course/s

I took 6 ten points courses to get my 60 credits.

Principles of Dynamics – Dr. Tony Padilla – Went over Classical Mechanics including Lagrangians and Hamiltonians. Tony was a very friendly guy always open to questions. Also an avid Liverpool fan so rather than particles travelling in space they would the “free kicks taken by the amazing Stevi G”.

Structure of Stars – Dr. Simon Dye – Went over star classification and the four main equations that govern the internal structure and the life path of the star. Also very friendly guy who enjoyed to bring up stories about his kids and make quit nerdy jokes (which are always appreciated in a physics class).

Politics, Perception, and Philosophy of Physics – Dr. Phillip Moriarty – A course that scrutinizes the scientific method, the scientific publication system, sciences relationship with the general population as well as politics. Very interesting course that brought out the more social aspects of the sciences. The lecturer, besides having an amazing last name, was always very avid and passionate about the topics and always opened up for discussion at the end of each lecture. Guest lecturers were also common to bring in different perspectives.

Soft Condensed Matter – Dr. James Sharp – A class exploring characteristics of soft matter, i.e. not solids or liquids but the in-between substances like gels. Good lecturer who was passionate about his subject. Appears bit distant at first but if you talk with him individual he is more than happy to help.

Early Modern European History – Phillip Riden – History course spanning 1500-1800 going over the period thematically. A new lecturer every week who is an expert in that area of history so there was not a single lecturer. Phillip Riden was the seminar leader and was the person I was in contact with the most. An insanely knowledgeable man about history and he was a joy to listen to when he went on tangents about his own historical research.

Foundations of Microeconomics – Dr. Silvia Sonderggren/Dr. Trudy Owens – Covered very basic microeconomic theory. Lectures were not the most exciting but they were effective in getting the information across. Again, two teachers who loved when students asked questions and interacted during/after class.
Accommodation

Applied through the webpage for the type of accommodation I wanted, was very easy. Choices were catered hall, semi-catered hall, self-catered hall. I enjoyed living in a catered hall and not having to worry about buying groceries and cooking every day. You can’t be a picky eater however to do this. Catered halls tend to be located right on campus while self-catered were in the city and thus had a longer commute time.

Leisure/spare time
What did you do when you didn’t study?

Travelling and hanging out with other internationals and well as hall friends. I went on organized trips with the organizations mentioned above as well as privately organized ones to Scotland and Ireland. Night life is great in Nottingham and there is not a night where there is not an event happening somewhere.

Costs
Compare costs to Sweden – was it cheaper or more expensive than you had imagined?

It was as expected. Accommodation was quite expensive, but it was expected. Other than that, going out was cheaper than in Sweden. Flights and buses were cheap to travel. If you take trains you have to book tickets early and it’s really worth getting a Rail Card which gives you a 33% discount on train tickets across the UK. I did not buy too much food since I lived in a catered hall so it was not a large expense for me personally.

Other
Don't put things off, do them as soon as possible, travel and go to the party. Your exchange term will be over before you know it.

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