

Personal Report

Saxion University of Applied Sciences, Winter Semester 17/18, 1 Semester Soziale Arbeit und Gesundheit, Fachbereich 4

Language

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

The main language I communicated in was English in university (teachers, fellow students) as well as privately. Most Dutch people are fluent in English which means that it is not necessary to learn Dutch.

Accommodation

Did the host university arrange for accommodation?

No, unfortunately not.

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

350€

How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?

Good.

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

By bike it took me 15 mins to the university; however my accommodation was located outside the city center.

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

I can recommend the following Facebook groups: Wohnungen in Enschede, Appartments in Enschede- Saxion students, University of twente- marketplace.

Where have you been accommodated (name of dormitory, location, part of town, etc.)? And how would you describe the surroundings of your accommodation (shopping facilities, distance to the city center, nightlife, etc.?)

I lived in a private flat share which was located in the South of Enschede. Nearby, there was a little mall with all shops you need for everyday life like pharmacies, supermarkets etc. There

were also two bus stations when I wanted to take public transportation. It took me 15 mins to the city center by bike. Enschede is a small city.

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

I would recommend arriving approximately one week before the orientation program starts in order to settle and explore the university and city.

How did you organize your arrival? Was the extent of the orientation program sufficient? What activities can you recommend? 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? How were the services for exchange students?

In my opinion, Saxion has prepared a very welcoming event for exchange students in which we could get to know the teachers but also each other, however things like how to print stuff in the library, and how to use public transportation were things I had to figure out by myself. That is why; I would say the orientation program is very superficial. Unfortunately, we did not get in touch with any local students as our group was only composed of international students.

Living Abroad

Compared to Frankfurt, how high was the cost of living abroad?

Higher, it costs about 150%

What additional expenses did you have during your semester abroad? How far were you able to travel with your semester ticket? How was your student life off-campus? How were the mensas/ student cafeterias? What types of meals were served? How much did the meals cost? How were the libraries? Was their use free? Did the university provide computer workplaces/ computer pools? Was Wi-Fi available on-campus? Were you able to use study rooms? Were you able to rent separate rooms for studying? Did the university provide a sports program? Was this free of charge?

Main additional expenses were travel costs for vacation. The Netherlands is a small country but very recommendable to travel through. Unfortunately, there is no opportunity for international students to get a discount or like a semester ticket. Enschede is a small student city with some cultural, social activities but most of the time I spent visiting other cities as it does not take much time. There are the Erasmus associations which organize events for international students. I personally did not like the cafeteria as it was pricey and only served cold dishes. The library of Saxion is very small and especially in Exam time it is hard to get a seat. That is why; I would recommend the library of the University of Twente or the central library. There was Wi-Fi on the campus and several workplaces that provided computers. There is also a possibility to reserve study rooms. Saxion does not provide any sports program, though the University of Twente is an alternative.

Studying at the Host University

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

Much 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? What surprised you, what should newly arriving students know? How were the student services? Was the fact, that you were an exchange student taken into account (by professors or other staff)? If so, how? How were difficulties, which you or other exchange students may have met, handled by the partner university?

The teaching methods do not differ that much to Frankfurt. However, there is a main focus on group projects and group works. Almost every subject demanded that we had to work in groups. Moreover, it is not easy to receive good marks. The work effort is more than in Frankfurt and you need to consider that achieving the best grade is nearly impossible. The teachers are aware of the needs of international students and thus very cooperative and understanding. Mainly, the courses are very small up to 10 people which provide a very personal learning atmosphere. Also, the relationship to teachers is very close and personal.

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?

To all future exchange students, I would recommend you to organize your stay as early as you can so that you do not stress out in the end (apartment search, financial sources etc.). Overall, I would rate my exchange experience as very positive and enriching. I met people from other countries which broadened my horizon, I learnt a lot about social work like methods and theories especially in the field of management and leadership and personally I learnt about myself, my strengths, my weaknesses, my vision and goals in life.