

Personal Report

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, SoSe 2022, 1 Semester FB3 – International Business Administration - Bachelor

Language

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

English was the language of study and was also the main language of communication with Dutch students, as well as with internationals. However, being in Amsterdam I did take an introductory Dutch class.

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

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

Accommodation

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

Yes, they provided a dorm and the quality was good.

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

462€

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

20-25 minutes, because it is located out of Amsterdam.

Which websites, forums, Facebook pages, contacts, etc. can you recommend for looking for accommodation?

I didn't use them because luckily I got a room in student housing.

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

Rode Kruislaan, Diemen 1111XD, by deKey. It is located outside of Amsterdam and is also managed by a different municipality. Diemen is rather calm to live in, there are many families hence it is a very friendly surrounding, with easy access to shopping and groceries. But this also means that there is a lack of nightlife and other activities because they are located in the city center. It takes around 20 minutes to get there. Diemen is very pleasant to live in, with a lot of greenery and calmness but it's not exactly the Amsterdam experience.

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

The day of arrival was determined mostly by my rental contract. To collect my keys and move in I do recommend arriving on the assigned day, which was about a week before classes started. I arrived in the afternoon, with enough time to unpack, and do groceries but that is open to preference.

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?

It was fairly easily managed because I arrived by train which was rather uncomplicated. The orientation program took place a day or two after my arrival [online] and covered the most important things, which were very reassuring in the beginning and took away a lot of uncertainty. I had a little struggle with public transportation at first but like everything else, it's very easy to get a hang of it.

Upon arrival everyone was very keen on meeting everybody else so it didn't even take a day, then there are new roommates to meet and a few days later classes start with another batch of people to meet.

Living Abroad

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

About 150% higher than in Frankfurt. In order to save money, I recommend going to Lidl, because Albert Heijn is more expensive even though they have a greater offer, although I do highly advise you to get a bonus card because it does make big difference.

For meat and fruits, small local stores can be less expensive. I highly recommend not buying drugstore products, like soap or shampoo in Amsterdam, because they can be 3 times the price of what one would pay in Frankfurt, so I recommend bringing this from Frankfurt. In case it is needed, Kruidvat has a lot of package deals and sales to look out for on drugstore products. In the case of second-hand shopping, I highly recommend Waterlooplein. Generally, secondhand stores are way more expensive than any of the fleamarkets so that is something to keep in mind. The American Book center in the center of Amsterdam offers a 10 % discount for students if you present your study ID.

But generally, Amsterdam is more expensive than Frankfurt. Also, you might consider a museum-kaart, as well as a PERSONAL OV card.

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?

There is no semester ticket provided, which gets very expensive due to the cost of public transport. Also, I rented a bike because it is easier to get around to most places, but this also adds 20€ monthly for the subscription. The cafeteria is satisfying in its offer and fantastic in its size, but there are also many takeaways located nearby, the coffee inside was great and very decently priced. At the top of the cafeteria, there was a lounging area with a ping-pong table to relax. The wifi on campus is almost flawless and it works in all places. There were a lot of places, where one could study so there certainly was no struggle to find space.

Concerning sport offers outside I did not take advantage of those, so I don't know. But generally, the Hva is very well equipped, very modern, and spacious.

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?

It is a lot more interactive classroom teaching, and more of dialogue between students and teachers. They are very keen on group work, especially for final assessments, which can be a hustle. It can also happen to have several examinations throughout the semester, as well as midterms, which is not the case for Germany. But in the end, you adapt to it pretty easily, most teachers are very kind and helpful if you have struggles.

The most important thing to keep in mind, when applying for the classes is the fact that the HvA in Amsterdam expects incoming students to be in their third year of studies, which I was not, by far. So, the classes offered for exchange expected a higher level of education, than I had upon arrival, which led to me dropping classes in order to better manage the other classes. I passed them well, due to my exam schedule and extensive studying, but especially in the first few months, I had the distinct feeling I was lacking specific knowledge for some classes.

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, and linguistically for your future career?

The exchange in itself is a truly fantastic experience, the organizational stuff around it is a nerve-wracking mess, at least it can be, especially in the beginning. Which is rather stressful in the midst of arriving, meeting new people, and trying to settle in. But once you settled it's really great. I find it very hard to judge how six months can change a person, but I know I met a lot of incredible people from all over the world and got to know them and some of their backgrounds and lifestyle. And it can't be denied that you get more fluent and comfortable around the English language, even for me it still comes a little more naturally, and for some others, there were major improvements along the way.