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Hae

Maa: tuntematon

, , 01.06.2017 – 30.11.2017

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Kaupunki:

Vaihtoaika: 01.06.2017 – 30.11.2017

Vaihto-ohjelma: Erasmus-harjoittelu

Yliopisto:

I am a doctoral student of the higher education group (HEG), Faculty of Management at the University of Tampere. I conduct research on issues relating to higher education management and policies, with focus on public universities. Research is an important activity that is meant for creating and developing valuable knowledge for the enhancement of different aspects of human life. Complementary to research endeavours are certain skills that are needed to facilitate the process of scientific knowledge acquisition. Hence, practical experiences are required to enhance theoretical skills and better prepare candidates for work life. A work placement opportunity is fundamental as a foundation for achieving this goal. That is why I applied for the Erasmus Work Placement Grant.

After acquiring much theoretical knowledge and related skills, I felt it was good time for me to articulate them through some practical experiences. Therefore, the chosen period (01-June to 30-November 2017) was well calculated to fit in my plan. As a third year doctoral student, I was already aware of the placement scheme and so planned adequately for it. Announcements, information and reminders about it were communicated through individual school email addresses, and the university website. Application forms and other resource materials were downloadable from the school website. In addition to that, the Erasmus Mobility office and international student counsellors were quite helpful with their guidance and provision of vital information regarding other aspects of the project, especially in relation to obtaining the required credits for the completed placement. My conclusion is that, the application procedure is not complicated. The Euro-CV template is user-friendly, even though it requires quite some patience from the applicant to get it filled. I think the main problem is finding and getting a place for the work placement.

Notwithstanding, the Erasmus Mobility Office is quite helpful in this regard. I personally did not encounter any problems with getting a placement offer because I was already well connected with Eco2Top Services. This organisation had the right career profile opportunity I was looking for. Even though I had cumulated a long list of organisations to choose from (with the assistance of the Erasmus Mobility Office), I had already experienced with them what I needed to enhance my practical skills on. That however did not stop me from sending

applications to different organisations and institutions. I chose not to limit myself to research organisations because the skills I need which are also in line with the essence of the Erasmus placement scheme can be acquired from a vast range of organisations. One important thing to remember is to include the Europass-CV with a cover letter for all submitted applications. The respond rate was not encouraging. I only received a few replies from the many applications and emails sent; many of which were a refusal. Also important to note is the fact that, in search of leadership, organizational, project management and other skills, I decided to spread my search to other non-academic institutions and organizations. In this case I made contacts with friends, families and mates in other parts of Europe. Given that I am a non-European citizen, I also contacted and asked for assistance from associations of immigrants from my home country living in different European countries where I searched for opportunities.

The agreement procedure was completed immediately after I decided to do the placement with Eco2Top Services. This is a consultancy firm with an international orientation. It is based in Denmark and has among its priorities the desire to provide diverse services within the business management and development field. The company already has business development projects that are ongoing for companies in Ghana and Togo. Nonetheless, her activities and services are not limited to African based companies. She is also offering her services to companies in Denmark. Upon consultation with the company director, we agreed on my assignment and job description. That was when he filled the Training Agreement which I presented to my academic supervisor for validation. Upon assessment of the job description, knowledge, skills and competences to be gained, plus detailed program of the traineeship period, my academic supervisor valued the 6 months traineeship at 10 ECTS credits. The Training Agreement was then forwarded to the Erasmus Mobility office for validation and so I obtained the right to complete a traineeship at Eco2Top Services.

The first instalment of Erasmus Mobility Grant was paid into my account after I got the authorization to begin work at Eco2Top Services. But this was only done when the 2017-2018 Erasmus grant period was opened. By this time I had already researched and made prior arrangement pertaining to lodging and transportation from place of residence to work. I was extremely lucky because I already had a network of friends who helped me out in the endeavour. Copenhagen is quite an expensive city and accommodation is not really cheap in the city. A one-bed room student accommodation costs as much as 380 euros a month. Public transportation is also not as cheap as is the case in most Finnish cities. A monthly ticket for public transportation cost as much as 100 Euros. Overall, a total average monthly expenditure for accommodation, subsistence and travels amounted to a minimum of 600 Euros. It would vary depending on where you live and work. As a foreign student, I already had insurance for health and travels, including other indemnities worth up to 30,000 euros and so did not need to afford any extra insurance. However, Eco2Top Services was responsible for my liability insurance throughout the training period.

The main working language at Eco2Top Services is English language with the Danish language as a requirement, as it is needed for interventions in the Danish market. Given that I have a strong academic English background, I did not find any difficulties settling in as an English speaking colleague with the others. They were quite friendly and receptive. We understood ourselves and they helped me throughout my integration process with regards to work and company culture. I must admit that I met a great and friendly team, and it was real fun to work with all team members. The director who was my main supervisor did all he could to help me through every stage of doubt. Within the broad area of my assignments as assistant project

manager, I was able to learn new things, acquired new skills, enhanced existing skills, and have built a solid base of experience in leadership and work coordination in organizational management. I also learnt resilience and patience in the execution of workloads, working 7 effective hours a day, 5 times a week. My weekends were work-free and leisure filled. The city of Copenhagen has a good number of sight and other attractions both for day and night time life. I did not regret a moment of my time spent on the streets, pubs and other beautiful places in the city.

Since my academic supervisor had signed for 10 ECTS credits, I am sure that he will stay true to his decision. I do also think that the feedback from my traineeship supervisor will substantiate that decision. And given that I am studying for a doctoral degree in the Faculty of management, I find the skills acquired from my work placement experience good enough to be considered as knowledge acquired within the field of management. The credits earned will then be included in the 60 ECTS requirement for doctoral studies in the Faculty of Management.

In all, it is my contention that the internationalization module of the entire European higher education system is part of the harmonization success story of the Bologna process. This is a practice that has gained worldwide recognition and is being adopted in other parts of the world. I was able to learn, understand and adjust into a new national and workplace culture which is important for the dynamism of human resource in a diverse European setting. Equipped with such dynamism any European job seeker would have a better chance of gaining employment within the wider European job market. Personally, I do admit that the knowledge, skills and experiences acquired have enhanced my ability to think within the framework of multiple perspectives. With such ability, there is greater possibility for me to make better and more informed decisions than in the past. I cannot wait to have a second chance for such an opportunity.