

Francis Bloom
Nottingham Trent University Experience

The past winter into the summer semester I attended the dual degree program, coming from National Sun-Yet Sen University, and going to Nottingham Trent University in Nottingham. It has a wonderful campus located in the center part of the city near the downtown area. It is a beautiful campus as a lot of the architecture was not made in modern times and has an historic feel to it. It is located North west of London in an area called the East Midlands. As it is not in London, it has the student essentials of not being nearly as expensive as London and quite affordable as for as England standards go.

We were given the luxury of arriving 2 weeks earlier then the semester started and they had a good program set for all international students where we created a lot of team building and made friends for the semester and for life. We went on a wilderness escapade and got to do many outdoor activities together seeing the countryside and having a wonderful time. We then went on to take 4 classes in their Business School which were quite challenging and thorough. The professors there really know their business and I felt I learned an immense amount in that semester. I took 4 classes of Humor Resources, Innovation and Creativity, Supply Chain Management, and a work studies class working with actual businesses from a foreign country. The country we had the privilege of going to was Greece. It was beautiful and we also made friends with the students from Greece. We learned a lot about start-up companies and how to create, maintain, our own if we ever have the ambition.

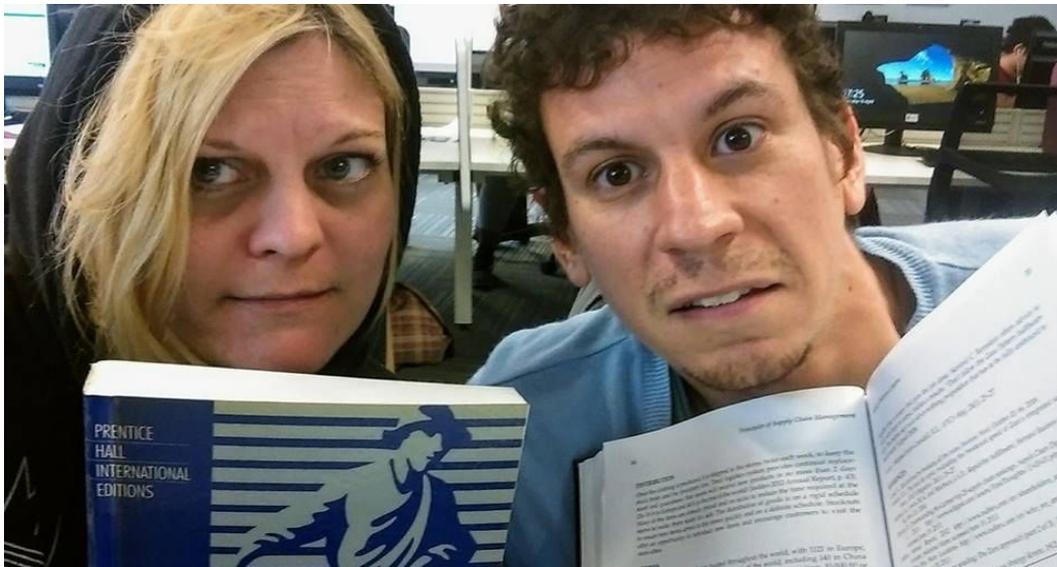
Life in Nottingham itself was wonderful. They have a very vibrant atmosphere and I made friends from all around the world, especially Europe. I even visited a lot of those friends in their home countries when I finally finished the program. Nottingham has a great pub life, as you can experience what the English culture is like, and they have many affordable restaurants. There are a ton of live music venues if you love listening to live music, and even have a lot of open-mics if you fancy singing or playing some music yourself. They have a cricket and football(soccer) stadium with affordable student discounts for the games. Almost every pub and restaurant also has student discounts for anyone going to NTU, as they really take care of students in that town. It is also the former home of Robin Hood which allows for a lot of historical museums and areas you can visit. They also have a stadium for sporting events such as ice hockey, where you can skat yourself, and they play famous bands. I saw an Ed Sheeran concert in Nottingham.

Things we learned while on our semester abroad:

1. HR Management
2. Leadership skills
3. Working as a team
4. Working with people internationally
5. Financial Budgets
6. Many business skills
7. Networking around England and Europe especially

8. Working with startups
9. Conducting Research
10. How to conduct yourself in a business environment

Things that I would be more interested in learning would be how to find your own investors when building your own startup company. I felt they could touch on that a little more. At the end they also gave us a business internship where we had to work 30 hours, mostly unpaid. I felt they should have given us more warning about this internship, and the financial matters concerning working 30 hours unpaid and if you can afford it. As it is essential to conduct this internship, I don't believe the University gave us enough support in finding and helping us get an internship. I felt we were a little bit too much on our own and could have used a lot more help and support finding an internship.



Me and a fellow dual-degree student studying in the NTU Library.



Us pretending to be Batman, where Batman Begins filmed Bruce Wayne mansion in Wellington Park in Nottingham.

1. Introduction of NTU

I had a wonderful time studying at NTU. They had a very comprehensive orientation week which answered many of the questions that were unanswered before we arrived. The first few days were full of errands to set-up our lives in Nottingham. We collected our BMI ID card at the post office, bought SIM cards, applied for student rail passes and national insurance numbers (necessary to work in the UK) and bought all the things we needed for our house, and had a chance to explore Nottingham in the process. My favorite day of orientation was the explore Nottingham task, where we were split into groups to do a scavenger hunt around the city. The culmination of our orientation was at a leadership camp in the Peak district, where we spent two days and one night. This was an excellent opportunity to get to know all the students in our program on a personal level.

2. Learning Experience

I am enamoured of the teaching program at NTU. Courses are set as modules, so you take one course for three weeks, then have one week to complete a final paper or group project. By arranging the courses in this way, it gives students the opportunity to focus on one course at a time and this enabled us to have a deeper commitment and reflection period for each course. The classes were generally small, 15-20 people, and the professors were extremely committed to the students. Lectures were topical and relevant, and we were given many opportunities to work in groups both in the classroom and out.

3. Activities/ life in UK

Life in the UK was COLD at first, which limited our ability to explore as much as we desired. However, as the weather warmed, I spent a lot of time exploring the city and going for walks in and around Nottingham. We also found some open mics to attend, as Francis is a performer and I am an active audience. There were also several comedy nights at the Student Union. We attended a football game at the Nottingham Stadium, there are usually a few games that offer deeply discounted student tickets. We visited Nottingham Castle which is right at the edge of the city and took silly photographs with Robin Hood. We went bowling several times at the derelict bowling alley (there is also a student discount available). We went ice skating at the Nottingham Ice Centre, and Francis and I also saw Ed Sheeran perform there at the end of the semester. We also spent a lot of time attending various university events, several of which were hosted by the Global Lounge, which also offers free lunch once a week.

I spent a lot of time looking for work at restaurants and bars but it was difficult to find a short-term position. Instead I worked for a temp agency and also an event staffing company, as well as doing random odd jobs like handing out flyers at the train station.

4. What did you learn from the dual degree program?

-I learned that I prefer the hands-on teaching methods of the professors at NTU. It is much easier to be engaged with professors who you know face-to-face vs. being one of many in a large lecture hall, as has been the case with all of my NSYSU courses.

-I also learned that I prefer the module system of class schedules. It allows students to more fully engage with the material and commit more attention to detail to the course topic.

-I learned a lot from my fellow students- our program was extremely diverse, we had students from all over the world and it was extremely informative to discuss our course content from a variety of perspectives.

5. Feedback

My main feedback is to give students a more comprehensive understanding of the NTU Dual Degree experience and requirements before they leave for the semester. We were the first students to embark on the Dual Degree program, and we found that there were many requirements and details we did not know about before we arrived. For example, the NSYSU literature suggested that we "may have an opportunity for an internship" when in reality, we were required to complete an internship as part of the degree. This disrupted many of our plans. Students should be advised to begin looking for internships before they leave for the United Kingdom, as many positions were full by the time we arrived.

6. Pictures



Late nights at the library



Our First Poster Presentations.



Francis and I at the Nottingham Robin Hood statue.



Our team at the National Entrepreneurship Challenge.



And these are from a Nottingham Scavenger Hunt.