

Personal Report

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, Sommer term 2019, 1 Semester

Social work: transnational, Fachbereich 4, Frankfurt

Language

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

I used English as the main language in the classes. Apart from English, I tried to learn and speak Dutch.

Accommodation

Did the host university arrange for accommodation?

Yes, in a dormitory

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

Around 400€

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)?

It took me around 20 minutes to reach the university by bike and about 12 minutes to get to the city center. The accommodation is close to lakes and nature reserve.

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

www.sshxl.nl/steden/zwolle

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.?)

The accommodation is placed in Aa-Landen, which is approximately 12 minutes away from the city center by bike. Nightlife is in the city center. Aldi is directly next to the student housing. Albert Heijn, Jumbo, Etos, Kruidvat etc. (also small market on Thursday) are 3 minutes by bike. Another 2 minutes one can find a huge lake where one can swim and a nature reserve, which is perfect for making sports or relaxing. The student housing provides single rooms with shared toilets, showers and kitchens. Perfect for the living together with

other people, which was mainly situated in the kitchens. Free parking spots are in front of the house.

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

They told to arrive the Friday before the semester start. Most of the students arrived on Sunday before the first day of university. Both were possible, since the university was shown on Monday (first day of lecture) anyway.

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?

The contact with the university and the student housing was very good. They answered emails immediately and were welcoming us when arriving in Zwolle. Hereby they were flexible (we arrived at 9 pm in the evening due to the traffic). The orientation program was organized by students (mentors) of Windesheim, where one could get in contact with domestic students. The mentors answered all the questions. Most of the students in class were domestic. The international office at the Windesheim University provided us with a handbook where everything was described (such as visiting a doctor or who to call in the case of emergency).

Living Abroad

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

Similar to Frankfurt.

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?

Additional expenses for a bike and public transport, since the university did not provide a semester ticket. The student life off campus was mainly with students from the student housing. Next to the internationals living on the same floor, the Dutch students from the other floors were open to spend time with the internationals. The Mensa in the university was nice. They provided many different dishes (such as salad, soups, bread, fried dishes); unfortunately one could only pay with card in the Mensa. The costs were about the same as in the German Mensa. The library at the university is big, many books and computers were free to use. In addition they had a multimedia center with a green screen studio, recording

studio and many more facilities, which were free to use as well. The Wi-Fi in the university was good. In case of troubles with the Wi-Fi or electric devices, a service center helped out for free. The university offered single rooms for studying. Sport/swimming pool costed extra.

Studying at the Host University

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

Much less 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 responsibility of the students was way higher and the training staff was more in a tuition role. The level of classes was way less than in Frankfurt, still the requirements in the assignments were much higher, which was contrary to the way of teaching. The classes were not critical at all and discussions were not acted out, which was difficult for some students. Sexist content was included in the presentations of the teachers. Surprising was, that deadlines are very flexible and excuses such as going to holiday and therefore not finishing the assignment, were accepted by the teachers. In addition, group work is not taken serious since the grades do not count in the Netherlands. Those were the difficulties that the international students have met.

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?

Future students should know that they should not expect too much from the lessons at the Windesheim University in Zwolle. The standards of teaching are way simpler. The students have to do a lot of group work. There are two different kinds of student housing. One is with shared rooms; the other one has single rooms. Even though the housings with shared rooms are closer to the city, the other student housing is very nice as well. I improved my language skills during the classes.