

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

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My name is Laura Carvalho, I'm 21 years old, and I was an exchange student from Brazil in the Czech Republic. Studying abroad has always been a dream of mine, so when I had the opportunity to study in Hradec Králové, I knew it was going to be a life-changing experience for me. Since the beginning, months before my arrival, the International Office (especially my coordinator, Tomáš Herčík) was very supportive and helpful with all my questions. And once I arrived in the Czech Republic, Michelle, a student who is part of the Buddy System, was at the train station waiting for me, which for sure made this first day way easier.

Back home, I'm an International Relations student, so in the Philosophical Faculty, I studied many subjects that I've never had the chance to study before, such as Central Europe and its politics, which became one of my study interests after my exchange program. The Faculty offers many interesting courses that fully met my expectations, and the professors were also very helpful and made sure that the students were comfortable even though we were no longer having face-to-face classes due to COVID restrictions measures.

This period away from home can be difficult but also very enriching. I had the opportunity to meet people from all across the world and learn about their culture, language, political ideas. The Buddy System organized weekly gatherings called "What's with the World Today" with all the exchange students to discuss each week one country's politics in which the exchange students could talk about their countries and others could ask questions. I thought this was a very nice way to socialize and also be aware of what's going on somewhere else from the point of view of a local.



Since the Czech Republic is in the center of Europe, it was also very easy to travel abroad and explore places I've never even dreamed I could. But exploring the Czech Republic was one of my favorite experiences here, and even though Prague is one of my favorite cities in the world, the Czech Republic has many other not-so-famous cities and parks that exchange students will love to meet, such as Český Krumlov, Bohemian Switzerland, Adršpach, and Brno.



I'm forever grateful for the time I spent in Hradec Králové; it was definitely a marking point in my life, as a student and a human being. I'll bring these amazing memories and the people I've met forever with me. I can't wait to come back! Thank you.