

## Utrecht – Hogeschool University

### Agenda

I.	Your overall feeling after your semester abroad .....	2
II.	Before the travel .....	2
A.	Preparation.....	2
1.	Visa.....	2
2.	The flight.....	2
3.	My luggage.....	2
4.	Bank account .....	2
5.	Insurance.....	3
B.	Housing.....	3
1.	Where to live.....	3
2.	Find a flat or a room.....	3
3.	Cost.....	4
III.	When I arrived at the university .....	4
A.	Inscription at the university.....	4
B.	Information on the university .....	4
1.	Class .....	4
2.	Organization of the Class .....	4
3.	List of courses and recommendation.....	5
4.	Exam .....	5
IV.	When I lived there .....	5
A.	Safety .....	5
B.	Phone and Internet.....	5
C.	Events.....	5
D.	Sports.....	5
E.	Eating.....	6
F.	Go to the university : bus, car, bike .....	6
G.	Travels .....	6
V.	After your semester abroad .....	6
A.	What are you planning do to?.....	6
B.	Did you apply for master? Where did you apply for a master? .....	6



## I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

My semester abroad was an incredible experience. Utrecht is a beautiful city located in the center of the Netherlands. Close to Amsterdam, this city is full of life where a lot of international students are enjoying their exchange. The cost of life may be more expensive than in France but the beauty of the landscapes there is worth the splurge. Utrecht is full of trendy restaurants and cafés as well as cultural activities. Basically, this city has everything Amsterdam has to offer, except for the tourists. In addition to that, almost all Dutch people speak English which comes in extremely handy. A lot of international students even decide to stay in Utrecht for the summer in order to complete an internship or even their Masters degree.

## II. Before the travel

### A. Preparation

#### 1. Visa

There is no need for a Visa when coming to the Netherlands if you are a European Union resident. You will only need some sort of identification (ID, passport) in order to register at the municipality upon your arrival.

#### 2. The flight

Depending on where you live, the plane might not be the cheapest idea. Make sure you check the trains or even Flixbus (4 hours total from Lille to Utrecht for less than €30). Because I live in Bretagne, I flew from Nantes to Amsterdam Schipol for a total of almost €200 with Air France for a one and half hour flight. Amsterdam train station is located inside Schipol airport. There you will be able to buy a train ticket on the automaton, from Schipol to Utrecht (around 20 minutes).

#### 3. My luggage

It gets pretty cold during winter in Utrecht. Because you will be cycling around the city most of the time, I highly suggest you to bring a good jacket, a beanie, a scarf and gloves. At the beginning of the semester, it will most certainly rain a lot. Therefore, you'll be glad to have a rain coat with you in that case. During spring, the weather is close to the French weather so you'll probably want to have lighter clothes for the second half of the semester. I personally overpacked, per usual, and ended up paying a €70 additional fee for my suitcase (30kg instead of the 23kg allowed). Therefore, I urge you to check the weight of your luggage before leaving for your flight to avoid ending up in the same situation. Because Utrecht have a lot of thrift shops around town, you'll probably want to do a little shopping while you're there. Then if you fly back at the end of your semester and end up with more clothes than when you arrived, no worries. You can easily find companies in Utrecht that will pack your remaining belongings and mail them to you for very cheap.

#### 4. Bank account

The bank account was a burden for A LOT of international students. If you have to know one thing before leaving for the Netherlands is that most of the shops, bars, restaurants,

clubs **won't accept credit card** (Visa, Master Card, Amex,...). Therefore, you can decide to carry cash around you at all times. I don't recommend it because if, like me, your bank is charging you for every money withdrawal you do in a foreign country, your semester abroad will definitely get expensive. In addition to that, the ATM in the Netherlands close at 11pm so if during a night out you forgot to withdraw money, you'll be stuck. Another solution is to open a Dutch bank account in order to get a debit card. I chose to open a free student bank account at ING. In order to do so, you'll need to make an appointment online and bring with you a copy of your rental contract, your ID, your BSN (Dutch registration number) and your school enrollment certificate. HU will send you several emails before the start of the semester explaining you everything in details regarding the Dutch bank accounts, if you want more information on that, but trust me it is a fairly easy (and free!) process. Lastly, you could also open a Revolut/N26 account online before leaving (or any other online bank). Whatever you chose, make sure you have it sort it out before arriving in Utrecht, it will save you a lot of time and struggles.

## 5. Insurance

Before leaving, I made sure to contact my insurance company in order to get the repatriation insurance and liability insurance.

## B. Housing

### 1. Where to live

In my experience, I never heard of dangerous neighborhoods around town. Overall, Utrecht is a very safe city to live in. If you don't like to cycle too much in the morning, then I'll probably recommend to find a place close to HU. However, keep in mind that the city is fairly small so, whatever place you chose to live in Utrecht will be at a 30 minutes cycle maximum from the city center. I know that some student chose to live in Zeist, a town right next to Utrecht, in order to have a cheaper rent or because they were no SSH accommodations left (see next section). It would not be the best for you because you'll have to travel almost 1:30 hours to get to Utrecht City center.

### 2. Find a flat or a room

The cheapest, easiest and best way to find an accommodation in Utrecht as an international student is to go through SSH. SSH is a student housing company in partnership with HU. I highly, HIGHLY recommend you to go for SSH. First of all, everything will be taken care of for you according to your educational semester. Indeed, during your introduction day at HU, everything will be organized according to the school's schedule for you to get your keys and everything else you need. Furthermore, most of the international students live in an SSH accommodation. You'll meet the best people there and share great memories with them. SSH has several locations around the city but I recommend you to pick either **Johanna** or **Pythagoraslaan**.

Pythagoraslaan is where all the parties are happening. It is in a lovely location surrounded by trees and creeks. It is also conveniently situated between the city center and the HU campus. There, you'll be living with 10 to 12 people with shared bathrooms (2 showers, 2 toilets) and kitchen (6 fridges). You can either have a room by yourself or share one with one other student. I do recommend you to have a room by yourself as living with a lot of people can get a little bit overwhelming sometimes, you'll enjoy the time you can have by

yourself. The rooms feel very homey and your flat mates will end up being like a second family.

Johanna is located on the HU campus, across the street from the main building which is very handy. There you'll share a flat with 4 to 5 people with shared bathroom (1 shower, 1-2 toilets) and kitchen (2 fridges). This building is a lot more recent than Pythagoraslaan with very modern furniture but which can make it less homey than Pythagoraslaan. The building has a rooftop terrace on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor which is great for outdoors get-together during spring. I personally lived in Johanna and didn't regret this choice. Indeed, after a night out, I guarantee that you'll enjoy the quietness of this building and on freezing mornings, you'll benefit from the closeness of the school.

### 3. Cost

SSH Room: €420/month (incl. Charges) + 2 months rent for deposit

## III. When I arrived at the university

### A. Inscription at the university

In order to apply for the University, you'll need to go through the platform Osiris. There, you'll have to complete the application online which is fairly quick and very well guided. Moma's international relations service will guide you and help you get started on the application process.

### B. Information on the university

#### 1. Class

You'll have to choose one program that usually has six classes in total (3 classes for the first quad, three classes for the second quad). You'll find all programs offered for exchange students here:

<https://www.internationalhu.com/programmes#/typeofprogramme=a90b3191d1744155b7c97b3e39665cc3:1/>

Indeed, you won't be able to choose each class from a catalogue. You also have the possibility to take Dutch classes offered by HU. I personally didn't. I chose the International Marketing Management program as part of the Marketing & Sales specialization I chose at Moma.

#### 2. Organization of the Class

Each class was either 3 hours or an hour and a half, except for the Management of Information Systems labs which lasted 4 hours. Overall, I had about 12 hours of class a week. Every single course material presented during the class will be uploaded to the Canvas of the class, so students mostly listen and take very few notes. However, I highly recommend you to take notes during the labs/tutorials. Most of the lecturers will check attendance and some of them could also take points off your final grade if you skip class without a proper justification. Classes include a lot of group works and most of the exams will include a final group report (therefore, choose your group wisely...).

### 3. List of courses and recommendation

- **Market and Marketing Research:** Mr. Mead was my absolute favorite lecturer, very interesting, lots of teams works and weekly oral presentation/small reports.
- **Management of Information Systems:** I would say that this course is way more technical than the one given in Moma. You'll have to refer to the "Experiencing MIS" book very frequently for additional information. I personally found the labs very easy; you'll have to work on Excel and PowerBi.
- **Sales and Account Management:** This was the course I was most excited about. Unfortunately, I personally didn't learn much throughout the course except for the sales negotiation simulation that was more interesting than the usual lecture.
- **Innovative Product Management Plan:** Seemed very interesting on paper but I found that the lecturer was asking a LOT from us, in a very short period of time. We had to meet almost 4 times a week with my group in order to prepare for the weekly presentation. That was pretty stressful, however, looking back, I learned more in this class than any other during the exchange.
- **Strategic Marketing:** Loved this class, I learned a lot as well especially thanks to the reading material advised.
- **Consumer Behavior and Branding:** I honestly didn't like this course; the lecturer was very experienced in her field of study but struggled to share her knowledge when it came to teaching, so it was pretty hard to follow her and to keep being entertained.

### 4. Exam

As I've previously mentioned, a lot of the courses are evaluated through group reports and/or oral defense/oral presentation, with or without the COVID-19 pandemic (nothing really changed for us in terms of exams). For the MIS course, a computer exam took place as well as an online test.

## IV. When I lived there

### A. Safety

The city is definitely safer than other cities I have been.

### B. Phone and Internet

Internet is provided by the University and, if you live in a SSH residence, WI-FI is also included. My usual phone contract (Sosh) was also including European communications, so I didn't have to worry about this.

### C. Events

The ESN group is a great place to meet people and get invited to very cool events like beer pong tournaments, karaoke, laser games, introduction week, bike tour of the city etc... Every week, ESN organizes several events so you'll never be bored. I advise you to buy the ESN card (preferably during the introduction day at HU, their booth will be open). It costs 7€ and you'll get a lot of discounts in bars or for the events.

### D. Sports

Close to the campus, there is a very nice gym, Olympus, and it's also very cheap (around €12/month for students). I didn't have the time to get a membership before the COVID-19 outbreak.

### E. Eating

A lot of restaurants are pretty expensive but there are also some very reasonable restaurants. I am a vegetarian and there are tons of vegan/vegetarian restaurants around town, which is very convenient. There are a lot of « eating corners » inside the main university building, but I personally cooked everything at home. I bought most of my groceries at Jumbo (cheaper than Albert Heijn). Dutch people are not the finest cooks in the world and they don't really have typical dishes. If they do, it's mainly fried food. However, to be fair Utrecht has great Ramen places!

### F. Go to the university : bus, car, bike

Since I was living in front of the main building, I was walking to school.

### G. Travels

Except for Amsterdam, I didn't have the chance to travel before Corona. However, since Utrecht is at the very center of the Netherlands, everything is within 2 hours drive/travel. I advise you to go to Groningen, The Haye, Rotterdam.

## V. After your semester abroad

### A. What are you planning do to?

I am entering the Grande Ecole Program of EmLyon Business School in September.

### B. Did you apply for master? Where did you apply for a master?

<b>Master</b>	<b>University</b>
Master 1 Marketing Ventes	IAE de Lyon
Master 1 Management International	IAE de Bordeaux
Master 1 Commercial-Business developer	IAE de Bordeaux
Master 1 Ingénieur d'affaire à l'International	IAE de Montpellier
Master 1 Ingénieur d'affaires	IAE Gustave Eiffel
Master 1 Marketing Ventes, parcours Stratégie Commerciale et Politique de Négociation (SCPN)	Université Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne
Master 1 Marketing et Stratégie	Paris Dauphine
Programme Grande Ecole	Audencia Business School
Programme Grande Ecole	EmLyon Business School