

Personal Report

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, SoSe 2021/22, 1 Semester

FB4 – Social Work: transnational - Bachelor

Language

Which language did you use? How did you communicate with your fellow students?

English with all students and teachers, exams and assignments were also in English. I learned a few words in Dutch by speaking with native speakers.

How well were you able to follow classes linguistically at the partner institution? Did the partner university provide language classes?

I could follow classes very well. Language courses were offered during the semester.

Accommodation

Did the host university arrange for accommodation? How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?

Yes, they provided rooms in a dormitory and the quality was very good.

How high were your overall monthly costs for accommodation (in Euro)?

470€

How well was the accommodation situated? How long did it take you on average to reach the partner university (in minutes)?

The Dekey accommodation in Prinsengracht was perfectly situated in the Jordaan district in Amsterdam city center. It took me 15 minutes by bike to the AUAS and approx. 30 minutes by bike. In general, I highly recommend renting a bike through e.g. Swapfiets as it is the best way around in Amsterdam.

Which web sites, forums, facebookpages, contacts, etc. can you recommend for looking for accommodation?

Facebook Marketplace

Where have you been accommodated (name of dormitory, location, part of town, etc.)?

I lived in Prinsengracht 219D, 1015DT Amsterdam in a student housing of Dekey. It is located next to the Anne Frank House in one of the most famous and beautiful Areas in Amsterdam. Everything is in direct reachability from supermarkets to bars, museums, etc. At night it is surprisingly calm there. My view from the ground floor led to the canals of Amsterdam. All the tenants agreed that it is one of the best places to stay as we also had a common room and community garden which facilitated getting to know others. We also had bike storage in the basement and free wifi plus washing machines (costed money).

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

I arrived in February and left at the end of June. I highly recommend the summer semester as spring and summer are beautiful in Amsterdam.

How did you organize your arrival? Were all important questions answered? What did you have to find out yourself? How fast were you able to get in contact with the domestic students?

My parents were able to drive me there which is why I saved money on the train and also on buying every supply new as the rooms were furnished but there were no kitchen or cleaning tools.

The orientation program by the European Student Network (ESN) was nice, but I honestly did not enjoy it too much as my group coach was not well prepared nor invested. I heard about better experiences from other groups and the ESN organized a lot of events throughout the semester (parties, activities, etc.)

Living Abroad

Compared to Frankfurt, how high was the cost of living abroad? What additional expenses did you have during your semester abroad?

The costs are about 200% higher than in Frankfurt. I can recommend Lidl, Aldi, Jumbo, and Dirk as cheaper supermarkets (Albert Heijn is more comparable to Edeka). "Action" is cheap for kitchen and interior supplies and eBay, Vinted, and Facebook Marketplace as forums. Additional expenses: 18€ swapfiets bike rent monthly, 15€ washing mashine, 12€ smartphone flatrate.

How far were you able to travel with your semester ticket? How were the libraries? Was their use free? Did the university provide computer workplaces/ computer pools? Was Wi-Fi available on-campus? Did the university provide a sports program? Was this free of charge?

Public transport is really expensive, I bought the OV chipkaart to save a few euros and only traveled to cities or places farther away like Zandvoort.

The Mensa at the campus is also more expensive starting with 8€ per meal (vegan options available).

The campus offered a lot of study space and computer workplaces, Witbauthuis is a really nice campus with the Café Fest next to it, a cheaper student bar, Wifi on campus was free.

I can recommend the Ufc sports program/gym.

The museum card is worth it as museum entries start at 15€ also for students.

Culture, in general, is really expensive e.g. techno club entries start at 25/30€, in tourist areas you spend 5-8€ for a beer, other sightseeing activities like the Adam Tower are also more expensive, main meals in restaurants start at 13€ it is difficult to find cheaper options besides snacks/bistros

Studying at the Host University

How would you describe the academic standard of classes compared to Frankfurt?

More challenging.

Did you experience any difference in teaching methods/ class structure? Which were the difference regarding your expectations and your experiences at the partner university?

More self-studying through videos and ted talks at home is an interesting new teaching approach. The time at university was spent with practical exercises and no lectures in the Positive Psychology minor. Everything was on campus. In general, a bit more literature to read and to prepare and weekly assignments throughout the semester. It is definitely a full-time study program as the second half consists of group work by developing a positive psychology intervention for a specific target group, still, it was fairly graded.

Final Remarks

What should future exchange students know/ do/ avoid? How would you overall rate your exchange experience? In what ways have you benefitted academically, personally, linguistically for your future career?

Save enough money to spend your time without worrying too much about your expenses, take time to explore the area around the city you live in, try to get to know and speak to people from other countries rather than your home country, try to appreciate this experience as much as possible as it will be over soon enough, don't let yourself be held back by things in your home country and enjoy the semester to the fullest, maybe try something new at the new university campus.