

My Visit to Novosibirsk State University

In August 2019 I visited Novosibirsk State University in Russia. The trip lasted just over two weeks and I studied the course titled Business in Russia: How to Understand and Survive.

Before going to the course I had only met the other participant from University of Surrey for a short amount of time, and didn't know any of the other participants that would be going. Before the course officially started, the other people on the course all went out for a dinner with some of the lecturers. This was a good way to get to know other people and their backgrounds, as well as getting to know the lecturers. Whilst in Novosibirsk, we had a student of Novosibirsk State University who was paired with our group, and helped to show us around the university as well as help us in the local area.

The other people in the group were very easy to get along with, and were very interesting people with a lot of different backgrounds. We did excursions as a group, including visiting local sites such as the planetarium and the Nuclear Physics Institute (a particularly interesting one for me), and the geology museum. We also had a BBQ on the shore of the Ob river and had a guided tour of the city of Novosibirsk. As well as the excursions that we did as a group, there was a smaller group of us that went out of an evening into the city of Novosibirsk. There were a lot of good places in the city where we could go.

Overall this experience was a challenging, but rewarding one. Before I travelled to Russia I couldn't speak any Russian, and was unaware of the cultural differences that I would encounter. During this trip I also got to experience a lot of firsts. This was the first time that I made an international bank transfer, booked connecting flights and had to apply for a visa. While some of this was a bit daunting doing it for the first time, I now feel a lot more confident if I had to do this in the future. This was also the first time that I had travelled abroad to somewhere that isn't considered a 'popular tourist destination', and at first I struggled with the language barrier as not many of the locals spoke good English. I was able to overcome this by learning small phrases in Russian such as asking how much for a drink or for certain items on the menu.

The trip to Novosibirsk was a memorable one and Novosibirsk is a city that I would definitely go back to.