

Lappeenranta University of Technology

Survival Guide

for International Students and Trainees in Lappeenranta

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Lappeenranta University of Technology



Survival Guide for International Students and Trainees in Lappeenranta

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Foreword

Tervetuloa Lappeenrantaan! Welcome to Lappeenranta!

The International Services and the Student Union of Lappeenranta University of Technology welcome you and wish you a pleasant stay in Finland.

The purpose of the Survival Guide is to provide you with information about Lappeenranta and Finland, as well as the Finnish way of life. We hope that this guide helps you to take your first steps in our country and town and, of course, at our University of Technology.

- ▶ You can find information about Lappeenranta at:
www.lappeenranta.fi

1. Lappeenranta University of Technology

Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) was established in 1969 as a national university of technology. LUT, as well as the 19 other universities in Finland, are all state-run and financed by the Ministry of Education.

Lappeenranta University of Technology is specialised in technology and economics. About 5,000 students study in the various degree programmes offered by the university, and about 1,100 new students are admitted each year. There are about 500 postgraduate students and 900 members of staff.

The most outstanding feature of the university is the way in which it has successfully integrated expertise in technology and economics. LUT's location on the border between the EU and Russia has also had a major impact on the university's activities and orientation.

The university campus is located on the shores of Lake Saimaa, which is the largest lake in Finland. The university is located some seven kilometres from the centre of the city of Lappeenranta and is surrounded by the picturesque Finnish nature.

Lappeenranta University of Technology operates in modern premises. All teaching and research buildings are located in a joint campus area in which new facilities are constantly being built for the university students and researchers.

2. Important Practical Matters

2.1. Residence / Work Permits

All foreign students who wish to study in Finland for more than three months are

required to have a residence permit (non-EU citizens) or register their residence (EU citizens).

EU citizens and citizens of Liechtenstein, and Switzerland must register their right to reside in Finland at a local police. Citizens of the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland) are registered at a Register Office under an Inter-Nordic Migration Form. To obtain a written certificate of registration a student needs to fill out a form at the local police station and include a passport photo and an account of livelihood. A student needs to prove that he/she has at least 500 EUR per month for living. The written certificate costs 45 EUR and it is valid until further notice. After registration an EU citizen can work while studying in Finland and does not need to acquire a special work permit.

Citizens outside the EU/EEA must always apply for their first residence/work permit at a Finnish Embassy or a consulate in their home country before leaving for Finland. The first residence permit is always issued for a fixed term. The first permit is usually granted for a year, unless the residence permit is specifically applied for a shorter period. Students must be able to prove that they have at their disposal at least 500 EUR for a month or 6000 EUR for a year. They also have to attach details of their comprehensive health insurance which covers the types of treatment and costs that are covered by municipal health care services and the public health insurance system.

Students are permitted to do a limited amount of paid work under a residence permit issued for studies if the work

is practical training included in the studies or final project work. Part-time employment is possible if the working time comes to an average of 25 hours per week at most. There are no limitations on working hours in full-time employment during holidays, specifically the summer and Christmas holidays.

If you are a trainee coming to Finland through an international organisation, you either do not need a permit at all or you should have no problems obtaining one.

Please note: Although your residence permit gives you the right to work you should note that it is difficult to find jobs in the Lappeenranta area.

The personnel at the International Services will assist you in obtaining the necessary permit.

- ▶ More information about residence and work permits:
www.migri.fi, www.poliisi.fi
- ▶ See contact information for the Finnish embassies abroad at formin.finland.fi/english
- Countries and regions

2.2. Health / Travel Insurance

All foreign students must have sufficient health/travel insurance while they are studying at LUT. For citizens of EU/EEA countries it is enough to obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from social security authorities in their country of origin. The holders of the card are entitled to the same benefits provided by the Finnish Insurance Institution as Finnish citizens.

Citizens of other countries (non-EU/

EEA) must have valid health insurance cover provided by a reliable and solvent company or institution. Students whose period of studies covers less than two years must have private insurance which covers the costs of medical treatment up to a value of EUR 100,000 (cost level in 2007).

Students must have insurance cover when they apply for a residence permit, otherwise their request for a resident permit will be rejected. Residence permits cannot be issued for periods that exceed the period of the insurance cover. For further information, please contact Finnish Missions abroad or the Finnish Immigration Service.

2.3. Civil Registration

The Population Register Centre which operates under the Ministry of the Interior maintains an electronic database known as the Population Information System, which contains information on Finnish and foreign citizens who reside in Finland. It is compulsory for anyone staying in Finland for more than one year to register with the Local Register Office (maistraatti).

Your tutor will take you to the Local Register Office and help you to fill out the necessary forms.

- ▶ More information on the Population Registration Centre is available at:
www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi

2.4. Taxation

The following information on taxation in Finland has been obtained directly from the Finnish tax administration's web site. More information can be obtained at:

- ▶ www.vero.fi

In Finland resident individuals are taxed on their worldwide income. Residents are taxed according to progressive tax rates for national tax purposes and flat rates for municipal ones (including social security payments).

A non-resident foreigner (a foreign citizen who occasionally works in Finland) is taxed on Finnish-source income only. However, tax treaties may provide that under certain conditions even such income may not be taxed in Finland. Non-residents are taxed at flat rates in accordance with the Non-residents' Tax Act.

An individual is deemed a resident of Finland if he/she resides permanently in Finland or stays in Finland for a continuous period of more than six months. The stay in Finland may be regarded as continuous in spite of a temporary absence from the country. However, a Finnish citizen is considered a resident in Finland for three full calendar years after leaving the country, unless they can produce evidence that they no longer have any essential ties to Finland. Resident status can begin or end during the course of a year.

3. Arriving in Finland

3.1. What to Bring Along

When coming to Finland, there are some things you should bring with you. First of all, in addition to your passport and your residence/work permit, you will need some euros and the phone number of your contact person in Finland. If you have an ISIC card take it with you, as well, although it does not entitle you to any discounts in trains or long distance buses. Student apartments are furnished with the most important cooking appliances (ovens, electric cookers), but the tenants are expected to supply their own dishes and cooking utensils.

You should also keep in mind the weather. Average temperature is around +15 during summer and -7 during winter. However, the temperature may vary from +30°C in the summer to -30°C in the winter. Make sure you bring the warmest clothes you have with you, including shoes meant for low temperatures and snow! If you will be staying in Finland for the summer, do not hesitate to bring T-shirts, shorts and swimming gear with you. Spring and autumn can be very wet, so we suggest you to have some rainwear with you. Sunglasses are needed in the spring and summer and sometimes in winter, too.

- ▶ Information about the weather in Finland can be found at:
www.foreca.com
www.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi

3.2. How to Get to Lappeenranta

If you arrive in Finland at Helsinki-Vantaa International Airport, you can take an express bus from the Helsinki-Vantaa airport or the Helsinki central bus station to Lappeenranta. The trip involves changing buses once or twice and it takes about four hours.

- ▶ www.matkahuolto.fi/en/

The second alternative of getting to Lappeenranta is to take a train from Tikkurila railway station, which is situated a short bus drive from Helsinki-Vantaa airport (takes about 20 minutes). The bus line 61 from the airport to the Tikkurila railway station runs every 10 minutes. You can also take the train from the main railway station in Helsinki, but this is slower than going via Tikkurila to Lappeenranta. Finnair buses shuttle at regular intervals (every 20 minutes) between Helsinki-Vantaa airport and the Helsinki railway station. The train trip from Helsinki or Tikkurila to Lappeenranta takes about 2 hours.

- ▶ www.vr.fi

In order to receive a discount on your bus or train tickets, you should have a Finnish student ID card. In order to obtain the card, the membership fee of Student Union has to be paid. The card will be delivered to the Student Union office where you can pick it up. Holders of an ISIC card will not receive any discount on the bus or train tickets.

If you arrive by car, take a direction

of Kotka from Helsinki, then to Kouvola and finally to Lappeenranta. You can also drive via Lahti, but this is a bit longer route. About 8 km before Lappeenranta, turn right to the direction of Yliopisto (university) and follow the signs which will lead you to the university campus area. The distance between Helsinki and Lappeenranta is 225 km.

3.3. On Arrival / Tutors

International students and trainees are advised to send information about their exact arrival in Lappeenranta as early in advance as possible. Before your arrival a student tutor who studies at Lappeenranta University of Technology is appointed to you. The tutor will meet you at the place of your arrival in Lappeenranta (the airport, railway station etc.). Your tutor's contact information will be given to you before your departure to Finland. The tutor will help you with practical matters in the beginning of your stay in Lappeenranta, as well as introduce you to the student life. In the Student Union, there is also a secretary of international affairs (int@ltk.fi) who will give you information about different activities.

If your study/traineeship period is not organized by the International Services the arrangements for your arrival may differ from above. Your contact person at LUT will be able to provide you with more details.

3.4. Orientation Program

Make sure you take part in the orientation program arranged for international students at the beginning

of each semester. You will receive important information about practical matters and studying at LUT.

3.5. Check-List for International Students at LUT

- Meet your student tutor who will help you with the points listed below
- Attend the orientation program
- Register at the university
- Pay the Student Union fee and apply for the Finnish Student Identification Card
- Visit a bank to open an account (with your tutor) if you need to open an account
- Pay the rent
- Make a change of address notification
- Get your LUT user account and password from Origo

4. Life in Finland

Finland's geopolitical location between East and West has always been reflected in the country's events. With this combination of western and eastern influences the Finnish culture has developed into something strong and highly individual, just like the Finns themselves.

4.1. The Country

Independent since 1917, Finland is today a pioneering EU member state in many ways. It is a safe and stable welfare state with a functioning infrastructure, education system, health care services

and a vibrant cultural life. Our country has also been rated one of the least corrupt states in the World.

Finland is also a country with a strong competitive edge. Finland's investment in R&D as a percentage of the GDP is among the highest in the World. The International Institute for Management Development has ranked Finland as one of the most competitive countries in the World several times. Finland's strength lies in the fact that its economy is one of the most technologically advanced in the World. The WEF report cites Finland's "strong political institutions, a focus on technology, and sound macroeconomic management" as some of the reasons for the country's impressive economical performance.

4.2. The Finns

Finns have a very strong sense of national identity. This is rooted in the country's history - particularly its honourable wartime achievements and significant sport merits - and is today nurtured by pride in Finland's high-tech expertise.

Even though it is not possible to talk in general terms of a national character, all in all it is fair to say that Finns perhaps give an extreme degree of space to other people, which can mean that the initiative for making friends often falls to the foreigner. However, many have observed that once the ice is broken Finns are open, warm and can be relied on. Honesty and dependability are the two characteristics most highly regarded by Finns.

English is widely spoken in Finland.

Of course a few Finnish words and expressions make an exotic souvenir to take home with you. Should you want to learn more Finnish during your stay, the LUT Language Centre offers Finnish study programme for foreigners during the academic year. Etelä-Karjalan Kansalaisopisto, an educational institution that is open for everyone regardless of age or educational or professional background, also offers Finnish lessons for foreigners.

4.3. Equality

There are approximately 2.7 million women and 2.6 million men in Finland (at end of 2009) and equality between them is provided in the equality act passed in 1987. Finnish women were first in Europe and second in the World to be granted the right to vote in national elections and to be electoral candidates in 1906.

Finnish women are among the best educated within the EU and more than half of the students in higher education institutions are women. Most Finnish women have paid employment because efficient maternity leave and child day care systems enable a career and family life to be combined.

The visible rise of women to the highest echelons of political power really took off in the 1990s. In 1990, Finland became the first country in the World with a female Minister of Defence, in 1994 a woman became the Speaker of Parliament and in 2000 the country elected its first female president.

4.4. Way of Life

The Finnish way of life reflects the democratic principles of the nation. It is based on equality of all people. Nature plays quite a big role in the Finnish way of life, as well as sports, arts and sauna.

Finns have a real passion for sports and their patriotic spirit is aroused in international ice hockey games, skiing competitions, athletics (especially when competing against neighbouring countries) and in motor sports, in which Finland made a real breakthrough in the late 1990s. Finland has also achieved a lot of media coverage internationally because of organising crazy sports events such as wife-carrying, boot-throwing, swamp football and mosquito killing World Championships or swimming in the ice cold water in the winter.

The fact that there are 5.3 million Finns and 1.7 million saunas says it all. The sauna is still an important part of the Finnish way of life. There are saunas everywhere in Finland and it's customary to go to sauna about once or twice a week. As a general rule women and men bathe separately, with the exception of husbands and wives and parents and their children.

The Finnish way of life is easy-going and strict formalities are not really observed. People are quite frank and straightforward. Silences and gaps in the conversation are not generally dreaded the way they are in many other countries. In conversation it is polite to wait for the other person to finish what s/he is saying before presenting your own point of view, which tends to slow down

the conversational rhythm. In Finnish the familiar word for you, 'sinä', is used almost universally. The older generation tends to use and expect the formal you, 'te'. At work, the atmosphere tends to be informal; first names are used and people dress casually.

4.5. Visiting Friends

When invited to visit friends it is polite to be punctual. Finns rarely kiss or hug but instead give a firm handshake while looking each other in the eyes. Avoiding eye contact is taken as rudeness and can even be interpreted as a sign of dishonesty. People always take their shoes off inside their homes. Smoking indoors is very rare and forbidden in all public buildings, transports etc.

Finns usually invite each other over for a cup of coffee or tea. It is a great honour to be invited for a dinner, whereas being invited for a sauna is much more commonplace. In Finland it is customary that at the table people start eating when everybody has been served. It is also polite to thank the person who prepared the meal, so remembering to say "kiitos" after dinner is very important.

4.6. Nature and Seasons

The Finnish landscape is a blue-green mosaic of waterways and forests with room to move and wide-open spaces. The country is among Europe's largest when it comes to land area but one of the smallest when it comes to population. Roughly 70 % of the land area is forest and 10 % water. There are about 200,000

lakes, and the largest archipelago in Europe is found in Finland's waters.

The four clearly defined seasons are characteristic to Finland. Summer is a time of light; in the summer nights the sun dips below the horizon for just a couple of hours and the night is just a delicate twilight. In Lapland, the northernmost part of Finland, the midnight sun can be experienced during June and July when the sun remains above the horizon for the whole time.

The night without darkness is celebrated towards the end of June with the Juhannus Midsummer festivities. Traditionally large bonfires are lit and spells are cast to find your true love. During the summer months many Finns virtually move to their summer cottages. Towards the end of the summer, during warm and darker August evenings, crayfish parties are held.

Autumn is the time of harvest, berry picking and collecting mushrooms. The so-called "ruska", when leaves change colour dramatically into a sea of bright reds and golden yellows, presages the arrival of rains or snow is also a part of autumn. The darkest time of year is in November when leaves have fallen and rain has not yet turned into snow, which will reflect light.

The northern parts of the country will receive a coat of snow towards the end of October or early November, while in the south it usually will not happen until early December. Winter is also a time of the polar night, when the sun will not rise above the horizon in the north of the country at all for several months.

Christmas is a great family festival

with rich traditions. Santa Claus lives in Finnish Lapland and he visits many families personally or simply leaves presents under the Christmas trees. The spring period from February to April is the time to enjoy outdoor activities and sports: the sun reappears and there is enough snow for different winter activities. The arrival of summer is marked carnival style with the traditional students' and workers' festival on May Day, or Wappu.

4.7. Finnish Currency, Standards or Measurements and Time Systems

The currency is the euro, which is divided into 100 cents.

Winter time in Finland is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. The time difference between Eastern US time and Finnish standard time is seven hours. From the end of March to the end of September Finnish summer time is three hours ahead of GMT. Finland is, therefore, always one hour ahead of central European time.

The metric system is used in Finland. The system for the sizes of clothing and shoes is the same that used in most Western European countries.

4.8. Education

Studying and training in Finland is a safe but quite an exotic way to acquire academic and professional experience, as well as to gain personal growth while living in a foreign country and another culture.

Education is highly valued in Finland, and the high standard of education

forms one of the cornerstones of the Finnish national strategy. The Finnish education system consists of preschool education, comprehensive school, post-comprehensive general and vocational education, higher education and adult education. The comprehensive school provides a nine-year education program (with a voluntary 10th year) for all school-aged children, beginning at the age of seven. Post-comprehensive education is provided by general upper secondary schools (approximately three years, ending in the national matriculation examination) and vocational institutions (three years, leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications).

The Finnish institutions of higher education are internationally oriented, and the country's good reputation in higher education combined with a wide range of courses offered in English attracts an increasing number of international students.

In Lappeenranta University of Technology, as in most Finnish universities, lectures, seminars, group exercises, independent work and exams have traditionally been the main study methods. Studying in Finland is generally regarded as relatively free and independent, but you should keep in mind that most of the exercises are compulsory. Some students are surprised at the strong emphasis on books as an essential source of information compared to lectures. Many students find that the relationship between students and teachers in Finland is relaxed and informal and that teachers are easy to approach. Our university has a Language Centre where students may

carry out additional language studies, which are often included in degree programmes.

The Academic year is divided into two semesters. The autumn semester runs from late August to December and the spring semester from January to May.

4.9. Student ID Card

If you will be studying at LUT as an undergraduate (bachelor / master) student for at least three months, you are obliged to join the Student Union. The membership fee is 51,50 EUR for one semester and 103 EUR for one academic year. This payment needs to be executed through a bank transfer and can not be accomplished in the Student Union office. As a member of the Student Union you have the right to receive a Finnish student identification card which costs 15 EUR and for which you need to provide a digital passport photo.

The student ID card is ordered via internet (<http://portaali.lyyra.fi>) after you pay the Student Union membership fee. You may attach a digital photo to your order. The card can be paid instantly through an online banking system or you may print the generated payment slip. Again it is not possible to accomplish the payment in the Student Union office. Once your payment (EUR 51,50 or 103) has been registered, the application will be processed. You will be notified when the card is ready to be picked up from the Student Union office.

A Finnish student ID card entitles its holder to have lunch at a reduced price in all student canteens in Finland and free

medical treatment at the Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS or YTHS in Finnish) at all the universities in Finland. FSHS at LUT is open from Monday to Thursday at 8-15 and Fridays at 8-13, from September to May. FSHS also provides dental care and the possibility to see specialists when necessary for a small fee.

The Finnish student ID also entitles its holder to a 50 % discount on railway and long distance bus tickets. Other advantages that the student card provides include discounts on concert, theatre, museum and exhibition tickets, swimming pool entry charges, purchases at various shops and meals at certain restaurants.

The student ID card is not accepted as an official identity card and it is therefore recommended that you keep your passport or driving license with you when doing official business.

Trainees are not eligible to join the Student Union and therefore will not get the Finnish student ID card. However, they are entitled to a 50% discount on railway and long distance bus tickets. An application form for this can be obtained from the International Services after arriving at LUT.

4.10. Accommodation

The foreign students and trainees live in student apartments owned by an organization called LOAS (Lappeenranta Opiskelija-asuntosäätiö, Lappeenranta Student Housing Foundation). The housing application can be found at the LOAS website. Because the number of students applying for the LOAS housing is big, students are advised to

apply for housing as soon as their stay in Lappeenranta is confirmed. LOAS webpage can be found at: www.loas.fi

The flats are composed of two or three individual rooms with a common kitchen and a bathroom. Each room is furnished with a bed, a large desk, a desk lamp, a chair, a bookshelf and a wardrobe. The kitchen is fully furnished with a kitchen table and chairs and equipped with a refrigerator, cupboards, a sink, an electric cooker and an oven. The bathroom is fitted with a shower, a sink and a toilet.

The common facilities in LOAS buildings usually consist of a laundry room equipped with washing machines, dryers and an iron and, of course, saunas, which can be used free of charge. On certain days and hours the saunas are open for all the tenants in the building, with separate saunas for men and women. In addition, tenants can reserve a sauna for their personal use once a week. LOAS buildings also contain additional facilities, such as storage space for each tenant and bike shelters. In each LOAS building, near the main entrance, there are bulletin boards on which you can find useful information, such as the sauna time tables and a list of all tenants.

The rent for a room in a LOAS apartment depends on the floor area of the room, the age of the building and how recently the building has been renovated. The rent can vary between 200 and 290 EUR, in addition to which you are required to pay a deposit of 200 euros. No blankets, pillows or bed linen are included in the rent. It is recommended

you take a sleeping bag with you for the first nights. The rent for LOAS apartments must be paid by the 5th of each month.

LOAS apartments are not mixed. Male and female students can live in the same apartment on request only. Pets are allowed in LOAS apartments as long as they do not disturb neighbours.

The following items are NOT provided in a LOAS apartment:

- Coat hangers
- Dishes and cooking utensils
- Cleaning material and toilet paper
- Blankets, pillows, bed linen, towels
- A parking space in front of a LOAS building can be rented for 4 EUR/month.

Due to the cold winter conditions in Finland every parking space has its own timer-controlled electric connection for warming the car engine. Continental European cars do not usually have the required electric socket and heater that can be installed in all regular petrol-fuelled cars.

4.11. The Costs of Living and Shopping

Since university education is funded by the government through the Ministry of Education, students enrolled in regular degree studies pay no tuition fees. The Student Union, however, charges an annual membership fee for its activities.

Students have to pay for their books and other materials, as well as their accommodation and living expenses. The total monthly living expenses of a single student are on average approximately

700 EUR. Do not forget personal and leisure expenses. There are many things to do and see in Finland, and during your stay you may also want to visit the neighbouring countries.

It is possible to buy all the basic household necessities, such as soap, shampoo, toilet paper and food, in a normal Finnish supermarket. The larger supermarkets have an excellent selection of products ranging from clothes to sports equipment. Supermarkets are usually open between 7 and 21 on weekdays, and between 7 and 18 on Saturdays. Opening times on Sundays vary depending on the supermarket. Supermarkets are generally closed on public holidays.

The town market is open all year round during the mornings in front of the Rakuuna supermarket and offers fresh food and handicrafts. Kiosks are open every day between 9 and 21 and sell a limited variety of foodstuff, such as cheese, bread and biscuits, as well as other items such as newspapers, phone cards, stamps and cigarettes.

There are five canteens in the campus area: three in the university building, one in the Student Union building and one in the Karettek technology centre. Normal lunch costs about 2 EUR with the student discount. Trainees are required to pay the regular price of approximately 5 EUR. There are also lactose free and vegetarian meals in all canteens.

All prices in Finland contain value-added tax (VAT). Tips are customary only for hotel and restaurant doormen and porters. Restaurant and hotel bills

always include a service charge. Barbers, hairdressers and taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped.

4.12. Health Care

A Finnish student ID card entitles its holder to free medical treatment from the Finnish Student Health Service, FSHS (YTHS in Finnish), at all universities in Finland. YTHS at LUT is located in block 7 of the 1st and 2nd floors of the main university building. It is open from Monday to Thursday at 8-15 and on Friday at 8-13 September to May. YTHS also provides dental care, as well as the possibility to see specialists for a small fee.

- ▶ For more information about YTHS go to: www.fshs.fi

Trainees at LUT are entitled to the free occupational health care services. Appointments are booked through the coordinator at International Services.

When these services are not available and you need urgent medical assistance the local hospital treats you. The South Karelia Central Hospital in Lappeenranta (Etelä-Karjalan keskussairaala) provides an emergency service during evenings, weekends and public holidays. Citizens of EU/EEA countries need to show their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or private insurance documents. Citizens of other countries need to show a comprehensive health insurance document. Please see more information on www.lut.fi/exchange -> Services -> Health services. The emergency

number is 112 (ambulance, police, fire department).

4.13. Local Transportation

There are fairly good local bus connections from downtown Lappeenranta to the university. Unfortunately most bus drivers do not speak English. There is a yellow rectangular sign with a picture of a bus at every bus stop. Buses 1, 3 and 5 drive through the centre of Lappeenranta to the university (yliopisto). Bus 5 leaves from the Travel Centre (Matkakeskus) where railway and bus station are situated. The university is the last stop for all buses and therefore hard to miss. The buses leave from downtown every fifteen minutes and a ticket from downtown to the university costs about 3 EUR. The foreign students are also entitled to a buscard of 44 trips that costs 93,40 EUR + 6.50 EUR deposit. Students living in Lappeenranta at least for two years are entitled to buy also a monthly ticket that costs 43 EUR + 6.50 EUR deposit.

A taxi from downtown to the university costs about 15 EUR. There are taxi stops in front of the main post office, at the railway station and in the market place. Tel. 0200 60 400

4.14. Driving Licence

The following text is quoted from the official website of The Finnish Police:

Driving licenses issued in another EU or EEA country and interim driving licenses issued in the Nordic countries

entitle the holder to drive motor vehicles in Finland equivalent to those indicated on the non-Finnish licence. The driver must be at least 18 years old. The right to drive is valid regardless of whether the person is in Finland as a tourist or residing permanently.

A person residing permanently in a country that has signed the Geneva or Vienna Road Traffic Convention and who holds a national or international driving licence or an official Finnish or Swedish translation of a national driving licence is entitled to drive motor vehicles equivalent to those indicated on the non-Finnish license for up to a year following entry into Finland, provided that the person fulfils the Finnish age requirement to drive such vehicles.

The right to drive is based on the possession of a driving licence issued to a person living permanently in a country that has signed the Convention. A driving licence acquired in such a country during temporary residence (for example as an exchange student) does not entitle the holder to drive in Finland.

A person who lives permanently in Finland or has been studying in Finland for at least six months may apply to exchange a driving licence issued in another EU or EEA country, excluding temporary driving licences, for an equivalent Finnish driving licence without having to take a new driving test.

- ▶ More information on www.poliisi.fi
-> Licences -> Driving licences
- ▶ Tips for driving in the winter and about winter tyres:
www.liikenneturva.fi

4.15. Banking

The banking hours in Finland are at 10-16.30 on weekdays. The most common forms of payment in Finland, in addition to cash, are either bank or credit cards, whereas cheques are not used anymore. When you open an account in a Finnish bank you are entitled to a Visa Electron card, which allows you to withdraw cash from automated teller machines and pay in various shops and restaurants. The ATMs also accept international Visa and MasterCard. The easiest way to do your banking is via internet. If you open an account in a Finnish bank you can make an internet banking agreement. Some banks offer these internet services also in English. It is the cheapest and easiest way to do your banking in Finland 24 hours a day.

4.16. Postal Services

There are a few post offices (posti) in Lappeenranta. The main post office in the downtown area is open on weekdays at 9-20 and on Saturdays at 10-14. The closest postal agency to the university is located in Siwa supermarket in district of Uus-Lavola and is open on during the supermarket's opening times. Stamps can also be bought from kiosks, bookstores (including the university bookstore) and most supermarkets.

Mailboxes are orange and bear the label "posti". The mail is collected from the boxes in the afternoons once every weekday.

- ▶ More information about postal services: www.posti.fi/english

When moving and changing your address you are required to fill out a special form that can be found in all post offices. You need it in order to have your mail sent to your new address.

4.17. Laundry

The apartment buildings where foreign students and trainees live offer shared laundry facilities where washing machines can be used for free or a small fee.

There is one self-service laundrette in Lappeenranta, Pyykkityttö at Suonionkatu 27, and several dry cleaners where clothes can be left for cleaning.

4.18. Cinemas

In Finland movies are not generally dubbed but nearly all foreign movies are subtitled in Finnish. This way you can watch a movie without knowing any Finnish at all. There are two cinemas in Lappeenranta: Nuijamies and Kinoaula, which are both situated downtown. You can buy discount movie tickets from the Student Union office at the price of 7 EUR. The Student Union also has a film club which shows some films at the university.

4.19. Public Libraries

You can find quite a few books and even comics in foreign languages in Lappeenranta public libraries. To be able to borrow books from libraries you need a library card for which you have to fill out an application form and present your ID. Books, music and DVDs can be borrowed free of charge. The Sammontori library has quite a good selection of books, as well as audio-video material. You can request books from the main library located in the town centre. Libraries are usually open from 10 am till 7 pm on weekdays. The opening hours may be shorter during the summer.

- ▶ More information at:
www.lappeenranta.fi
-> Services -> Cultural Services

There are three main public libraries in Lappeenranta:

- The main library, Valtakatu 47, tel. (05) 616 2340
- Sammonlahti library, Sammontori, tel. (05) 616 5041
- Lauritsala library, Hallituskatu 27, tel. (05) 616 4771

4.20. National Holidays

Below you find the most important national holidays in Finland during the year. Most shops are closed on these days and there may be some changes in the public transportation timetables or it may not run at all. You should remember this especially if arriving in Finland on a national holiday. To check the dates

please see <http://almanakka.helsinki.fi/english.html>

New Year's Day	January 1st
Epiphany	January 6th
Good Friday	March or April (April 22nd, 2011)
Easter Sunday	March or April (April 24th, 2011)
Easter Monday	March or April (April 25th, 2011)
First of May	May 1st
Ascension Day	May or June (June 2nd, 2011)
Midsummer Day	Saturday at the end of June (June 25th, 2011)
All Saints Day	First Saturday in November (November 5th, 2010)
Independence Day	December 6th
Christmas Eve	December 24th
Christmas Day	December 25th
Boxing Day	December 26th

4.21. Sauna

Sauna is an integral part of Finland. It is the best place to relax your muscles and forget your daily hurries and worries. A sauna can be anything from a room adjacent to a bathroom of a house or flat to a building of its own. Saunas also come in all sizes, the smallest being big enough for just two people and the largest for 40 people. A sauna consists of an electric or wood-heated furnace covered by several layers of medium-sized stones, and benches that line the walls of the sauna on several levels around the furnace. The interior of a sauna is often made of pinewood treated

especially to withstand large changes in temperature and humidity. The sauna also had a religious function before Christianity came to Finland: it was a place where women gave birth and where the dead were washed before burial.

The temperature in a sauna can vary between 80°C and 100°C and water is thrown onto the stones to increase the temperature and humidity. Usually only family members and really good friends take mixed saunas, whereas public saunas are never mixed. People swim before and in between taking a sauna, especially in the summer but also during the winter. For an extra special sauna experience we recommend a wood-heated sauna located beside a lake. No sauna is complete without a "vihta" or "vasta", which is basically a bunch of birch branches tied together. The scented sap of the birch cleans the skin and gives the sauna a pleasant scent. For the full effect, beat yourself lightly with the vasta after first dipping it into a bucket of water. After taking a sauna, it is polite to rinse the wooden bench, fill the bucket and replenish the wood in a wood-heated furnace.

4.22. Alcohol and Smoking

Finns do not consume more alcohol on average than other Europeans, although drinking might be a bit more weekend and bar oriented than elsewhere. The age limit for purchasing alcohol is 18 years for beer and wines, and 20 years for strong liquors. Wines and liquors are sold only at ALKO stores and are rather heavily taxed. Most restaurants, bars and night clubs impose

an age limit on their customers. The legal age limit to enter a restaurant is 18, but for certain nightclubs the limit may be 20 or even 24, so we suggest you carry an ID with you if you plan to visit a bar.

Finnish are strictly against drinking and driving and therefore, as the bars and nightclubs close for the night, people queue up at taxi stops. Finnish legislation permits a driver a maximum blood alcohol content of 0,05 %, which is equivalent to one beer during the evening. Driving drunk is a punishable crime.

There is also a strict anti-smoking law, which forbids smoking in public buildings, bars, restaurants and working places. Some places have special built-in smoking rooms but in general the smokers have to smoke outside. Smoking in private homes is also inadvisable.

4.23. Drugs

Using, possessing and selling any drugs are forbidden by law in Finland. The general atmosphere against all drugs is very strong compared to many other countries. Opinion against drugs is very strong among students. These regulations are controlled strictly by the customs and police.

5. Student Life

5.1. Student Union

The Student Union of Lappeenranta University of Technology was founded in 1969 to unite the students and promote their academic and personal

welfare. There are roughly 4,500 student members. Finnish legislation requires that every university in Finland must have a student union and that every person studying in the university must be a member of the Student Union this also applies to all international students studying in Finland for over three months. The Student Union takes care of certain duties provided by Finnish legislation, for example issues concerning the students' health care. It also has student representatives in university administration and other administrative bodies.

Although the Student Union seeks to promote the welfare of its student members, it also has a business function. In addition to providing services free of charge for the students at LUT, it gives financial and administrative support to over 30 clubs and societies covering a wide spectrum of recreational, cultural and religious activities. The Student Union also owns the Aalef group that runs the bookstore at the university and a student canteen in the student union building and two restaurants in the city centre.

Student Union activities are open to all the students at LUT and personal initiative is a greatly valued characteristic. The Student Union especially welcomes any idea that you as a foreign student or trainee may have to develop the Union, LUT or the student community as a whole. We continuously encourage our foreign students and trainees to present their own cultures and universities to the local students and are grateful for any positive influence you have on LUT. There are two people

in the Student Union who are in charge of international affairs: the Secretary of International Affairs and the Member of the Student Board on International Affairs.

- ▶ More information on the Student Union can be found at: www.ltky.fi/eng/

5.2. University Clubs and Associations

The students of each department have their own student club, a guild. The guilds organise parties, excursions and different kinds of happenings to unite the students of each department. They also sell clothes with the logo of the guild, badges and songbooks. One of the most visible signs of the guilds' activities is the overalls that they provide for their members. Each guild has different colour overalls, and it is regarded as the "student uniform" at most parties and excursions. You can buy overalls from your guild.

There are about 30 clubs at the university. They all offer students the

opportunity to have a good time doing things they are interested in. Most clubs are active during the fall and spring semesters. You can find more information about them on the bulletin boards at the university.

- ▶ More information about clubs can be found also on the Student Union webpage at www.ltky.fi/eng

5.3. Traditional Events

Lappeenranta offers many possibilities to live active student life full of traditional events and parties during the whole year. Taking part in the events is a good way to meet new people and have lots of fun!

Some of the most traditional events are:

- **Freshmen weeks** in the beginning of the autumn semester are organized to help new students to get to know each other and other university students. This is why there are parties and events almost every day for the first two weeks. They include for example the beach party with contests and a city orienteering with fun games.
- **Sauna evenings** are organized every Tuesday. Besides going to the sauna you

Here is a list of the guilds at LUT:

Guild	Department	Color of overalls
Armatuuri ry.	Energy Technology students	white
Cluster ry.	Information Technology students	red
Kaplaaki ry.	Industrial Engineering and Management students	blue
KeTek ry.	Chemical Technology students	black
KRK ry.	Mechanical Technology students	orange
Enklaavi ry.	Business Administration students	neon yellow
Sätky ry.	Electric Engineering students	green
Pelletti ry.	Environmental Technology students	grey

can relax and play games there.

- **Sitsit** stands for having dinner, singing drinking songs, and drinking.
- **Finnhits** is a traditional 70s style party and one of the most popular parties of the year.
- People get dressed in their best at **academic balls**. A three-course menu with drinks is being served and people sing traditional drinking songs.
- **Liugur** is a snowy winter event where students sled down the hill on funny sledges that can be made of anything from sofas to bathtubs. The strangest sledge wins an award.
- **Wappu** is celebrated for two whole weeks full of parties and events. It is the grand finale of the spring semester and anxiously waited all year long.

5.4. Sports

The university and the area around it provide great possibilities for sport enthusiasts. In the university sports hall you can do sports from morning until late night and there is a gym at students' disposal free of charge! There are also great possibilities to go jogging. The sports secretary and Parru ry, the sports club, are in charge of all the sports at the university.

You can practise almost every type of sport imaginable in Lappeenranta. Here are some examples:

Aerobics & Gym

Huhtiniemi, Syke Gym, Platinum, Lehmus and LadyLine (females only) sports centres offer gyms and several different kinds of aerobic sessions held every day, including Les Mills classes. During the

summer there are even outdoor aerobic sessions by the harbour for free. At the university there is a gym for students that can be used free of charge. Also the gym for the staff is open to students except on week nights.

- Syke Gym, at Technopolis (Skinnarila), Laserkatu 8, tel. 044-544 2929; in the city centre Kauppakatu 66, tel. (05) 4202 3910, www.sykegym.fi
- Etelä-Karjalan Liikuntakeskus (Huhtiniemi), Pelitie 36, tel. (05) 541 9600, www.liikuntakeskus.com
- Lappeenrannan OMT-keskus Lehmus, Valtakatu 34, tel. (05) 544 6900, www.lehmus.fi
- Platinum, Toikansuontie 11, tel. 054 202 3033, www.powerhouseplatinum.fi
- Lady Line, Snellmaninkatu 10, tel. (05) 541 1340, http://lapeenranta.ladyline.fi//in_English

Athletics

The municipal track and field centres close to the harbour can be used free of charge.

Badminton, Floor ball, Basketball, Squash

Check the Parru bulletin board at the university. Here are the addresses of some other places where these sports can be played:
Huhtiniemi, Pelitie 36, tel. (05) 451 3570
Sammonlahti, Ruskonlahdenkatu 7, tel. (05) 616 5003

Ballet, Dance

For dance lessons, contact Tanssiopisto Sonja Tammela (Dance School Sonja Tammela), tel. 040-0854281

Boxing

K.O. Club, Koulukatu 21,
toimisto@koclub.fi, www.koclub.fi/

Equestrian Sports

Contact Hubertusseura, ratsastustalli,
Helsingintie 530, tel. (05) 452 9290.

Ice Hockey, Skating

During the winter there are many outdoor skating rinks in Lappeenranta, which can be used free of charge. There is also an indoor skating rink owned by the city at Kisakatu 9, tel. (05) 616 3023.

Martial Arts

For karate, contact Lappeenrannan Shukokai ry., tel. +358 400 557 558.

For other martial arts (aikido, judo, taekwondo, hoi jeon moo sool, kick boxing) contact the sports club.

Skiing

There are many possibilities to go cross-country skiing in Lappeenranta. The Student Union rents skis to international students with a small fee. There is also a small downhill skiing centre in Joutseno (30 km from Lappeenranta) called Myllymäki. The university downhill skiing club LaSkin organises skiing trips to Lapland every winter.

Swimming

During the winter two indoor swimming pools are open to the public. One is in the downtown area at Pohjolankatu 29, tel. (05) 616 3020 and the other one is in Lauritsala at Luukkaankatu 51, tel. (05) 616 4777. Outdoor swimming pool in Myllysaari beach is open all the year

round and it is located about 1 kilometre from the harbour. In the summer you can enjoy the many beaches in Lappeenranta.

- ▶ www.ltky.fi/eng
- ▶ www.lappeenranta.fi -> Services
-> Sport and outdoor activities

Tennis

There are ten public outdoor tennis courts (open from May 15th to September 15th) and six indoor courts in the Huhtiniemi sports centre. The prices are reasonable and equipment is rented out.

For more information on tennis courts maintained by the City of Lappeenranta, call (05) 616 3014, and in Lauritsala (05) 616 4775.

More information on sports can be obtained quite easily. Check out the bulletin boards at the university, the web pages of the Student Union (www.ltky.fi/eng) or ask your tutor. The secretary of international affairs will also help you on this (int@ltk.fi).

6. Finnish Language

Finland is a bilingual country with two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. The number of Swedish speaking people is about 5 percent.

6.1. Pronunciation

Finnish pronunciation is quite easy since each letter in a word is pronounced and there is only one way of pronouncing each letter. When speaking Finnish you must remember to always stress the first

syllable. Many words appear to be very long and these are often composed of several separate words. These "composed words" are very common in Finnish and often replace complete phrases.

In Finnish, every letter is pronounced, and therefore, a double letter is stressed. The meaning of the word depends on the length of the vowels and syllables.

A	as in cAr	aamu (morning)
E	as in tElEphone	eilen (yesterday)
I	as in pln	pilvi (cloud)
O	as in lAw	omena (apple)
U	as in pOol	tuuli (wind)
Y	like the French sUr	yleensä (usually)
Ä	as in hAt	päivä (day)
Ö	as in fUr	yö (night)

6.2. Basic Expressions

Finland	Suomi
Finnish, a Finn	suomalainen
Finnish (language)	suomi
Hello, hi	Hei, moi, terve
Thank you	Kiitos
Yes	Kyllä
No	Ei
Excuse me, sorry	Anteeksi
I'm sorry.	Olen pahoillani.
I don't understand.	En ymmärrä.
I don't speak Finnish.	En puhu suomea.
Do you speak English?	Puhutko englantia?
How are you?	Mitä kuuluu?
Fine, thank you	Kiitos hyvää
Here you are	Ole hyvä
Goodbye	Näkemiin
See you later	Nähdään
Bye	Hei hei

7. Useful Addresses and Phone Numbers

Emergency number 112

In case of an emergency call 112. This number will connect you to the police, ambulance or fire department. The emergency number does not require an area code and phone call is free of charge.

Police

The police station is located in downtown at Villimiehenkatu 2. There is also a lost property office (Löytötavaratoimisto) which is open from Monday to Friday at 9-12 and 13-16.15.

Lappeenranta University of Technology, International Services

P.O. Box 20, FIN - 53851 Lappeenranta

Fax +358 5 621 6089

Internet www.lut.fi

Office hours Mon-Thu at 9.30-15, Fri at 9.30-14

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Student Union of Lappeenranta University of Technology

Internet www.ltky.fi/eng

E-mail: int@ltky.fi (international secretary)

Others

Cafés

- Cafe G Bar, Kareltek Building G (next to the Student Union House)
- Café Kristiina and Arnold's Donuts, IsoKristiina shopping centre, Brahenkatu 3
- Cafe Weera, Weera shopping centre, Kauppakatu 41
- Coffee House, Armada shopping centre, Kauppakatu 29
- Majurska, fortress, Kristiinankatu 1

Camping Sites

- Huhtiniemen Matkailukeskus Finnhostel, Kuusimäenkatu 18, tel. (05) 451 5555

Cinemas

- Kino-Aula, Valtakatu 39, tel. (05) 457 0065
- Nuijamies, Valtakatu 39, tel. (05) 457 0066, www.nuijamies.com

Department Stores and Supermarkets

- Anttila, IsoKristiina shopping centre
- Citymarket, Toikansuontie 4
- Euromarket, Kaakkoiskaari 22
- K-market Kaneli, Kannelkatu 2
- K-Supermarket Rakuuna, Sammonkatu 5
- K-Supermarket Sammonlahti, Korpikunnaankatu 1
- Lidl, Myllymäenkatu 36
- Lidl, Puhakankatu 1
- Prisma, Puhakankatu 9-11
- S-Market Sammonlahti, Orioninkatu 2
- Valintatalo, Kourula, Katajakatu 10
- RobinHood, Myllymäenkatu 34

Insurance Companies

- Pohjola, Toikankatu 4, tel. 010 558 516, www.pohjola.fi
- Tapiola, Oksasenkatu 1 and Puhakankatu 9-11 (in Prisma), tel. 010 195 100, www.tapiola.fi

Liquor Stores (ALKO)

- IsoKristiina, Kaivokatu 9
- Prisma, Puhakankatu 9-11
- Citymarket, Toikansuontie 4

Night Clubs

- Diva, Snellmaninkatu 10
- Giggling Marlin, Oksasenkatu 2
- Golden Apple, Valtakatu 34
- Wiltsu, Kauppakatu 39

Pharmacies (apteekki)

- Lappeenrannan I apteekki, Prisma
- Lappeenrannan Keskusapteekki, Iso-Kristiina
- Yliopiston Apteekki, Kauppakatu 23

Places of Worship

- Lutheran Churches: Lappeenranta, Lappee, Lauritsala, Sammontori
- The Orthodox Church, Fortress
- Jehovah's Witnesses, Kantokatu 19
- Methodists, Kiviharjunkatu 3
- Baha'i Community, tel. (05) 452 3342
- Catholic mass in the Orthodox Church every month's 3rd Sunday
- Catholic Church, Valimontie 1, 45100 Kouvola

Pubs

- Birra, Kauppakatu 27
- Green Apple, Valtakatu 34
- Hemingway's, Valtakatu 31
- Iltätähti, Ostosraitti, Skinnarila
- Irish Pub Old Park, Valtakatu 36
- Lucky Monkeys, Valtakatu 42
- Old Cock, Valtakatu 54
- Suvi Saimaa, harbour (in the summer)
- Prinsessa Armada, harbour (in the summer)
- Kasinoterassi, harbour (in the summer)

Restaurants

- Casanova, Brahenkatu 1
- Huviretki, Valtakatu 31
- Olé, Raatimiehenkatu 18
- Rosso, Kauppakatu 29
- Tassos, Valtakatu 33
- Torilla, Kauppakatu 21
- Wolkoff, Kauppakatu 26

Taxi

- Taxi service, tel. 0200 60 400

The City Theatre

- Valtakatu 56-58, tel. (05) 453 1155, www.lappeenranta.fi -> Services
-> Cultural Services

Tourist Information

- Kauppakatu 40 D, tel. (05) 667 788, www.gosaimaa.fi/en/

Transportation

- Lappeenranta airport, tel. (05) 680 6370, www.flylappeenranta.fi
- The central bus station (Matkakeskus), tel. 0200 4053, www.matkahuolto.fi
- The railway station (Matkakeskus), tel. 0307 20902, www.vr.fi
- The passenger harbour: Karelia Lines, tel. (05) 453 0380, www.kareliainlines.fi/

Taxi

- tel. 0200 60 400

Travel Agencies

- Kilroy Travels Finland, tel. 0203 545769, www.kilroy.fi
- Matka-Miettinen Saimaa Tours, Kirkkokatu 10, tel. (05) 453 0110
- Matkapojat, Kauppakatu 35, tel. 010 2323 890
- Matka-Vekka, Valtakatu 36, tel. 020 1204 330
- Pohjolan Matka, Valtakatu 36 B, tel. 0201 303 500, www.pohjolanmatka.fi
- Saimaan Liikenne, Valtakatu 39, tel. 020 141 5700
- Saimaan MatkaVerkko, Valtakatu 48, tel. (05) 541 0100
- Suomen Matkatoimisto, Koulukatu 12 B, tel. 0600 97215, www.smt.fi

Embassies in Finland

The contact information for foreign embassies in Finland can be found on the Internet on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland's website at www.formin.fi -> Diplomatic missions.





Open your mind. LUT.
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