

Chris: Hello and welcome to this study abroad podcast. We're here today to speak with one of our study abroad program students about their study abroad experience at reading, so I'll be quiet now and I'll let you introduce yourself.

Gunnar: OK. Hi everybody. My name's Gunnar. It's my fourth year at university. I've done three years back at my home school in Colorado in the USA. I have been here in reading for the last two months and I have about a month to go. I'm in the business program here at Henley Business School and I've had a lot of fun. I've had some good times and I've I feel like I've got a pretty good experience of how school and living and everything that goes with it happens here in the UK after these last couple months. And so yeah, I'm hope I would be excited if I can impart some wisdom or give some useful tips for anyone who may be coming over here or going to CSU back in back in the states.

Chris: Grand, thank you. Good. So you're at Colorado State, aren't you? Colorado State University?

Gunnar: Yes, that's right.

Chris: And just just here for the autumn semester.

Gunnar: Yeah. The semester or the term? Whatever.

Chris: Is interchangeable words.

Gunnar: Yeah.

Chris: And so when of see you, you're you're here at reading.

Chris: Why did you choose us? What took your fancy about the University of Reading as a study abroad destination?

Gunnar: Well, you know, I was fortunate to have a lot of options through Colorado State, there's a lot of part in the universities all over the world. I had a couple. I had a short list of countries I was particularly looking at. I was looking at Australia and the UK. Yeah, and I liked Reading for a few reasons. I really liked the Business School here. That's why I came to study. It's not my main study at home, but it is a secondary study. And this seemed like a really useful way to apply that, given that the international aspect of being here kind of applies to the international aspect of business. So I wanted that perspective. I also liked that reading is close to London because for those who are coming over here to study abroad, you're also looking to travel a lot of the time. So that was useful as a as a destination port and and just in doing research I read really good things about the university and it seemed to reflect a lot of the values that my home

university shares of a green campus and sustainability. And I really like that about it and I thought it would be a good fit. Also, it's convenient that the language is the same. And is it different culture entirely? But it's similar enough to where it doesn't take too long to figure out how to get around and do things.

Chris: You're see taking a few modules in the Business School and that is the the business is the minor sort of element of your degree back home. So what's your favorite business module that you've been studying with us?

Gunnar: Good question. I think my favorite so far has been management and media industries. I've been very fascinated with that because I have a big passion for a lot of things regarding media, just in my personal life. I really like to play music. I like getting involved in social media is I'm gonna use that in my future future career learning about film and television and everything that goes with it. It's been really interesting to learn the business side of that industry.

Chris: Fantastic. Yeah, just one of the many modules. You can take at Reading. There's a lot more in the Business School and elsewhere in the university and you also said you've sort travelled quite a bit. Yes, I will say to students, you are here to study, but there's obviously a lot more opportunities when you are overseas, away from home to explore other parts of the world. So yeah, tell us about where you've been, what you've got involved with what you've done.

Gunnar: Yeah. So UM to start with the travel side of things. I've been fortunate to be able to travel to several countries. That's one thing that's great about coming to Europe is that you can travel a lot for a lot cheaper than maybe people in the in North America are used to. All the countries are very close together compared to our standards of the West, and so it's very nice to be able to travel to different places. I've been to the Netherlands, Serbia, as indicated by my background, I also visited Italy, Spain, Wales. I'm actually leaving tomorrow to go to Ireland and I believe I'm going to try to shoot for Scotland next week. So yeah, I've been super fortunate to be able to check out a lot of different places, and it's been very nice that it's it's a lot more affordable to travel once you're here versus from America.

Chris: Grand and I'll just say for folks listing. Uh. Gunnar's background cause I've got him on camera here. It's the Serbian flag that he's got up on his student room wall. For a souvenir from his recent trip there. So and you said see about like you like to play music and other things that you've umm been doing and So what else have you got involved with on on campus in in terms of like club societies, events, other bits and pieces?

Gunnar: Yes, there is a lot of opportunity at the University of Reading to get involved in any number of things that you might be interested in. And that's one thing I've really

appreciated about this school, compared to maybe just how a lot of universities can be in America. You can definitely find those things, but it seems like there's always something happening at reading and every night of the week you can find something for your interest. My personal biggest interest has been music, and so within a few days of being here I made a lot of connections in the rock society. The Band Society the Singer, Songwriter Society and several more. And just through going around and meeting people, I've been able to get involved in playing several open mics. There's opportunities to play live shows, some that you're even paid for and just the opportunity to play music with people from all around the world. It's been really amazing and you know for students who are coming over here from overseas, you may not have, you know, the ability to bring your instrument of choice with you and that that can apply to a lot of different interests, whether it be art or, you know, maybe gaming and something like that. You can't always bring all of that equipment with you, but they have a lot of opportunities here at reading to rent equipment or use resources that you might not be able to bring. And so that's been super helpful because I've been able to explore and and entertain my musical interest without necessarily needing all of my own equipment.

Chris: And obviously that saves a lot of the luggage allowance, doesn't it?

Gunnar: Yes, yes, absolutely.

Chris: Now, I think we've we've always had study abroad program students get involved in all sorts of clubs societies at the university and and it it's new stuff every term because you're such a well rounded group of people from all over the world coming to us of all your different interests and likes and dislikes and things like that. And it's then lovely to hear about what you're doing while we're sitting study abroad HQ hopefully doing things to help make that happen for you. So no, it's lovely to hear. So you're approaching the end, sadly, of of your term with us at reading. See, we're looking forward to welcoming more students in the future. While obviously we're sad to see people go, we always are. But what hints and tips do you have for those folks? You'll be joining us or thinking about joining us on the study abroad program at reading in the future?

Gunnar: Sure. I do have a couple I've been thinking about it and umm, I think the first thing I would say is don't expect every day to be wildly exciting or mind blowing. It is school at the end of the day and some days you're just working on your classes and taking care of your tasks. And I think especially at the start of your time, you might find those days a little tricky as far as becoming homesick. That's definitely something I really experienced when I got here, you know, missing my family, and I have a girlfriend at home that I've missed a ton. And you know those days are they can be tough, but don't let those get you discouraged because they truly are not representative of the time

that you will have. And once you're acclimated through those first few weeks, you really will start to have the experience you expect to and before you know it, it'll be over. I'm sitting here and I have less than three weeks less than I feel like I got here yesterday, so don't get discouraged by the days that don't feel outstanding and also don't take it. Don't take for granted the days that do because it'll be over quick. Another piece of advice I'd want to share is take advantage of your first week specifically as much as you can. The welcome week is busy, but amazing. There's a lot. There's events every single day that you can go meet people and they have a fair for sports clubs and they have a fair for other types of clubs and student resources. There's events all over campus, basically, on the hour, every hour, the entire first week. Take advantage of that time and get involved early because it's gonna hold a lot of benefit for your time here. If you can make connections early versus waiting around and doing your own thing and then trying to get integrated towards the end, you can really maximize your time. If you get involved early and also my third piece of advice would be. Explore like go get out there. Walk around campus. It's beautiful. It's great for walks and even the town of Reading itself is really cool and there's a lot to see in the surrounding areas of campus. So I would say definitely do some exploring and just generally put yourself out of your comfort zone and try out things that you wouldn't typically do because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. And I think that it's best to take advantage of it and to push your limits because you're going to learn a lot about yourself. And I think that's a lot of things that you can take home with you that are gonna hold a lot of benefit.

Chris: Wise words. Thank you for sharing. I'll second everything you've just said, particularly sort of making the most of that initial week. Welcome week and Orientation is busy for everybody as an exciting time on campus, so joining up with societies, finding like-minded people, both on the study abroad program and elsewhere in the university will, as Gunnar has said, really put you in good stead to have, hopefully a grand time with us. I'm so gonna and thank you very much for sharing your experiences as an incoming study abroad program student at the University of Reading, and for anybody who's been listening, who's been inspired, please feel free to send us an email to studyabroad@reading.ac.uk. You can also access a function to book an appointment with myself for a colleague from the team via our website. We'll be more than happy to help support advise you and hopefully welcome you to reading at some point in the future. So thank you very much.