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# Survival Guide: Nepalese Students Moving to Finland

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Kerava

## **Survival Guide for Nepalese Students Moving to Finland**

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**Survival Guide for Nepalese Students Moving to Finland**

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This Bachelor's thesis is valuable to gain adequate information about the chosen topic. This thesis focuses on Nepalese students who wish to study in Finland. The abstraction of the thesis provides to produce the map of own research as well as examines the international student perspective. The major priorities are culture, education, intercultural communication, and development work. The topic was developed from own personal experience being an overseas student and an aspiration to promote student life in Finland to become easier and informed.

The thesis highlights an improvement proposal consisting of a guide to the student in Finland, daily life, culture, and communication. However, to analyze development work from student's perception, this thesis combines together the recommendations and suggestions to be presented to schools' international coordinators. In general a guide will help new students adapt into a studying environment, familiarize into practices and habits in a new culture. The thesis examines the motivation factors influencing Nepalese students to make the decision. Therefore, the research problem debates into the motivations to apply overseas studies, how the motivation factors affect student's decision and how to develop international studies more friendly. The research problem aimed to improve discussion on students' life, their major priorities, and opinions. The report's main priorities are students' personal opinions, conceptions and beliefs that include public surveys, personal surveys and data collection.

In order to complete the whole research work, the thesis is divided into two different studies. Methodological summary of the thesis was approached through qualitative open-ended questions and a quantitative survey. The survey was carried out using an online questionnaire among Nepalese students studying in Finland. The empirical part focuses on a questionnaire and a semi structure theme interview for data collection. Additionally, some students who could not be interviewed individually provided written answer to a questionnaire via e-mail and social network Facebook.

The research is therefore mainly based on survey work, international book publications and journals, government publications, administrative statistics and Internet sources regarding the third country student in Finland. Lack of general information about the country and study method, both presented students experiences and views, while many respondents felt problematic life in Finland. Most interesting motivation for Nepalese students to come to study in Finland was because of free education. The common issue was practical matters such as daily living, finding a apartment on the other hand managing time to study and work, homesickness were remained struggles for most of the Nepalese students. Students gave suggestions and open responses of how to make student life easier and how to develop endurance guide for Nepalese students' in Finland. The results of the survey are positive and negative regarding the problems faced by the students at Finnish schools.

Keywords: Education, Finland, Intercultural Communication, Nepal

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## 1 Introduction

Across the developed nations, the growth of international students is increasing year after year. The figures of international students studying overseas are increasing from less developed countries due to limited access to education (Mazzarol 2001, 3). In Finland, international students are often reviewed as an attractive individual in the same way skilled workforce. Notably, in a European nation such as Finland language skills play a vital role in finding jobs after graduation. However, there is no such evidence in Finland like different policies, procedures or systems for international students in finding a quality work. According to Finnish legislation the discrimination based on national origin, nationalist and language is prohibited (Kiuru 2012, 208). Most probably the government and experts often understand the positive influence from international students. As a result, the employment rates upon graduation are relatively high and due to the age status of international students their social and educational benefits consumption is extremely low (Klasek 1992, 57). From the governmental point of view the purposes of internationalization are more suitable to a national perspective compared to an institutional viewpoint (Scott 2000, 6). In the past, international education was seen as essential for foreign policy especially with regard to national security and peace among nations. While at present the movement of international students is still considerable, it does not have the significance impact it once did (Knight 1996, 9).

Based on the survey of Internationalization by European Commission, in the 1990's international degrees were taken more intensely into the educational programs and with an exceeding pace since 1995 when Finland joined the European Union. To get over with the changes and to comprehend the revolutions Finnish education improves students to become energetic citizens of Europe and the world. Through all levels of the institution sector, Finnish education programmes contain modules assisting internationalization (Ministry of Education, 2009). The European commission based on the member state policy stated, inviting third country individuals to study or work in the EU would increase the union's quality in education as well as improve modernization, entrepreneurship and financial development (EU migration of international student to the EU, 12-13).

The circle of the economy, people, knowledge and concepts impacts every nation in a different way due to different individual history, culture, and lifestyle of the nation (Knight 1966, 6). Conversely over the last decade's internationalization at Finnish institutional level represents study faculty exchanges, international students, development of new trends towards attitudes and values in students, further development in intercultural dimension and international networking. According to the Government's Development plan for education and research for 2009-2015, Finnish higher education institutions are advised to improve their international cooperation through the implementation of the new Internationalization plan.

## 2 Research Background and Definition

### 2.1 Purpose of the Thesis

The aim of the author's to write this thesis is to provide the complete survival guide for the Nepalese student moving to Finland. The author's own personal experience being an international student for four years in Finland and desire to develop student study in Finland more informative, truthful as well as easy. In practice, there are several Nepalese students who come to Finland without understanding the facts. On the top of that they lack important information of the country. As a result, many practical problems stay unclear between the students as well as school coordinators.

The topic is more specific so the thesis is mainly based on Nepalese student's experiences but also surveys outcome. The author however, believes the comparison of Nepalese students experience living in Finland and the expectations of Nepalese student before coming to Finland to study gives the results more reliable accurate and informative facts of culture shock.

In order to comprehend the whole research work, author develops two different studies. One is an interview and the other one is an online questionnaire. It is obvious and simple that this research has aspects of qualitative open-ended questions as well as the quantitative survey. The interview is conducted with Nepalese students living in the Uusimaa region around the Helsinki city as well as outside the Uusimaa region.

On the other hand, the online questionnaire was sent to the Nepalese students living in Finland. As a result, the online questionnaires extracted the various difficulties of Nepalese students who came to study. This also helped to get the possible solution from the student's experience. The interview and online questionnaire are used to make the final result of the dissertation. In addition, from the quantitative research the knowledge, encloses, concepts, suggestions of Nepalese students makes thesis more accurate and specific. Therefore, to make a final outcome of the thesis all the answers from experts and individual students are used. The thesis keywords are Culture, Education, Finland, Intercultural communication, Nepal.

## 2.2 Research Problems and Questions

The thesis was started at the beginning of spring 2015. In the beginning, Nepalese students often struggle to study in Finland. Studying in Finland is challenging with many practical decisions. Where can you find a suitable apartment? How long do you have to wait to get student apartment? How would you make a new bank account or what sort of bank account is suitable? What do you do if you fall sick? How will you find hospitals? How will you cope to get rid of homesickness? How will you manage the cost of living and travel? Therefore, this paper collects useful information, suggestions and provides guidelines to improve the Nepalese student's life in Finland. At the same time, there are various personal aspiration or motivation factors involves in the decision-making process. Hence, the theme interview answers those topics: Before planning the studies, what are the main reasons to apply for overseas studies to Finland? What are your motivations to come to Finland? What motivation factors affect student to make the decision?

Due to lack of awareness among students, they use consultancy to get help with the application process. Many of them do not have good information regarding the study and application process. Perhaps the lack of easy access to the Internet or the false information about the jobs and opportunities marketed by consultancies has been one of the main reasons. However, most of them apply studies by themselves. On the other hand, lack of clear information on general matters has increased hassle to students. Before the studies Information, assistance on studies that student receive from UAS? How is the overall admission process from Nepal?

### Research Conduction

Google docs via social media and email were used to collect primary data. The online questionnaire link was sent to Nepalese students studying in Polytechnics only. Out of total 110 online survey questions, 103 answers were received. In order to complete the research work, five Nepalese students were interviewed. Two of them were from Helsinki region and three of them were from outside Uusimaa region. Three students who couldn't be interview personally were interviewed via skype and face time video call. The purpose of the survey was made clear to the participants. The survey comprises on assembling useful information from the Nepalese students as well as their challenges to study, work and live in a new environment. Therefore, this thesis tends to provide the challenges faced by the Nepalese students and their adaptations into the Finnish culture and Finnish market.

### 3 Higher Education in Nepal

In Nepal, after completing the secondary level education, students enroll into Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB)'s +2" program to get the equivalent of international high school degree. Some students enroll into the International A levels program and some into the Indian Higher Secondary Education Board (CBSE) accredited programs. The higher secondary education curriculum is two years long with emphasis on science, management or liberal arts. Higher education is mostly taught in English making students ready to succeed at national and international colleges.

After completing their two years of higher education studies, students can choose to further their studies in Nepal. Science students join engineering, medical, nursing, and pharmacy schools for professional degrees. Similarly, some science students join bachelor's program in one of the areas of natural sciences like forestry, biology, physics, chemistry, biotechnology and others. The students of management curriculum usually join professional degrees like certified accountant, hotel management and so on. Most of the students who cannot get into such programs continue further education in their related fields.

#### 3.1 Development of Overseas Studies in Nepal

Many students apply for colleges abroad. United States of America (USA), Australia, United Kingdom (UK), India, Bangladesh, European countries, China, Japan etc. are the most popular destinations for students. Most of the talented students try to get into premiere colleges in the USA, UK and Europe. Such students start preparing since in high school taking exams like TOEFL and SAT. Students interested in the field of medicine who cannot get into the selective medical programs in Nepal apply for medical schools in Bangladesh and China. Students prefer engineering and nursing schools in India if they fail to get into the good programs in Nepal. Many students after they fail to get into any of the above options try to take the IELTS test (International English Language Testing System) and apply for further education in Australia, Europe, Canada and the USA.

Students can apply for higher education in most of the part of the English-speaking world with a passing IELTS score. Australia and UK are not attractive to many students recently due to lack of scholarships and high living and tuition costs. The United States (US) offer good solution for students who can afford some money and at the same time for students who are smart enough to get full scholarships. European nations like Finland, Norway, Sweden and Germany offer free tuition for college education. The programs are however selective and students often have a hard time getting into colleges of their choice. Many students take language courses to be prepared for education in such countries. Some students take language



courses in Japanese and apply to colleges in Japan. Japan is not as a popular destination because English is not the major language of learning there. Students usually spend about a year after high school preparing for the abroad application process, preparing the financial documents, applying for the visa and then planning the travel logistics.

Many students cannot continue their further studies due to family reasons. They have to work to make a living for their family. Some students have to stop their studies and go abroad to work. The students from poor family background go to Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Iraq because they now have the responsibility to take care of their families. Students who are academically poor also try to go to countries like Korea, Malaysia, and Philippines for employment opportunities.

After bachelor degree, many students who studied in Nepal try to apply for local jobs. Similarly, most of the students who went abroad try to get jobs abroad as Nepal do not provide ample job opportunities. Quite a few students cannot complete their education in abroad due to language and culture barriers, poor academic results and other reasons and hence return back home. Many students with engineering and medical degrees from Nepal apply for graduate programs abroad. The Poor job market and insufficient opportunities lead to a major number of students trying to go abroad for better opportunities. Parents want their children to go abroad as well as they believe it will provide them with better opportunities for future and which in turn can help their families

### 3.2 Issues with Abroad education

Abroad study application process in Nepal is marketed by many private consultancies solely looking to make money. They provide false information about the jobs and other opportunities abroad and lure student to their consultancies and charge hefty fees for the application process. The marketing strategy of Nepalese consultancies has been the main reason for the failure of Nepalese students abroad. The consultancies make it seem like students don't have to pay for anything once they go abroad and that students can easily find a job to earn enough to cover their expenses. But in reality that is not the case and many students cannot afford to pay for their expenses and fees once they get abroad.

There are many risks involved with the study abroad process. Completing all the requirements set by country and the school does not guarantee an admission. Students might not get accepted at a college, they might not pass the language requirements, they might not be able to gather enough financial support, and may eventually be denied Visa. At this point, the students would have already spent a large sum of money. Families with low income either sell

their property or borrow money from their neighbors at a high interest rate to cover those expenses.

Only few of many applied students are accepted and they get to go abroad. Most of them always have in their mind the money they have spent and the amount they owe back home. This causes the distraction in their mind while they are continuing their education. Things do not go as they were told by their consultancies back in Nepal and many students are not able to complete their education. At this point they won't have any other option than returning back to Nepal. This causes financial distress to the students and their families because when they return back, they still owe money.

#### 4 International Students in Finland

There has been a positive trend of international students coming to Finland since 1995. The previous two decades are the good examples of gradual improvement in international students, coming to Finland. Over the same period, international movement of students and teachers has become progressively key part of the overall development of education (Ministry of Education, Finland 2009). According to the government's current development plan for research and education, the mobility of students and further improvement of graduates and teachers will implement in Finnish institutions. In addition, the opportunity for international peer learning will be innovative for education organizers (EU Commission 2010, 5).

The Finnish Government has introduced a national strategy for the internationalization of higher education. The strategy indications are clear to the direction towards strengths, quality, infrastructures and attractiveness of education system. Therefore Finnish government programmes emphasize on the improvement of international mobility of students, researchers as well as teachers (Virkkunen 2009, 7). For the year 2009-2015, the Finnish government set strategy for 30 different improvements. Importantly, one of the measures was to attract more foreign students and experts at the same time to improve the status of immigrants and developing service structures (Ministry of education, Finland 2009).

Based on the statistics via center for international mobility (CIMO), each year the number of foreign students in Finland is growing. In 2009, the number of overseas students in the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) was 7,100. While the number increased by 36% with 19,100 students in 2012. Finnish higher education confirmed majority international students migrated mostly from Asia, Africa, Europe, ETA and America. Similarly, Finnish University of Applied Sciences operates annually 20,000 bachelor's degrees in different fields. On the other hand, the bachelor degree programmes offer in the UAS is just 100 (Study in Finland 2014). Since 1990s, Internationalization has become one of the areas of improvements and key aims of

Finnish institutions. As a result, Finland has been rated top in international education, research, innovation and technology (Ministry of education Finland 2009, 14).

By the year 2012, the international students most captivating destinations are southern Finland, west and middle Finland lastly northern Finland. According to statistics Finland, in 2009 surprisingly china and Russia account for topmost countries of origin for international degree students while Germany, France, Spain and Italy account for top countries to send exchange students to Finland. The Finnish higher institutions have made great improvements in internationalization by the year 2014. Overall the international students are enrolled at Finnish higher education institutions was approximately 20,000 (Study in Finland, 2014).

#### 4.1 Development of Higher Education

In 2002, the ministry of education debated the process of the Finnish double higher education system. One is at Universities and the other one is at University of Applied Sciences (UAS). At the same time, the ministry of education released a document from which the process began. Nevertheless, all Finnish Polytechnics were working on a permanent basis by 2000 (Ministry of education, 2009). Universities of Applied Sciences often known as polytechnic provide specialized or occupational higher education while universities offer academic education based on research (Study in Finland, 2015). According to the Finnish government development plan for internationalization strategy, Finnish higher institutions are increasing the quality and attractiveness at the same time, they have motivated non-Finnish students to come to study, and stay in Finland. In Finland, Universities of Applied Sciences are the good examples of attractive institutions with a multicultural environment of non-Finnish students and exchange students.

#### 4.2 Enhancement of International Students in Finland

University of Applied Sciences emphasizes on various sectors such as information technology, business, industry and service sector. Under the ministry of education and culture currently there are 24 polytechnics institutions in Finland. UAS focuses on development needs of the Finnish market as well as the global market by producing qualified graduates for various occupational field and professional duties (Centre for international mobility, CIMO 2015). During the last 10 plus years, the numbers of overseas students in Finnish higher education institutions have trebled. At present the record shows the number of overseas students originating from Asia and Africa is increasing (Ministry of Education and Culture). The most recent data from statistics Finland confirmed the total number of foreign students in UAS to be 9673 by 2014. The top destinations according to the data of enrollment are as follows:

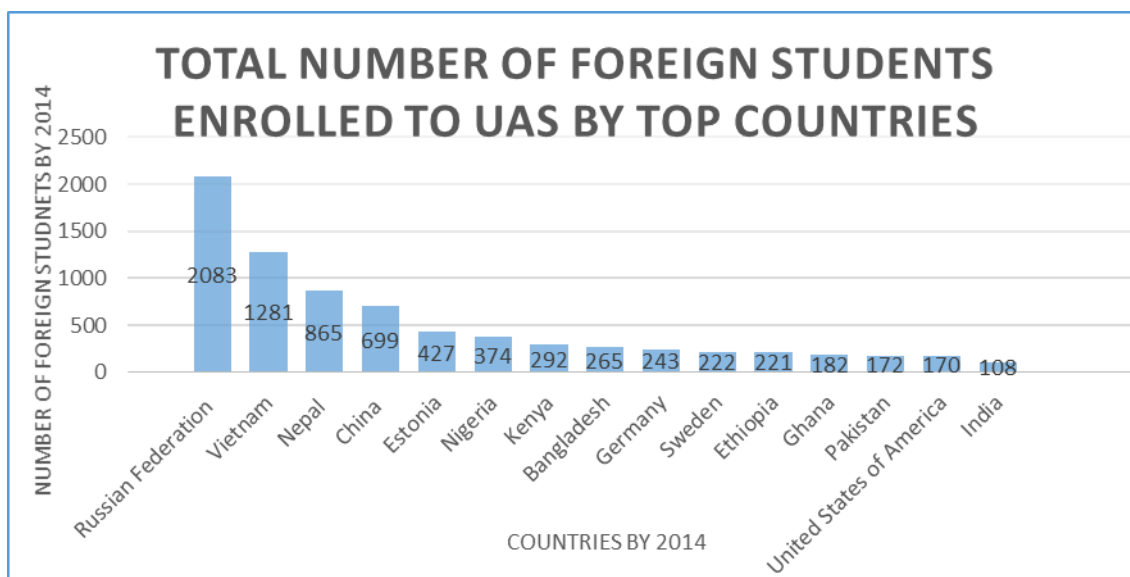


Table 1. Total Number of Foreign Students Enrolled to UAS by Top Countries. (Statistics Finland 2014.)

The above table 1 illustrates the total number of foreign students enrolled to University of applied sciences by 2014. In particular, the majority of foreign students enrolled to Finnish Polytechnics are from Russian Federation. The total number of Russian students enrolled to polytechnics is 2083. In fact about 60% of the total enrollment account for non-European countries while just 40% of total enrollment originate from European countries (UNESCO 2014). Similarly, from Asia Vietnam accounted for the second highest number of students (1281). While Nepal has also emerged among top three countries. Nepal accounted for the third highest number of students (865) enrollment in the UAS. The neighboring countries Estonia account for 427 and Sweden account for just 222 numbers of students enrolled to Finnish polytechnics.

Field of Studies	Number of Students	Percentage 100%
Social sciences, Business and Administration	3276	34,1
Technology, Communication and Transport	3119	33,7
Social services, Health and sport	1216	12,7
Tourism, Catering and Domestic services	839	8,8
Natural Sciences	601	6,2
Culture	355	3,7
Natural Resources and Environment	49	0,5
Humanities and Education	22	0,2

Table 2. International Degree Students in Polytechnics by the Field of Education 2013. (Statistics Finland 2013.)

The above table 2 shows the total number of overseas students in percentage as well as in numbers those are enrolled to various field of study in Finnish University of Applied Sciences in 2013. The total number of overseas students enrolled to the University of Applied Sciences was 9477. Surprisingly, the total number of foreign students was 3276. Students who studied social sciences, business and administration accounted for highest percentage 34.1. Similarly, 3119 (33, 7%) and 1216 (12.7%) international students enrolled to study technology, communication & transport and social services, health & sport respectively. In addition, the number of students studied tourism catering & domestic services are 839 accounted for just 8.8 %. In 2013, the least number of students 22 studied humanities and education that contribute 0.2% in Finnish polytechnic.

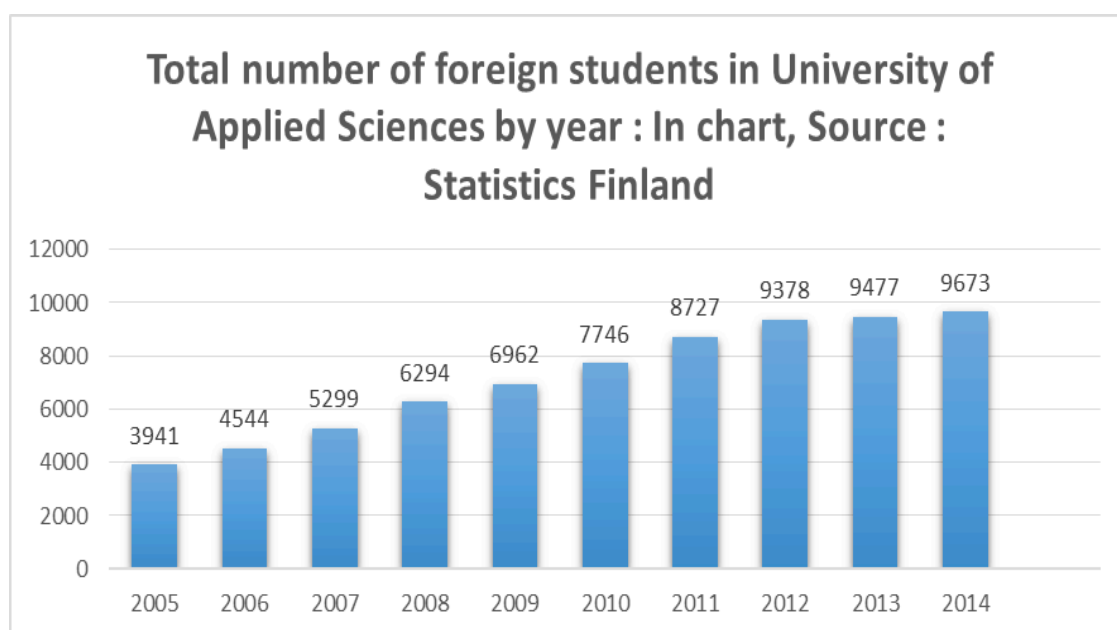


Table 3. Total number of Foreign Students in University of Applied Sciences by Year. (Statistics Finland)

The above table demonstrates the average growth from 2005 to 2014 led to significant number of international students enrolled to Polytechnics. In 2014, the number of foreign students in Finnish Polytechnic set the record of total 9673 students. The number has increased by 196 compare to the year 2013. It is clear that in 2005 the overall number of foreign students enrolled to UAS in Finland was just 3941. The record shows that the number of foreign students coming to Finland was growing slowly until 2008. Surprisingly the number was almost doubled in 2010 accounting to 7746. Likewise in the year 2011, the number of foreign students accounts to 8727, which was just 981 more than 2010. So far the number of international students coming to Finland is still increasing. In 2012 international student's number accounted to 9378 while in 2013 the figure was just 9477 in total. However in 2014 foreign

students in University of Applied Sciences record the highest number that was 5732 more than in 2005. According to the recent surveys, the majority international students in the university of applied sciences come from Asia that account for 38% and Africa 35% (Niemelä 2009, 26).

## 5 Motivational Factors

There are several factors that encourage students to study in a new destination and to live in a specific city. Factors such as, climate, cultural activities, international experience, safety, facilities, quality of life, visa application and immigration prospects encourage students (Bodycot, 2009; Chen 2007). More importantly, to study in a new destination and a specific institution, student satisfaction is a key factor influencing their decision (Petruzzellis & Romanazzi, 2010). The major prospect of studying abroad is to gain a different perspective on life and career; be it by adapting to a new education system or by immersing yourself in new culture and lifestyle. Study abroad challenges an individual's lifelong belief by presenting them with new perspectives and leads them onto the path of personal and professional growth. One of the key motivation for students to opt for Finland as their education destination is because Finland has a free undergraduate education. For Nepalese students, educational expense is the main factor in choosing where to study abroad and with its tuition-free policy, Finland ranks as the top choice. Also, the living expenses are comparatively cheaper in Finland than other educational destinations such as UK, Australia and the USA. Students can also work during semesters to cover up living expenses. Students get Schengen visa, which let them travel freely to other European countries during semester breaks, which is an added benefit.

### 5.1 Academic Impacts

Study abroad can be inspiring while different motivation factors influence the student desire to study abroad. The respondents exposed some motivation factors as well as decision-making process has a connection with academic impacts. Courses are taught in English and English is the major language of teaching in Nepal. As a result, numerous Nepalese students choose to study higher education courses that are taught in English. Many possible factors like tuition fees, living expenses, and education program have an impact with the decision. Nepalese student often consider the living costs and tuition fees as one of the influence factors to study in overseas or their interest to study in Finland. Undergraduate education is free in Finland. Some Nepalese students expressed free education in Finland was their motivation factor while others pointed out free education has the strongest influence to make a decision to study in Finland. Plus 2 equivalent of International high school degree is accepted widely in many Finnish institutions making it easier transition for students. Finland has higher standard of living and advanced education system compared to Nepal.

## 5.2 Work Opportunities

In Finland, students are allowed to do part time job while they are at school. They are allowed to work up to 25 hours per week. Most of the Nepalese students do part time work while going to school and make up money to cover the living expenses. Many students can save some money to send back home and take care of their families. Some students see part time job as a financial support for their living in Finland. Most of them always have in their mind that they owe some money back in Nepal from their families. Due to the reason student do not wish to ask money with their parents to study and live in Finland. The experiences of living and working would benefit their career in the future. Consequently, the data analysis argues that many Nepalese students see part time work opportunities as one of their motivation factor that influence in their decision to study in Finland.

## 5.3 Easy Admission Process, Experience and Development

The majority of the respondents explained the motivation factors that influences on their interest to study in Finland were: their convincing ambition to be independence and confidence, to build experiences in studying and working life, to travel within Europe and to experience a new culture and environment. Somehow less motivation was to study language, and to learn more about new country. In Finland, application process is streamlined where you can apply from a common application system to different Polytechnics. IELTS is the only required international standard test needed unlike the SAT required in many US colleges. There are plenty of schools to choose from providing the wide collection of disciplines that can suit the interest of students. In order to get admission for the bachelor degree in any Finnish polytechnic, students have to pass the entrance examination.

There are many opportunities for practical training while in UAS that can prepare students for their career. Practical training helps to develop student's professional career. Therefore, all respondents emphasized that Nepalese students often have seen their desire to improve job skills prospects. In other words, studying abroad provides new opportunities as well as motivates them to learn about new culture, language, and develop a new way of life. At the same time studying abroad offers challenges to student to be able to adapt to a new educational system, in a new place in a new culture, which can be rewarding to them for personal and professional development.

#### 5.4 Residence Permit

Nepalese students get Schengen visa, which opens the door for travel to other European countries during semester breaks and holidays. Living costs are not high like in the UK and Australia. Travelling around Europe is smooth and inexpensive in terms of expenses. Once student gets the visa to study in Finland then they do not need an additional visa to travel within Europe. Many western countries are inexpensive to travel during holidays because of frequent discounts and travel offers. Students tend to stay in hostels during holidays since hostels are usually economical. Majority Nepalese students emphasized to study in Finland because of the Schengen visa policy.

#### 5.5 Social Factors

In Nepalese society there is always some influences from friends, relatives and family members to make a decision. Influences and recommendations always play a vital role in a student's decision to study overseas. Although, students themselves decide the final decisive decision but their social circle such as friends, relatives and family members influence them emotionally by providing advice and information (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Among Nepalese students the influence of family is significantly high. While the majority of students suggest their parents is the basis of their financial support. Therefore, family suggestions are very important for them to make the decision to study abroad. However, few respondents consider that academic performance also somehow influence in their decision for further studies in abroad.

Some respondents argue that the recommendations from their former professor and fellow Nepalese students who are studying in abroad have clear impacts in making the decision. Young students mentioned that experienced students provide better information about studies, living status and student life in abroad. For that reason, Nepalese student's motivation to study overseas is influenced by such social factors.

### 6 Intercultural Communication

Culture allows us to connect with others; at the same time it allows us how to comprehend other people's behavior and feelings. Different cultures reviewed thinking, behaving, and feeling in different social communications (Kim 1988, 46). The same culture has impacts and somehow a connection between individuals. Therefore, individuals from the same culture might be more self-confident in each other's way of performing communication forms. However to communicate with a Finnish student who is from a different culture is a different case for a Nepalese student. For Nepalese students to communicate with Finnish people or fellow



classmate in English is a very different situation because the same language does not share the same culture. On the other hand, they cannot use their mother language to communicate.

In Finland, some Nepalese students shared their cultural interaction and cultural adaption in different settings. Many Nepalese students mentioned that they feel often shy to ask questions in the classroom or they are nervous to respond in some situation. The communication language makes them felt uncomfortable or they felt nervous interacting with Finnish students. Perhaps when it comes to explain something in English, things such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation mistakes make them feel uncomfortable. However, Nepalese students feel more comfortable to communicate with international students from Asia than native Finnish speakers or European students.

Nepalese student cannot predict Finnish student or fellow classmate's behavior based on his/her cultural background. Conversely, this might perhaps create confusions and misunderstandings. In Nepal students listen to lectures given by the teachers and simply they take notes. Typically in Nepalese culture people usually do not tell their opinion very much and they try to avoid arguments because they emphasize harmony and cooperativeness in the group. Inside the classroom, students do not have to express out their opinion if they do not want to. Although Nepalese student in the Finnish classroom feel that the atmosphere or classroom culture forces them to express their opinions. To speak your opinion here in Finland is a normal culture. In Finnish classroom, a lot of group work or usually teamwork is available. Sometimes a student who speaks less is thought to be a person with no opinion. To express own opinion and team discussions is very important in Finnish schools. The important thing is to be open-minded and ready to learn from others cultures.

Certainly in a school like Laurea University of Applied Sciences (UAS), a Nepalese student finds individuals from every culture background and ethnicity, which is often called as multicultural experience. Multicultural experience is when an individual group or community of ethnic, religious or other different cultural background interacts. It is through this multicultural exposure that people learn different ways of doing things and gain empathy for others. Often the words multicultural and intercultural are used interchangeably. However, there is a big difference between them. As an example, Finland can be considered as a multicultural society. People from different culture, language and nationalities live in the same area but they are not necessarily in contact with one another. On the other hand, a small community from the countryside of Nepal can be considered as an intercultural society. In Nepal, there are different culture, language, and ethnic nationalities among Nepalese. However, these individuals live in a community; have an open and impartial relationship with one another.

## 6.1 Overview of Finland

Finland a quarter of the total area lies north of the Arctic Circle along with neighboring countries Sweden to the west, Norway to the north, Russia to the east and Estonia to the south. The country is sparsely inhabited, with the population density 17.7sq km/person (Study in Finland). Compare with other western countries Finland is a small country with 5, 3 million populations. Forests cover about 73% of the entire land in Finland. In addition, nature plays an important role in the Finnish way of life and for many Finns nature and rural areas mean a lot to them. Usually, most of the Finnish people have a summer cottage in the countryside near to the lake or forest. They like to go to summer cottage during summer time or during their holidays.

Finland has four distinct seasons. The coldest month is February while July is the warmest month. The Finnish language is a Finn-Ugric, which is often closely connected to Estonian and distantly to Hungarian (Study in Finland). Finland has Finnish and Swedish two main official languages. Swedish is spoken as their mother tongues by 5.5%of the population (University of Turku, 2015). In Finland, for every citizen freedom of religion is a constitutional right. The majority of Finns are members of the Evangelical-Lutheran church, which indicate 75% and another 1% of the Orthodox Church of Finland.

## 6.2 Influence of Finnish Culture

Culture shock is a normal fact for all the students living in a different country. Finns usually go to sauna naked which is a normal Finnish culture. Nevertheless for a Nepalese who have never been to sauna usually get culture surprise when he/she goes to the sauna for the first time in Finland. The immigrants maintained social and cultural characters of the lands from which they left, but also embraced characteristics of their new society, thus contributing birth to many immigrant cultures (Kero 1974, 5). Eventually, a Nepalese student then gets used to the Finnish way to go to sauna naked. The growth of different cultures in the society creates the follow of attention towards new religion and values. However to promote Finnish culture among the global culture is the duties of Finnish education institutions.

For Nepalese students to enter into a new environment is very exciting but at the same time to get used to with an unfamiliar culture, meeting new people, and using new language can be challenging. Therefore, new lifestyle can also be remarkable and can affect new students physically and psychologically. Regarding own culture and the culture of your host country, there will always be dissimilarities. In order to meet the difficulties of a new culture and new environment, Students may need to develop the new way of living (Chen, & Isa, 2003). There can be emotional struggles. In Finland communication problem can be one struggle for Nepa-

lese students. Neither all Finnish peoples speak English to communicate with foreigners nor do new foreigners speak Finnish to communicate. However it is important to get over the communication problem either by learning Finnish language or by adapting to the host country. Sometimes Nepalese students will find very hard to get used to with Finnish food, language, clothing, music and way of living. The best way to understand Finnish culture is to live in Finland and network with Finnish people. Finns people are usually honest and they are serious towards their responsibility. Finns do not show their anger towards stuff or try to destroy infrastructures. Unlike in Nepal, the drivers and public transportation in Finland are safe drivers. In addition, robbery and crime rate is low in Finland compared to other western countries. Some Nepalese students admitted Finnish culture is one of the reasons they choose to stay in Finland.

During the interview, one respondent expressed himself being unable to pay his monthly bills in the beginning. While living together with Finnish girlfriend for some years now, he finds himself paying his bills on time. The way of Finnish culture and honesty has an influence on it. I lived in Nepal for years and I never thought sexuality being just normal like in Finland even though I was taught in the school. Human rights for men and women are equal in Finland. In Nepal there is some sense men are intellectually and physically stronger than women. Men are responsible for making the income for the living while women take care of household activities and raising the children. Apparently this kind of trend is still going on in Nepal, unlike in Finland where men and women both are responsible for income, expenditures, and living.

Culture change in some situation can lead to mistakes or feel uncomfortable. During an interview, other respondent felt uncomfortable and unpleasant scenario once when they went to a bar with his Finnish friends. He was requested to show his ID card (Identity card) to get into the bar. He explained he was over 20, even though they didn't let him enter into the bar. He experienced strange feeling and felt very uncomfortable. In Finland to get into a bar one has to be +18 or +20 depending on the bars and one must show their ID card unlike in Nepal. Later he realized it was because of cultural differences.

## 7 Education System in Finland

Finland is an attractive destination for international students. One of the reasons is that, all people have equal access to high quality education and training for free, which are also the basic principles of Finnish education and education policy. According to the ministry of education, Finnish education and study plan are designed on the long life learning principle. The primary right to education and culture is documented in the constitution. Every citizen in Finland gets equal opportunities to education following compulsory schooling. Education is free

at all levels from pre-primary schooling to higher education. The diagram below explains briefly the Finnish education system:

## Education system in Finland

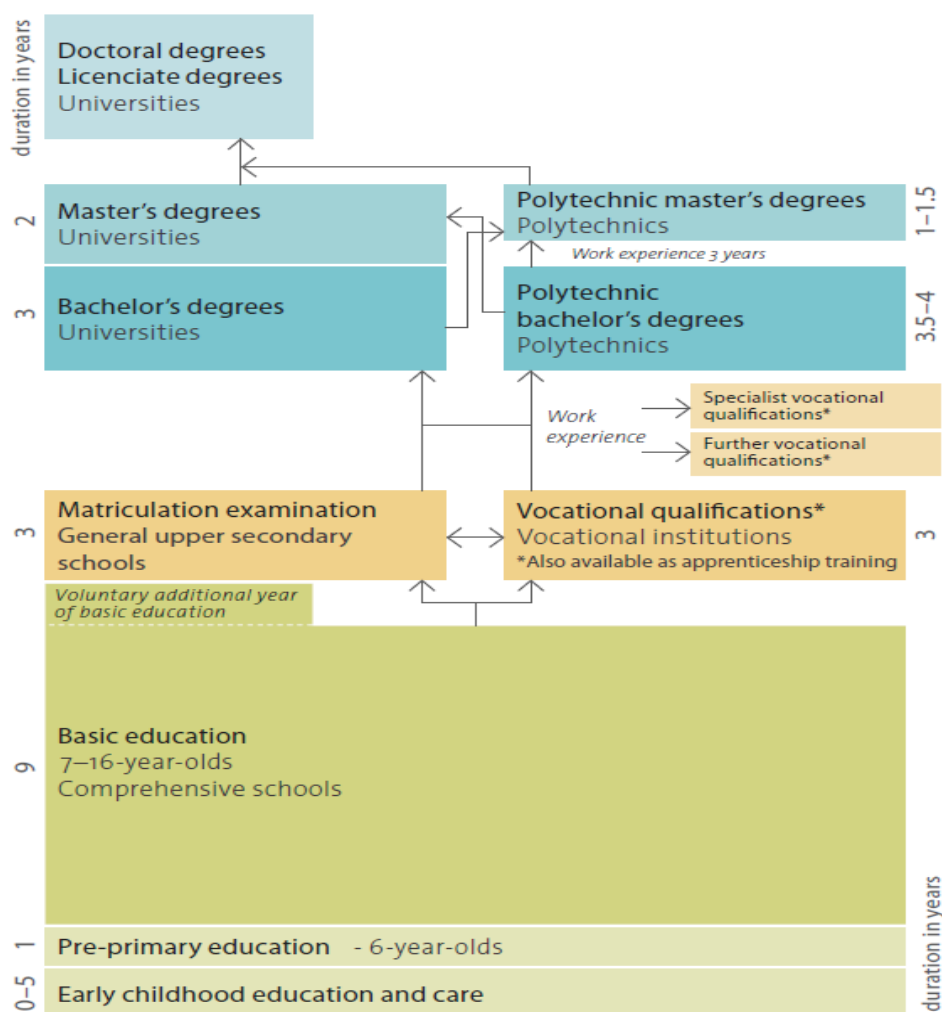


Table 4. Education System in Finland. (Study in Finland.)

The above table 4 illustrates the education system in Finland. In Finland, the higher education comprises University of Applied Sciences (polytechnics) and Universities. The most popular fields of study are art and design, architecture, communications, environment science and technology. After high school or vocational qualifications, students can choose to study bachelor degree in Polytechnic. The range of the studies in Polytechnic is 210-270 ECTS credits and the duration of the studies is 3.5-4.5 years. In a year, full time study corresponds to 60 credits. It takes 3 years of the bachelor level to complete 180 credits (Ministry of education, 2015). The academic year in Polytechnics is divided into two semesters. The autumn term (first semester) usually starts from late august to mid-December. Likewise, spring term (second semester) starts from early January to the end of May (Study in Finland, 2014). Mean-

while, summer holidays start from June until late August. During holidays, many students apply for school internship or part time job. Depending on the schools, some polytechnics offer alternative summer study options during summer time. Apart from this, there is winter break during Christmas and the New Year but also some Polytechnics also have a spring break around Easter. On the top of that, Finnish Polytechnic provides the wide range of study opportunities although they do not have any restrictions to study in a certain field. A student can choose a relevant field of study or they change their field of study without limitations. Students once enrolled to polytechnic have the option to transfer their studies from one institution to another. However, Finnish polytechnic do not accept studies transfer from the foreign institution (Study in Finland, 2015).

### 7.1 Studying in Finland

Studying overseas offers international students unique experience. The motivation to study in Finland demands learning by development, practical outlook, and assessment, learning abilities as well language skills, which is very important to find the job after graduation. In reality neither all students succeed after graduation nor does all of them find a better job. Some students regret their first choice. During an interview, one respondent from Turku University of Applied Sciences regrets not having study planned in the early stage. His first choice was to study Information technology later after two years he changed his study course to Environmental engineering. The plan and nature of the course have also changed his motivation to study in the different field.

According to my experiences, personal study plan is very important for students to facilitate the studies and progress in studies. University of Applied Sciences (UAS) contains compulsory practical training for each student for at least 20 weeks. The practical training is divided into two parts. The first part of the internship includes basic training while the second part is mostly professional training related to the field of study. Students are entitled to choose whether they want to complete their internship from Finland or from abroad. My suggestion is, not to seek your basic work place or normal job to complete the internship. Choosing the right place related to the field of studies will benefit a student to prove skills and abilities. However, to be eligible to get an internship is also challenging in Finland. There are numerous students applying for an internship in a good Finnish company. Therefore getting a job can be challenging for Nepalese students however it is not impossible.

In Finland, study semesters are not long compared to Nepal. Studying in Finland is much easier than back in Nepal. In Nepal, higher education institutions focus on the theoretical part of the several books whereas in Finland studies are completely different. Study at the University of Applied Sciences focuses on the practical part of the field. The whole study period won't

merge into various books unlike in Nepal. The survey indicates students from Finnish higher institutions find education in Finland more practical and less difficulty to pass the course. While in Nepal young students find examination too difficult to pass. On the top of that, to pass the examination in Nepal students have to read and prepare the entire book, which is often stressful and challenging.

## 7.2 Admissions process

There is a common application system for all Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences that requires IELTS score a minimum of 6 as the international standard test. The application process at Finnish colleges and universities is comparatively easier for Nepalese students. Additionally, the Nepal Higher Secondary Education Board's results are widely accepted making it an easier transition for students. Finnish Universities provide the wide array of disciplines to suit the interests of students and many programs provide opportunities for practical training that prepare students for their professional career. A student can send one joint application form at once along with their IELTS score and academic transcripts. One joint application form allows students to choose up to four different polytechnics.

Once the basic criteria and requirement set by the polytechnic is achieved then the students are invited to participate in the entrance examination. Entrance examination result is available on the website of each University of Applied Sciences. Students are entitled to confirm the acceptance letter and the attendance for the imminent studies. There are two types of documents attached by the school. One copy is required for Student's residence permit and the other one is for the school (Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu Nepal). Polytechnic often demand the acceptance letter signed by the student either by email or by post. Afterward, students have to find more information about living and studying in Finland. For example how to find a student housing? How long you have to wait to get a housing? Students apartment are comparatively cheaper compared to a private apartment. Therefore, before arriving at Helsinki it is recommended to reserve a room or apartment. To get student housing in Helsinki region is very tough. All the new students apply for student housing from June till September. All the new students who receive the acceptance letter should immediately apply for housing. The housing is granted on the basis of first come first serve.

## 8 Residence Permit for Nepalese Students

The data analysis argues that one of the main problems for Nepalese student is to wait the long period of time to get residence permit decision. Nepalese student may have to wait for at least 2-3 months. In addition, some Nepalese students whose families do not have a good source of income then they may face difficulties. Typically in Nepal, their parents are the

sponsors. Once the applicant passed the entrance examination and study place is confirmed candidate must make an appointment for a visa in Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu Nepal via phone or email. Applicant should fill out the residence permit form clearly. By the time applicant should arrange 6720 Euro in their bank account from their sponsor's account (Embassy of Finland, Nepal). The bachelor degree program in the University of Applied Sciences lasts for at least 3.5 to 4 years. Therefore, Nepalese students must have a health insurance of at least 30,000 euros to cover primary cost medicine. All the documents and attachments must be original (Migri immigration of Finland).

Usually, student residence permits are valid for one year as a temporary residence permits B. All the application for the resident permit is processed by Finnish migration service Migri (Migri immigration of Finland). Once students granted one-year visa they must visit at the local police station for an extension residence permit. In addition, students need to endorse a certain number of credits from the courses (Finnish immigration Service, 2015). Presently, a Nepalese student in Finland need to show proof of the funding that is around 6720 euros per year. The total amount is calculated on the basis of monthly expenditure for each student to live and study in Finland that is equivalent to 560 euros per month (Study in Finland, 2015). After graduation if a Nepalese student wishes to stay in Finland, the local police station will issue one year extended visa for the employment purpose. The student has to find their employer to get full time work in order to acquire an extension work permit.

## 9 Moving to Finland

There is always challenge weather you study in Nepal or overseas. Studying and living in Finland is more exciting. Before moving to Finland, some young Nepalese students are self-assured in their decision. The survey outcome underlines young students often think that they moved to Finland to get better education opportunities. While other thinks that they choose to move Finland because they want more freedom and they often look forward to determine a good career with a degree or qualification. Some respondents believe that they have established responsibilities to study and financial pressure on themselves while others fear of homesickness, friends, relationship and other issues.

In late august, each school coordinators organizes orientation programs for all the students. Orientation programs offer a good opportunity to meet with other international students. New students get more information from student office regarding accommodation, food and transportation discount, opening the bank account and most importantly Finnish social security number. There are different banks working in Finland. Firstly, Nepalese students must provide their personal information in local register office (Maistraattii in Finnish). Weather the residence permit is temporary or permanent social security is essential for all the Nepalese

students. Secondly, it is important to open a bank account as soon as possible after coming to Finland.

Helsinki is the largest and capital city of Finland. In particular foreign students often choose Helsinki as a destination to study as their foremost priority. The city is vastly populated compared to other cities in Finland. Perhaps the city offers the better opportunity for jobs, easy access to anywhere. Survey disclosed most of the Nepalese respondents preferred to move to Helsinki region from small cities after the first year studies. Their reason, to move to Helsinki was because they often complain small cities offered them little opportunities while other Nepalese students agree the fact that, it is depressing to live in a small city because of fewer crowds. They barely see people walking outside the street. Possibly the reason is because they came from densely populated cities from Nepal.

One responded was surprised when he moved to Kemi Tornio the northern part of Finland. He was expecting that he is going to a big city, tall buildings, busy life, and a lot of movement of peoples. He clarified that; Kemi Tornio city does not even offer the regular vehicle like bus and other means of transportation. He has to wait hours to get a bus, he scarcely sees local people moving around the city. In particular moving to Finland is not like moving to New York or Sydney or London. Perhaps the lack of enough information or general knowledge about the country is something lacking from the young student's decision to move to Finland. On the other hand, the survey shows that student expectations before coming to Finland were too high.

The survey of Nepalese students in Finland discloses both mixed emotions. Definitely the motivation, right decision, desire or confidence and their foremost concern towards independence play an important role to move to Finland. At the same time, some Nepalese students lack the general information about the country or city they plan to move.

### 9.1 Living in Finland

In the beginning, living can be tough and challenging for the new students in Finland. For example, to find a suitable apartment, to make new friends, get to know the daily living, paying the bills and so on. It takes some time to make new friends and good relationships with your classmates. One respondent from Metropolia UAS believed that he had always been lucky to have many good friends back in Nepal. He never had any strange situation to a get-together with new friends. In addition to this, he never had a weakness to make new friends back in Nepal. While in Finland, he experienced a sense of loneliness and homesickness.

Nepalese festivals spent with his family and relatives back in Nepal still reminds him how much he missed the country and relatives. Every year from September to October had always



been incomparable and meaningful to him. In Finland, he spends only a couple of hours with his Nepalese fellows to celebrate those festivals. Unlike local colleagues, international students do not have common networks and familial care (Ong, Danny, Larkins, Richard 2009,2). In the beginning, Nepalese student often live alone in Finland. Students living at the shared apartment become their friends and their classmate from the same school becomes a close friend. Among international students, it is very rare to stepping through years without having loneliness, financial pressure, relation-ship break-ups and even depression (Ong, Danny, Larkins, Richard 2009, 2). There are some Nepalese who stepped through years without having any depression or sense of loneliness in a new culture and society. During an interview, one of the respondents from Pietersaari Finland urged his everyday part time job and school assignment set his demanding schedule. His friendly behavior with everyone and busy schedule comfort his living in Finland. As a consequence, he never felt depression and sense of loneliness in Finland. In other case, one fellow Nepalese classmate set up himself in depression because his girlfriend wanted him to stay in Nepal however he moved to Finland to get better job opportunity after graduation and ultimately girlfriend broke-up with him.

One respondent who is living in Helsinki for 10 years thinks that, there is not going to be complete satisfaction weather you have a good qualification, new job, better income, a new home or new relationship. Though living in abroad will never be the special one. He thinks that, even with hard work and best efforts he lacked his family backgrounds and relations. He questions himself, where do I feel social? To Nepal or to Finland, Where is my home? In Nepal or In Finland, Where do I want to live in the future? This type of social influences has been in his observation.

Some students often consider that winter is the hardest part of living in Finland while others suggest young student might get into depressions because of the loneliness and cold winter. The temperature can go up to -30 degree Celsius depending on different parts of Finland. Graduated ex-student from Kemi Tornio suggests language obstacle, the unfriendly dark and long winter in Finland definitely creates difficulties for Nepalese students. Most of the Nepalese students who come to Finland had never experienced more than minus 1 degree Celsius temperature back in Nepal.

## 9.2 Costs of Living in Finland

The cost of living will vary from different cities in the Finland. Finland is one of the expensive countries to live in Europe. The main reason is because of the accommodation costs, public transport, food entertainment and clothing. The capital city Helsinki is an attracting city for Nepalese students. The average cost of living in Finland is 560€-900€ per month (Study in Finland, 2015). The living cost is relatively higher in Helsinki region and other large cities.

Students are given student discount 50% to their transportation costs. Some restaurants and cafeteria also provide student discounts. For the accommodation student housing with shared facilities are comparatively cheaper than one room or studio apartment or friends apartment. In those apartments, accommodation costs per month will differ from 200€-400€ per month. Accommodation option is offered according to the study location. The living cost always depends on personal spending habits. Nepalese students do not get social money benefit from the Finnish government to cover their expenses. It may be possible to do a part-time job to cover living expenses but finding such job is very hard in Finland. According to Finnish banking rules, a foreign student cannot get Visa credit card for at least two years.

## 10 Studies and Work in Finland

The Finnish higher education sector is very dynamic and has shown the further possibility of changes in this sector. In Finland, the former students and teachers are becoming the most reliable source of recommendation for studies. In particular former students can provide valuable information and recommendation regarding studies and work in Finland. In some cases, young students should analyze the information and recommendations they receive is from the right person. The Student graduated from information technology might stretch advice and recommendation that may not be necessary for the Nepalese student who is interested in studying tourism. For additional sources of information, it is always better to consult with experienced ones before making a right decision. (Ong, Danny, Larkins, Richard 2009, 19).

Normally Schools are open from 8 am until 15/16 pm. Students must participate in the classroom from Monday to Friday other than public holidays. Attendance is compulsory in each course that was enrolled at the beginning of the semester. In case you fall sick or student involved in any accident then he/she must visit the doctor. All the schools require sick leave letter approved by the doctor. Many Nepalese students work part time job during weekends and after the schools. However, Finnish language skill plays an important part to find a job in Finland. If you do not have Finnish language skills, it is not easy to find a part-time job (Study in Finland, 2015).

Finnish friends or fellow Nepalese can provide valuable information regarding the work in Finland. In addition, they can provide general tips on job searching. In Finland, various jobs are posted on the website unlike in Nepal where you can find work advertisement mainly in the newspaper and other sources of media. Former students or Finnish students in Finland may assist you how to search jobs on the website, where and what type of job you need. Nevertheless to cover the expenses foreign students should not count part time job as a source of income (Study in Finland, 2015).

Some students feel that studying is more stressing than working. Conversely, one of the respondents from Lahti felt that studying is a lot easier than working. In Finland, many Nepalese students do a part-time job after school to cover their expenses. Living is more expensive than compared to Nepal. Non-European students are allowed to work in Finland for maximum 25 hours per week. Former Nepalese students often recommend looking for a part-time job in the city where you study. On the top of that, local employment offices often provide assistance for possible job opportunities. Local employment offices may assist you to look for jobs however they will not promise to arrange jobs for you. In Finland, some job vacancies are announced openly through newspapers. Young students need to be active to find a job themselves.

## 11 Nepalese Students Experience

Out of 103 students, the majority of the respondents find it very hard and challenging to learn the Finnish language. Nevertheless, the large numbers of Nepalese students have a truly Finnish experience. After some years of studying in Finland, one respondent from Laurea University of applied sciences discovered himself in a scenario, ‘why I did not work hard to improve the Finnish language?’ ‘Why I did not make better study plan?’ Finnish pronunciations may be difficult for Nepali speaking students. However, few respondents found that, the Finnish language is easy to learn.

Overseas studies have generally positive experiences on students and some surveys show the high level of satisfaction (Ong, Danny, Larkins, Richard 2009, 37). One of the respondents found studying in Finland has made him more tolerant and developed his prospects. Some students often think that, in some situation they felt guilty and humbled. During an interview, another respondent from Arcada university of Applied sciences told me, after five months he moved to Finland, suddenly his 75-year-old grandfather fell sick back in Nepal. His grandfather called him from the hospital and asked him, ‘when are you coming back to visit me?’ over the period, he also missed most of his close friends wedding, birthday parties. He felt sad and lonely in some condition because he could not travel to Nepal often.

I joined Laurea University of Applied Sciences in 2011. There is no question that Laurea has an enriched multicultural environment. International students from different countries including the exchange students are wonderful examples of a diverse environment. Also, I met many Nepalese students who decided to stay in Finland after graduation. Before going back to their home country, some respondents pointed out the reasons to stay in Finland were building experience and learning the skills needed for better opportunities. Whereas some students believe that working experience would benefit them further to study Masters Degree.

## 12 Results and Development Ideas

The results among Nepalese students are very identical. Total 110 online questionnaires was sent to Nepalese students however only 103 answers were received. The aim of this dissertation is to improve new student's perspective towards culture, intercultural communication, and motivation factors influencing student decision, studies and work in Finland. Overall the central idea of this research is to provide the survival guide for Nepalese students in Finland.

For qualitative data collection, Five Nepalese students were interviewed. Three of them were graduates from the University of Applied Sciences and two of them are students studying in UAS. All the data and written notes were made trustworthy.

### **What are the main reasons to apply for overseas studies in Finland?**

The survey underlines the foremost priority of majority Nepalese students to come to Finland was to study at the same time to maintain the living cost. They do part time work while studying in Finland. However few students' intention to come to Finland was just to work. The results well defined their reason to apply studies in Finland was to study 44.7% (46 students Out of 102). To study and work 31.1%, to get better job opportunities after studies 22.3% and just to come to work was 1.9%.

### **Before applying for studies. Information on studies that student receive from the University of applied sciences.**

Out of 103 students 44 Nepalese students (42.7%) found information on studies helpful, 37 students (35.9%) found helpful but not enough information regarding application process and entrance examination, 21 students (20.4%) found information very helpful but only 1 student (1%) found information not helpful. As my experience, information from the UAS is clear and straightforward. At the same time, some important information related to application process and residence permit is not clear.

### **Did you get assistance from the UAS that was needed for the application process?**

Out of 103 Nepalese students 61(59.2%) Nepalese students found good assistance, 23 students (22.3%) found fair, 17 students (16.5%) found excellent but only 2 students (1.9%) found poor assistance from the UAS regarding the application process.

### **How was the overall admission process to apply from Nepal?**

65 Nepalese students (63.1%) found the overall admission process to apply from Nepal is easy, 23 students (22.3%) found difficult, 13 respondents (12.6%) found very easy although 2 students (1.9%) found very difficult. The admission process to apply from Nepal is quite easy. The data analysis argues that students do not get any materials to prepare for the examina-

tion. In other words, they find hard to pass the examination consequently they discovered the overall process to apply is difficult.

#### **General information about Finland before coming to Finland.**

Out of 103 respondents, 51 students (49.5%) were lacking important information about Finland, 29 students (28.2%) were found to have enough information, 16 students (15.5%) were found surprised after they moved to Finland and 7 Students (6.8%) never bothered to know about Finland. The findings sketched the problems among students and school coordinators remains unclear due to many reasons. One of the reasons is because before coming to Finland more than half percentages of Nepalese students ignore to know general information about the country.

#### **Did you use consultancy to get help with the application process?**

Total 53 Nepalese students (52.5%) out of 103 students used consultancy to get help with the application however 50 students (48.5%) did not use consultancy. The survey findings make it clear that the marketing strategy of Nepalese consultancies has been the main reason they use consultancies to get help with the application process.

**Did you request any help from tutor teacher or school coordinators in the adaption in Finland?** 48 students (46.6%) out of 103 respondents did not request any help, 39 students (37.9%) requested help, 9 students (8.7%) students requested minimal help, (6.8%) 7 students did not know about their tutor teacher or school coordinators. The outcomes of the survey often highlight that half of the Nepalese students often seek for help in the adaption.

#### **Orientation session that was arranged for you by school coordinators and tutor teachers.**

69 Nepalese students (67%) found helpful, 22 students (21.4%) found very helpful, 9 students (8.7%) found helpful but confusing, and 3 respondents (2.9%) found orientation session not helpful. Altogether, around 88% students are satisfied with the orientation session arranged by polytechnics, however few students found to be disappointed.

#### **Information on daily practicalities from student affairs office. (Finding apartment, opening bank account etc.).**

Out of total 103 Nepalese students, 51 respondents (49.5%) found helpful, 26 students (25.2%) found very helpful, 20 students (19.4%) found helpful but too many difficulties and 6 respondents (5.8%) found information not helpful.

#### **What do you think about culture and weather in Finland?**

60 respondents (58.3%) found different than they expected, 35 respondents (34%) found hard to adopt in new culture and weather, 5 students (4.9%) found familiar and 3 Students (2.9%)

found very familiar. The Majority of the respondents often find very challenging to adapt into Finnish weather and a new culture. Winter is very cold, dark and long, which can be very unusual to students, especially from Nepal.

#### **How do you rate Finnish language to learn?**

61 Nepalese students (59.2%) out of 103 found very difficult, 36 students (35%) found difficult, while 5 respondents (4.9%) found easy and only one student (1%) found very easy to learn. The Finnish language remains one of the struggles for Nepalese students in Finland.

#### **How was the living and finding a job in Finland?**

Out of total 103 responses, 55 Nepalese students (53.4%) found difficult, 40 students (38.8%) found very difficult, while 7 students (6.8%) found easy and only one student (1%) found very easy to live and find a job in Finland. Due to the language barrier in Finland over 90% Nepalese students find challenging to find work in Finland.

#### **What were your expectations before coming to Finland?**

Out of 103, 50 Nepalese students (48.5%) found normal likewise 41 students (39.8%) found high expectations, 8 students (7.8%) found too high and 4 respondents (3.9%) found low expectations before coming to Finland. Before coming to Finland Nepalese student's expectations found were mixed of normal and high expectations. Perhaps the lack of facts and general information the expectations are higher among students.

#### **Do you have any problems with studies and schedules?**

54 respondents (52.4%) found they do not have any problems while 23 students (22.3%) found study motivation is less compared to than in Nepal, 18 students (17.5%) found difficulties to understand and difficulties keeping up schedules and 8 respondents (7.8%) students found having problems with intercultural and daily living. Almost half of the Nepalese students found normal timetables and schedule. While in some cases the timetables and schedules might be stressful or too much burden on the new students in the initial year as they were struggling to adapt into a new society. Conversely, this might result in studying motivation being less.

#### **What are your plans after graduation?**

Out of 103 responses, 44 Nepalese students (42.7%) will find a work related to their studies similarly, 37 students (35.9%) will apply for further studies, 12 students (11.7%) will move back to Nepal and 11 students (10.7%) will move abroad to find better job opportunities. The main priorities of the Nepalese students in Finland are to complete the studies and to find a work related to their field of studies. However, few students go back to Nepal after degree achievement.

### Suggestions for New Students

From my own personal experiences, new students should be prepared for everything, for example, school, courses, college, daily living and accommodation that is very important. My suggestion is that; explore more to get the reliable sources of information about the place, school and accommodation. Do not hesitate to contact senior Nepalese students or school coordinators for suggestions regarding the courses, daily practicalities, studying and living in Finland. Likewise to improve the student life in Finland, Nepalese students should learn the Finnish language from the beginning and which will help to find the suitable work according to the field of studies.

According to my observation, Nepalese students must find a passion that motivates them to study abroad. Parents and family members often involve in decision-making process since they are their sponsors. They often force you to go abroad, which is very normal in Nepal. Young students should choose the right study and right destination that interests them. They should make the decision themselves. Similarly, they should accumulate enough knowledge about the courses and each course prospect in the future, which is very important to know beforehand. Many students are not familiar with the dissimilarity between the University of Applied Sciences and University. Most of them think that they are same however they are not.

### 13 Recommendations

Nepalese students and senior graduates have expressed their appreciation of Finnish experience, but they have also pointed out the weaknesses where Polytechnics could do better. It is always challenging for Nepalese students to succeed in Finland. First of all, the majority of respondents agreed that schools to have more teachers and professors' from the different cultural background. Appointing foreign teachers, lectures and tutor teacher would create a multicultural environment. While other suggested that Finnish school need to hire enough international teachers having fluency in English. They explain that teachers are good and qualified too, but it seems teachers have proficiency in their language so it made difficult for them to communicate the subject matter clearly. On the other hand, some respondents found teachers are friendly and teachers help a lot unless student understand so they don't think there is a space to improve. While one respondent shared his experience of not being treated equally in the classroom. He commented that teacher's behavior of treating students according to the nationality is unfair.

Furthermore, some Nepalese students remarked that English account of Finnish schools website is poor. They think that the schools website does not include the fact such as student challenges and useful information like accommodation for international students. Some re-

spondents commented that on-screen interaction would be the best option to search information. At present many students use Google to search important information. Online message services such, as chat is a demand for international students.

The majority of the respondents suggested that, the government should provide more scholarships to non-European students. They believed the concerned authority should provide sufficient loan to the foreign students to complete their degrees. In that circumstance, foreign students will not seek for part time job while they are studying. Regarding the residence permit, Nepalese students suggested, it would be much easier for them if the resident permit were given on study-based duration but not annually. Nevertheless, some suggested that issuing a long-term residence would encourage students ignoring their studies because of the secure resident permit. However, other criticized every year renewing is the waste of time, money and stress in mind. Additionally, the majority students recommend immigration services and foreign police office to process visa application quickly and effectively. They criticized to wait for many months to get the residence permit in Finland, which is often stressful to mind.

On the one hand, after studies many students wanted to study further in Finland however, they assessed housing services, internship places and sports facilities offered by the schools is very poor. Besides many respondents recommended university of applied sciences to back foreign students to find an internship in Finland.

On the other hand, Finnish employment office should provide assistance to search job for foreign students. While other suggested school should assist graduate students to find a job in their related fields. Nepalese students recommended to improve the multicultural environment at work as well as in Finnish services sectors. They suggested having more information in English especially on topics like jobs and housing in the places like public service offices would improve the multicultural environment.



## 14 Conclusion

For all suggestions mentioned by fellow Nepalese students, Moving abroad will bring some changes in every individual. You will interact with new culture; you will start a new relationship and you will sacrifice your family members, and relatives. Standing in Nepalese context, studying can be more pressure mentally and socially (especially from parents and family members). Sometimes young Nepalese students believe that without a good education or degree they will never be successful. However, there is no such evidence that someone has been unsuccessful because of degree or qualification. So Nepalese students should find a passion to study something that interests them.

The enormous growth in the number of Nepalese students over the two decades has seen a positive trend coming to Finland. The progression of students studying abroad raises a question, why thousands and thousands of Nepalese students move to overseas but also explain some motivation factors that influence the decision. Before planning to come to study in Finland, it is important to think more carefully, 'is Finland a right destination to study?' Is this the right course that I am really fascinated in?' similarly, the most important question will be: Are your sponsors (families) going to support you with the living in Finland? These answers give a well-defined route to new comers to concentrate on studies rather than finding a part time job to live and study. In other case, work experience is still measured as an important qualification in the Finnish market. Nevertheless, University of Applied Sciences demand job internship in bachelor's degree that also provides a good opportunity for international students that they are capable of working in related field.

The result among Nepalese students concludes that the Finnish language is a hard language to learn as well as considered as a very important skill to find a job. However, the language should not be a barrier to find a job. If language is important then there should be the provision of learning basics beforehand and school should provide some more extra classes especially speaking classes.

The development of the polytechnic in Finland has been impressive and has been offering top quality education for the last few years. All the polytechnics in Finland guarantee similar approach to education. This trend will further improve the quality of education and its productivity between society and the institutes. Not only free education has opened the adjustable path for foreign students especially from developing countries like Nepal, however this has been one of the main motivation factors for Nepalese students to come to study in Finland. At the same time, the Finnish government should make a strategy on how to integrate international graduates as they have invested so much money on them.

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Embassy of Finland Kathmandu Nepal:

<http://www.finland.org.np/public/default.aspx?nodeid=35133&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

Accessed on 18.07.2015

European Commission: International students in Finland

[http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query/index.do?queryText=international+student+in+Finland&summary=summary&more\\_options\\_source=global&more\\_options\\_date=\\*&more\\_options\\_date\\_from=&more\\_options\\_date\\_to=&more\\_options\\_language=en&more\\_options\\_f\\_formats=\\*&swlang=en](http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query/index.do?queryText=international+student+in+Finland&summary=summary&more_options_source=global&more_options_date=*&more_options_date_from=&more_options_date_to=&more_options_language=en&more_options_f_formats=*&swlang=en)

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## Illustrations

For more information on application process: <https://studyinfo.fi/wp2/en/higher-education/how-to-apply-for-bachelors/>

For more information about Finnish higher education: <http://www.studyinfinland.fi>

For more information about Student Residence permit: <http://www.migri.fi> Additional information can be found in:

[http://www.studyinfinland.fi/living\\_in\\_finland/before\\_your\\_arrival/residence\\_permits](http://www.studyinfinland.fi/living_in_finland/before_your_arrival/residence_permits)

Registration of the residence at the local register office (Maistraatti):

<http://www.maistraatti.fi/en/contact>

For more information on the identity number in Finland:

<http://vrk.fi/default.aspx?id=45&docid=0>

For accommodation: Contact the international office of the chosen polytechnic. For more information on various services in Finland: <http://www.infopankki.fi/en/frontpage>

List of Banks in Finland: <https://thebanks.eu/banks-by-country/Finland>

For Finnish Student health Service: <https://www.yths.fi/>

For Social insurance Institution of Finland: <https://www.kela.fi>

For visa extension (the police) in Finland: <http://www.poliisi.fi>

For Employment and economic development: <http://www.mol.fi>

For Occupational safety and Health administration: <http://www.tyosuojelu.fi>

The ministry for foreign affairs: <http://www.formin.finland.fi/missions>

Emergency phone number in Finland:112

## Tables

Figure 1 Polytechnics students in Finland by Nationality in year 2014: Source Statistics Finland

## Ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijat 2014 kansalaisuuden mukaan

Kansalaisuus	Opiskelijoita yhteensä
Yhteensä	138719
246 Suomi	129046
392 Japani	32
578 Norja	26
276 Saksa	243
826 Britannia	132
643 Venäjä	2083
724 Espanja	69
250 Ranska	100
404 Kenia	292
231 Etiopia	221
112 Valko-Venäjä	18
586 Pakistan	172
050 Bangladesh	265
524 Nepal	865
704 Vietnam	1281
356 Intia	108
566 Nigeria	374
120 Kamerun	122
100 Bulgaria	41
233 Viro	427
792 Turkki	27
203 Tsekki	26
800 Uganda	30
348 Unkari	99

156 Kiina	699
834 Tansania	36
300 Kreikka	25
840 Yhdysvallat, Usa	170
040 Itävalta	23
804 Ukraina	85
056 Belgia	18
360 Indonesia	20
428 Latvia	93
288 Ghana	182
642 Romania	49
364 Iran	70
076 Brasilia	37
380 Italia	62
410 Korean tasavalta(Etelä-Korea)	33
608 Filippiinit	31
894 Sambia	17
616 Puola	75
860 Uzbekistan	6
818 Egypti	13
706 Somalia	17
854 Burkina	1
124 Kanada	46
688 Serbia	7
729 Sudan	9
192 Kuuba	3
368 Irak	9
036 Australia	17
752 Ruotsi	222
398 Kazakstan	34
440 Liettua	41

Figure 2: Total number of foreign students in UAS by field of study: Source Statistics Finland.



## Ammattikorkeakoulujen ulkomaalaiset opiskelijat

Opiskelijat	Nuorten koulutus	Aikuis-koulutus	Ylempi ammattikorkeakoulu tutkinto	Yhteensä
Humanistinen ja kasvatustieteiden ala	14		8	22
Kulttuuriala	313	31	11	355
Luonnontieteiden ala	572	12	17	601
Luonnonvara- ja ympäristöala	21	28		49
Matkailu-, ravitsemis- ja talousala	760	50	29	839
Sosiaali-, terveys- ja liikunta-ala	1 042	125	49	1 216
Tekniikan ja liikenteen ala	2 821	215	83	3 119
Yhteiskuntatieteiden, liiketalouden ja hallinnon ala	2 909	154	213	3 276
<b>Yhteensä</b>	<b>8 452</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>9 477</b>

Figure 3: Total number of international student enrollment by the year.



## Ammattikorkeakoulujen ulkomaalaiset opiskelijat

Opiskelijat	Nuorten koulutus	Aikuis-koulutus	Ylempi ammattikorkeakoulu tutkinto	Yhteensä
Arcada - Nylands svenska yrkeshögskola	336	2	10	348
Centria ammattikorkeakoulu	517	26	8	551
Diakoniammattikorkeakoulu	155	40		195
Haaga-Helia ammattikorkeakoulu	834	101	55	990
Humanistinen ammattikorkeakoulu	5	3	8	16
Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulu	594	21	26	641
Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu	460	9	40	509
Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu	151			151
Karelia-ammattikorkeakoulu	119	7		126
Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulu	211	3	13	227
Kymenlaakson ammattikorkeakoulu	210	18	10	238
Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu	291	25	18	334
Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu	596	20	32	648
Metropolia ammattikorkeakoulu	963	139	101	1 203
Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulu	249	82	4	335
Oulun seudun ammattikorkeakoulu	258	23	13	294
Rovaniemen ammattikorkeakoulu	229	1		230
Saimaan ammattikorkeakoulu	394	5	34	433
Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu	165	4	12	181
Savonia-ammattikorkeakoulu	415	3	1	419
Seinäjoen ammattikorkeakoulu	175	6	6	187
Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu	284	6	3	293
Turun ammattikorkeakoulu	329	31	11	371
Vaasan ammattikorkeakoulu	351	7	1	359
Yrkeshögskolan Novia	161	33	4	198
<b>Yhteensä</b>	<b>8 452</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>9 477</b>

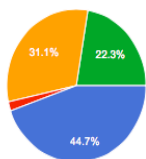
Appendix1 Survey results of Online Questionnaires for Nepalese Students

# 103 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

## Summary

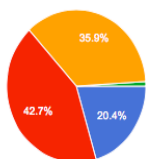
Planning the studies. Why did you choose Finland? What are the main reasons to apply for overseas Studies in Finland?



To study	46	44.7%
To work	2	1.9%
To Study and work	32	31.1%
To get better job opportunities after studies	23	22.3%

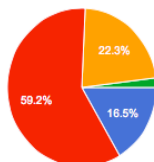
## Before the Studies

Information on studies that students receive from university of applied Sciences before applying for studies.



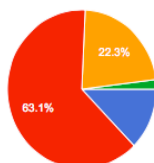
Very Helpful	21	20.4%
Helpful	44	42.7%
Helpful, but not enough information regarding application process/ entrance examination	37	35.9%
Not helpful	1	1%

Did you get assistance from the UAS that was needed for application process



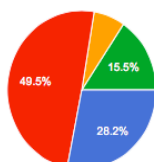
Excellent	17	16.5%
Good	61	59.2%
Fair	23	22.3%
Poor	2	1.9%

How was the overall admission process to apply from Nepal



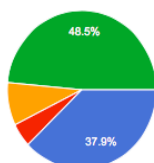
Very Easy	13	12.6%
Easy	65	63.1%
Difficult	23	22.3%
Very Difficult	2	1.9%

General information about Finland before coming to Finland



I had enough information about Finland	29	28.2%
I was lacking important information about Finland	51	49.5%
I never bother to know about Finland	7	6.8%
I was totally surprised when I came to Finland	16	15.5%

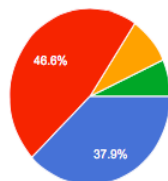
Did you use consultancy to get help with the application process



Yes I did	39	37.9%
I used because I was not sure if my application would be taken care carefully	5	4.9%
I used because it is usually easy to use consultancy than applying ourself.	9	8.7%
No i did not	50	48.5%

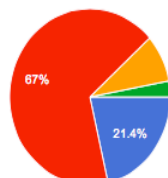


**Did you request any help from Tutor teacher or school coordinators in the adaption in Finland**



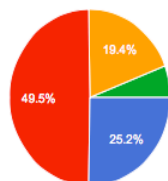
Yes	39	37.9%
No	48	46.6%
Very hardly	9	8.7%
D. I did not know about my tutor teacher or school coordinators	7	6.8%

**Orientation session that was arrange for you by school coordinators and tutor teachers**



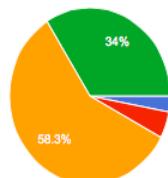
Very helpful	22	21.4%
Helpful	69	67%
Helpful but confusing	9	8.7%
Not helpful	3	2.9%

**Information on daily practicalities from student affairs office. (Finding the apartment, opening the bank account etc.)**



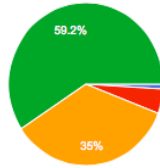
Very helpful	26	25.2%
Helpful	51	49.5%
Helpful, but too many difficulties	20	19.4%
Not helpful	6	5.8%

**What do you think about Culture and weather in Finland?**



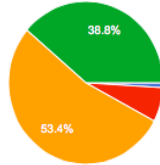
Very Familiar	3	2.9%
Familiar	5	4.9%
Different than I expected	60	58.3%
Hard to adopt	35	34%

**How do you rate Finnish Language to learn**



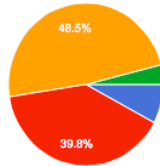
Very Easy	1	1%
Easy	5	4.9%
Difficult	36	35%
Very difficult	61	59.2%

**How was the living and finding a job in Finland**



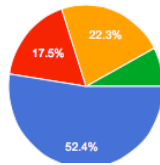
Very easy	1	1%
Easy	7	6.8%
Difficult	55	53.4%
Very difficult	40	38.8%

**What were your exception before coming to Finland**



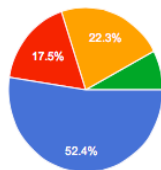
Too high	8	7.8%
High	41	39.8%
Normal	50	48.5%
Low	4	3.9%

**Do you have any problems with studies and schedules**



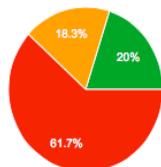
No i do not have	54	52.4%
Yes i have, difficulties to understand /difficulties keeping up schedules	18	17.5%
Study motivation is little compare to when I was in Nepal	23	22.3%
I have Problems with intercultural and daily living	8	7.8%

**Do you have any problems with studies and schedules**



No i do not have	54	52.4%
Yes i have, difficulties to understand /difficulties keeping up schedules	18	17.5%
Study motivation is little compare to when I was in Nepal	23	22.3%
I have Problems with intercultural and daily living	8	7.8%

**What are your plans after graduation**



I will find a work related to my studies	0	0%
I will apply for further studies	37	35.9%
I will move to abroad to find better job opportunities	11	10.7%
I will move back to Nepal	12	11.7%

**How would you suggest to improve student life in Finland easier?**

- be prepared for everything before you come. Study well about the place and college.
- learn finnish language and find the suitable work according to your studies.
- Everything is fine. Colleges need to give much more priority in language for foreign students.
- I hope certain facilities like finding rooms were much easier.
- \* Student appartment are expensive in most part of Finland. \* Part time work for students are not available. which makes student life difficult.
- Focus on what you are here for.
- More practical traingings within the study module. Effort on the language studies should be given.

**What are your suggestions to make study system in Finland friendlier**

- Get teachers from different cultural background.
- appointing foreign teachers and lecturers, tutors.
- Be on time. Check the schedule
- IDK

## Appendix2 Theme interview frame for Nepalese students in Finland

### Planning the studies

1. Why did you choose Finland? What are the main reasons to apply for overseas Studies to Finland?
2. What are your motivations to come to study in Finland?
3. In your opinion, what kind of factors involved in decision-making process?

### Before the studies

4. What difficulties did you face when you applied for school admission /residence permit?
  - a. Did you find enough information on studying in Finland?

### During the studies

5. Did you get assistance from tutor teachers and school coordinators with daily practicalities?
6. How hard or easy is it to adopt Finnish culture/ weather?
7. How hard or easy is it to find a job and live in Finland?
8. What are your suggestions for the school coordinators and for new comers?